FIELD GUIDE

THE MENTORING PROJECT

LEADERSHIP IN THE BIBLE: UNDERSTANDING THE "TRUE NORTH"



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INTRODUCTION

Did you know that there are currently 57,000 books with the word "leadership" in their title for sale on Amazon right now? The fact that there are so many underlines at least two things: 1. People want help leading things and 2. There are a ton of different ideas on how to lead things. If you've ever been tasked with leading something, you likely understand why having help is desirable. After all, being a leader is not easy! And yet, 57,000 books?! If you think being a leader is tough business, imagine reading every leadership book on Amazon and trying to judge which ones are good and which ones belong on the burn pile!

So, lots of people are talking leadership, but you have to choose . . . where will you go for advice on how to be a good leader? Your first answer may be, "I'm reading this field guide, aren't I?! I'm coming to you for help, Taylor." Gulp. You should know off the bat that I've led a few things in my lifetime. Sometimes, it went well. Other times, well. . . not so much.

As I think back on my failures, I think it's fair to say that in every case, failure was either the result of not fearing God as I should or not relying on him for his wisdom. This is the foundation of spiritual leadership. Failing to fear God gives way to all kinds of other fears, such as fear of others, fear of failure, or fear of responsibility. Failing to fear God also acts as a license to sin. After all, if leaders do not fear the prospect of giving account to God, what will stop

them from using their authority to indulge in their own desires? This is why leadership ethics are so vital. Similarly, if leaders do not rely on God's wisdom, they will employ their own. What is worldly wisdom to God? "Foolishness" (1 Cor. 3:19).

Thankfully, there is a central character in the Bible whose example provides a plethora of leadership principles for us today—more than we have time to discuss in this guide! The person I have in mind is Moses in the Bible. If you're at all familiar with your Bible, then you know Moses. Even if you've never really read the Bible, you've likely at least heard of him! Either way, I would suggest taking some time to familiarize yourself with the story of Moses. You might even consider reading Exodus and Deuteronomy with your mentor/mentee over the course of the next 4-5 weeks.

Start in Exodus 2 and read through the book. You're going to run into some of the Sinai laws in Exodus 20-30, but persevere. The story picks up in Exodus 31 and especially in 32 with the incident of the golden calf, followed by Moses' intercession on behalf of God's sinful people. Leviticus and Numbers then go into great detail concerning both the Law and key events in Moses's time leading Israel—namely, Israel's first approach of the Promised Land and the subsequent wilderness banishing. To read a summary of these two books, look at Deuteronomy. There you will read of Moses's own account of Israel's story. Deuteronomy will then conclude with Moses's death atop Mount Nebo in chapter 34.

Like with every leader, Moses's life had its ups and downs, and we will attempt to learn from both what he got right and what he got wrong. More often than

not, however, Moses stands for us as an example of good Christian leadership. While none of us will likely be tasked with calling down a great king like Pharaoh or leading a people through the center of a sea on dry ground, we can apply the same leadership in the Bible to our own lives. Moses's example can help us be better spouses, parents, bosses, ministers, and friends. Most importantly, our time with Moses can help us follow Jesus more faithfully. If we accomplish nothing else, I pray that this guide will at least do that for you.

1

WHAT GOOD LEADERSHIP IS NOT

Do you remember when you were in elementary school and had to learn about story arcing? If so, you'll recall that there are five basic elements to any complete story: exposition (where the scene is set), rising action (where the problem is introduced), climax (where the problem is at its height), falling action (where conflict begins to be resolved) and resolution (where the conflict is brought to a final close).

Well, the beginning chapters of Exodus offer something of an exposition for a story involving Israel, Egypt, and a Hebrew-born, Egyptian-raised shepherd by the name of Moses in the Bible.

Israel, a people from the land of Canaan, had been sojourning in Egypt for four hundred years at the time when our story begins. Throughout much of that time, Israel had found great favor with the Egyptians. In fact, Exodus opens by telling us that "the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly so that the land was filled with them." Life was pretty good in Egypt for Israel, you may say. But trouble was just around the corner.

A new Egyptian king came onto the scene, and he was not so interested in Israel and Egypt's friendly past relations (Ex. 1:8). The Pharaoh saw Israel

as a threat plain and simple—a threat that could not go unchecked. Pharaoh called for the Israelites to become Egypt's slaves, where they would be afflicted with "heavy burdens." To Pharaoh's great disappointment, however, the more he oppressed Israel, the more they multiplied and spread (Ex. 1:12).

Egypt dreaded Israel as if it were a disease, causing chronic illness under the threat of death. Pharaoh decided more must be done to mitigate for Israel's increase. So, he devised a plan to have every male Israelite killed at the time of their birth. The midwives, who were to execute Pharaoh's murderous plan, denied him, however, and "the people multiplied and grew very strong" (Ex. 1:20). It seemed nothing Pharaoh did to thwart Israel's increase would work. Israel's God matched Pharaoh's every curse with greater blessings.

It is into this conflict that Moses was born. In fact, his person is an intersection between these two peoples. In Exodus 2, we read that Moses was born to a Hebrew woman who, in order to save his life, hid Moses in a bulrush basket tucked in the reeds along the bank of the Nile (Ex. 2:3). There, Moses was discovered by none other than Pharaoh's own daughter. Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses, giving him his name, which means "I drew him out of the water" (Ex. 2:10). So here we have Moses, born a Hebrew yet adopted into the royal family of Egypt. What would become of such a boy? Where would his loyalties ultimately lie?

We don't have to read much more in order to get an answer to that line of questioning. The writer of Exodus writes:

> One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?" He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well. – Exodus 2:11-15

In just a few short verses, the story of Moses shifts dramatically; he goes from being Egyptian royalty to being an Egyptian fugitive. To make matters worse, his act of defense on behalf of his people, Israel, was unwanted, and his own scoffed at him, saying, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us?" Things were hardly working out for Moses at this point in his story. Though he belonged to two peoples, he was wanted by neither. Though he wanted to lead, no one was willing to follow him. What went wrong for Moses? Answering that question will help us understand what good leadership is not. It will also help us appreciate the great leader Moses is to become through his future leadership growth.

1. Good leadership is not the result of worldly wisdom.

Notice the qualifier, "good." In order for leadership to be "good," it must depend on godly wisdom, not worldly wisdom. Remember those 57,000 leadership books currently on Amazon? Most of those depend on worldly wisdom. That is, they are full of tips and tricks focused on how to get ahead, how to be first, how to be best. Often, their strategies involve putting others down or using others to one's own advantage. Worldly wisdom, in this sense, depends on self-promotion and aggrandizement. This is the opposite of servant leadership.

Was Moses guilty of operating by worldly wisdom when he killed the Egyptian taskmaster? He was simply defending his people, after all! Well, for as easy as it may be to sympathize with Moses, his actions do reveal a certain self-appointment to judge and jury on behalf of a people who almost immediately thereafter reject his rule. Moses acted hastily and secretly in accordance with what he thought was right. Rather than ask God for wisdom, Moses acted rashly and struck the man down. Notice, however, that his actions against the taskmaster did little to improve Israel's condition. In fact, Israel groaned even more because their suffering was great (Ex. 2:23).

What Israel needed and what Moses should have waited for was an answer from God as to what to do next. After all, God was very aware of his people's predicament. Moses wrote, "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew" (Ex. 2:24-25).

LEADERSHIP IN THE BIBLE: UNDERSTANDING THE "TRUE NORTH"

Can you think of a time when you acted rashly as a leader? Maybe you felt that the situation demanded fast-acting leadership. Of course, sometimes leadership does demand swift decisions. And yet, more often than not, rash decisions are born out of worldly wisdom. What that reveals is that we often aren't too good at thinking on our feet—we definitely aren't as good as we think we are. Worse still, we often fail to think God's thoughts after him when we think rashly. Instead, we rely on worldly wisdom, which is normally more intuitive to us.

As leaders, we need God's help and wisdom to know what to do next. Whether it be in our companies, our families, or our churches, we should be quick to seek God's counsel before we act. This is a core part of leadership training. One way to do that is to read God's Word while anticipating that, as we learn more about what God is like, we will understand more what we should be like. Because God is patient, just, and kind, we should strive to be that way for those who are under our leadership. To say it another way, the Bible may not tell us whether we should lead our company to sell this asset or send our children to private school. But by telling us what does the Bible say about leadership regarding God's character, it informs each of these decisions along with all the rest we face. We shouldn't make decisions that deny God's attributes. Instead, we should strive to make decisions that best display God's character to those under our authority. This is the heart of leadership ethics.

How might Moses have improved his and his people's situation if he had waited for the Lord's wisdom? Would he have managed to avoid the

whole being a shepherd out in the desert chapter of his life? Possibly. What we can say for sure is that he would not have regretted depending on the Lord's wisdom regardless of the outcome. We won't regret waiting either.

2. Good leadership does not come from arrogant ambition.

We've already noted that Moses acted according to worldly wisdom when he chose to murder the Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a poor Israelite slave. We now need to think about Moses's ambition, which was, no doubt, mixed with a certain degree of arrogance. Why do I say that? Well, for one thing, Moses had no idea that he would be appointed by God to lead his people from captivity at the time he killed the taskmaster. The reader of Exodus may have some inkling this would be the case based on how Moses had been rescued from the Nile by none other than Pharaoh's own daughter. But as far as Moses knew, he was just lucky to be alive, let alone to have Pharaoh's wealth at his disposal.

This didn't stop Moses from reaching for an authority that wasn't his to take. You see, leadership comes from the north—that is, from God. Before Moses could have the authority to make decisions on behalf of his people—decisions like which of their oppressors to kill—he first had to be called by God. This is the essence of spiritual leadership.

Notice the difference such a calling makes in the way Israel responds to Moses. When Moses first killed the Egyptian, the people asked him, "who made you prince. . . ?" (Ex. 2:14). But after God called Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand the release of his people, "the people believed; and

when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped." (Ex. 4:31).

I remember as a young man (to some, I am still young!), I thought all would be right once I was the one in charge. After all, I could make way better decisions than those in authority over me. Or so I thought. My arrogance has caught up to me more times than I want to admit. I have too often been arrogantly ambitious. Friend, if you aren't a leader of this or that yet but desire to be one, you should first learn to develop some suspicion of your ambition. Are you just out for authority for your own sake? For the sake of what others will think of you once you have it? Are you getting ahead of God with thoughts of what all you could accomplish if you were in charge? Is your charisma outpacing your character?

If you desire leadership opportunities, one of the best ways to channel your ambition is to focus on growing in character—God-glorifying, others-serving character. This requires a servant heart. Don't assume you're the right person for the job. Don't presume that other people should want to follow you. Instead, ask yourself and others about how you can grow to better resemble what God is like for others' sake.

If you're in leadership already but realize you're too prone to arrogant ambition rather than humble submission to God, this may be a good time to hit the reset button. Repent of your arrogance. Ask the Lord to humble you. Start looking for ways to serve others rather than simply forcing them to serve you. Vet all your ambitions against God's character. If they're in

alignment, proceed. If not, cast those ambitions aside and get better ones—godlier ones.

In the case of Moses and the Egyptian taskmaster, we learn a few lessons on what good leadership isn't. The rest of this guide will draw on Moses's many positive examples in order to see what good leadership in the Bible really looks like and how we can grow in it.

Discussion Questions:

1. What areas in your life are you currently serving in some leadership capacity?
2. Do you desire more leadership opportunities? If so, what are those, and why do you desire them?
3. Have you struggled in the past with relying on worldly wisdom or being motivated by arrogant ambition? If so, share that example in your mentoring relationship.
4. How does thinking about God's character help us make decisions as leaders that best honor him?

2

WHAT GOOD LEADERSHIP IS: HUMILITY

Something strange happens when you get married and then become a parent. Through those stages, you spend less and less time pursuing your immediate desires and more and more time serving the needs and desires of others—namely, your spouse and children. Parents are leaders, but often leading means humbly serving. This is the essence of servant leadership.

Let's stress test that for a second, because at first glance it may not seem right. Parenting is about humility? Sure enough, leading as a parent isn't only about humility, but it's never about less. Something about being a parent means serving, and serving requires humility.

And it isn't just parenting that requires humble leadership. No, all leadership in the Bible is born out of service to others, and service requires humility. If you aren't humble, you can't lead. Why is that? Well, for one, it's because leading is less about what others can do for you and more about what you can do for them. Good leadership isn't puffed up. It's about having a servant heart.

There is another aspect of humility leaders need to grapple with and grow in—namely, being honest about weakness. Humble leaders don't just

capitalize on their strengths. They admit their weaknesses. This is a vital part of leadership growth. Fear of man and pride leave leaders unable to pass out authority to others. Godly leadership admits weakness. Godly leaders humbly and joyfully celebrate other people's strengths.

We see all this in the life of Moses in the Bible and specifically in the event where God called him to what may seem like an impossible leadership post—leader of Israel, tasked with freeing them from Pharaoh. From the story of Moses, we need to learn what it means to admit weakness, rely on God's provision, and celebrate others' strengths.

1. Good leaders admit weakness.

If you were on the run in a foreign land, what would you do? That is precisely the question Moses had to answer when he fled Egypt. Become a shepherd, of course. Not so fast. God had other plans for Moses. One day, while Moses was tending to Jethro's flock, he was approached by a most unexpected visitor. This was the famous moment of Moses at the burning bush. The Lord said to Moses, "Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people... out of Egypt" (Ex. 3:10).

Moses must have been flabbergasted. In fact, that may have been the sentiment behind his followup question, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh...?" (Ex. 3:11). That is exactly the right question, Moses. You see, Moses was missing the point. God choosing him to lead Israel wasn't about Moses's qualifications—it was precisely about his disqualifications. This is a core lesson in spiritual leadership. God meant to show his power

by using this fugitive shepherd who couldn't speak straight. God would get glory through Moses's weaknesses.

What about you? Could you, like Moses, identify what makes you weak? You should be willing to admit those weaknesses to God, yourself, and others. If you struggle to admit your own weakness, a good practice is to solicit the perspectives of a few trusted counselors. This is a practical form of leadership training. A leader who welcomes criticism not only grows personally but also makes it safe for others to grow.

2. Good leaders rely on God's provision.

The goal of admitting weakness is to receive from God what we need but don't have in ourselves. After all, doesn't the Lord say to each of us, "For my power is made perfect in weakness"? (2 Cor. 12:9).

Moses was weak. He knew it, and God knew it. When Moses first asked, "Who am I?" God responded with "I will be with you. . ." (Ex. 3:12). Moses was looking for the solution within himself, but the task was simply too great. What Moses failed to understand at first was who was on his side. He retorted again, "The people don't know me! Who should I say sent me?" God responded to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex. 3:14).

Moses could do what God was calling him to because God is who he is. Pharaoh was no match for Moses's God. But Moses wasn't yet convinced. Moses responds again with doubt saying, "I am not a good speaker!" and God responded by saying "Who has made man's mouth?" (Ex. 4:11). This interaction provides profound leadership principles for anyone feeling inadequate.

Moses attempted to deflect once more, and this time God became angry because Moses persisted in doubt. God did not, however, withdraw his election of Moses. Instead, he promised yet more provision. "Is there not Aaron, your brother... I know that he can speak well... you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth" (Ex. 4:14-15). This was God's solution for effective communication in leadership—providing a partner to speak where Moses felt he could not.

How does all this apply to you? We know God will provide for us in our various leadership roles because his Word guarantees it. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you..." (2 Cor. 9:8). This is Christian leadership at its best: trusting that because God gave Jesus, he will also graciously give us all things (Rom. 8:32).

So, the next time you are having trouble with the kids or struggling to know what to do with a trouble-making employee, remember what does the Bible say about leadership regarding God's provision. He gives you everything you need to make the right decision. Moses relied on the Lord's provision, and God used him to set Israel free. That same God has promised to use you.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it scary to admit weakness as a leader?
2. Why can it be hard to identify our own weaknesses even as it seems relatively easy to point out other people's weaknesses?
3. How does admitting weakness benefit you and others around you?

4. Do you struggle with doubting that God really has provided and will provide you with everything you need? If so, why do you think that is?

5. How can you grow in relying on God for his provision? Spend some time talking to your mentor about your recent times in God's Word, in prayer, and with his people in your local church.

3

WHAT GOOD LEADERSHIP IS: VISION AND COURAGE

There is hardly a more epic trek in all of Scripture than Exodus 4-14. If you haven't taken me up on my advice to read about Moses in the Bible throughout the couple of books of the Bible, at least read these chapters now. Like God said, Moses returned to Egypt and demanded that the people of Israel be allowed to return to Canaan. Also, like God said, Pharaoh refused. Pharaoh didn't know it at the time, but he was playing the part of a platform. And Egypt? Well, they were the theater. God would use Pharaoh's defiance to show off his surpassing power. Egypt would rise up against God and his people, and God would swallow them up in the sea.

What part did Moses play in this epic? He was to cast vision for Israel and be first in courage to follow through with all God had said. The first thing Moses and Aaron did when they got back to Egypt was gather Israel's elders together and tell them all the Lord had spoken to Moses in the Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 4:28-31). They shared with the people a vision of things which were to come. This is a foundational step in leadership growth. How did the people respond? They believed.

1. Good leaders have a vision.

Now, you and I both know that you and I aren't Moses. We aren't even Aaron. Whatever vision we have for our families, our workplaces, our churches, or any other domain in which we have leadership, it likely doesn't seem as grand as the one God had given Moses. Now, I would argue that the most important vision which you should have for those under your authority is that they would know and love God and be encouraged to do so because of how you use your authority in their lives. If this is your vision for your family, your staff, your church, or your friends, then your vision resembles Moses's more than you may realize. His vision was also to bring those whom he led into a closer relationship with the Lord.

Even still, much of your vision as a leader is. . . well, less objective than Moses's. Unlike Moses's vision for Israel's freedom, which came from God, your vision to take your family on vacation or get more office space for your staff is far less secure or guaranteed. You don't necessarily have God's endorsement for buying this or doing that. You definitely don't have his promise that it'll be successful. Two things remain true:

1. You should vet every vision by God's Word. Make sure that the principles on which you're casting vision and making decisions are in accordance with what does the Bible say about leadership. Ask yourself, "Does your vision put others down or lift them up?" "Can your vision go forward with integrity?" This is the heart of leadership ethics. "If your

vision became a reality, are you ready to give God glory for your success?"

2. Vision is necessary if you hope to lead anything well. If you don't tell people where you're going and why they should want to go with you, you can't expect them to follow. So, if you're leading something, make sure you're casting vision. Paint a vivid picture of where you want your unit to go. Make sure people know that you have their best interests in mind.

What did Moses do next? They went to war with Egypt. Through a series of battles referred to as plagues, Moses courageously believed God and confronted Pharaoh with God's promises for Israel. Moses performed miracles by faith, each of which testified to God's saving commitment to his people.

All this led to a most daunting scene. After finally telling Moses that Israel could go free, Pharaoh changed his mind and led a full-on pursuit of Israel with Egypt's army. Moses described the event in Exodus as follows:

> And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while he the people of Israel were going out defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea. . . When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. – Exodus 14:8-10

Israel was pinned between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's massive army. There appeared to be nowhere to escape. Nowhere to seek refuge. Enslaved to Egypt for 430 years, the people of Israel would now die at the hands of Pharaoh on the shores of the sea. Or so it seemed. . .

Moses was courageous. He knew his God. Unlike when he first encountered God in the burning bush, this time Moses entrusted himself and these people to the Lord. He believed that this scene, as terrifying as it was, would not end in defeat. Springing to action, Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you only have to be silent" (Ex. 14:13-14).

You know how you can mentally recall significant scenes from your life and play them in your mind like a movie? I imagine that every Israelite returned again and again to relive in the recesses of their minds what happened next. We are told:

> Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. . . So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its

> normal course when the morning appeared. . . The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. . . But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea. . . Exodus 24:21-23, 27-29

My grandmother used to say at the climax of an epic story, "Oh, if only I could have been a fly on the wall to have seen that!" Even typing that story out, I feel my heart racing a bit. The story of Moses's courageous faith and God's brilliant rescue of Israel and defeat of Egypt is breathtaking.

But to know what it means for us as leaders, we have to go back to that moment when Israel was pinned, and it looked like they would surely be defeated. The people felt dread and despair because, to them, it seemed like death was inevitable. Moses, on the contrary, was full of faith, so he acted courageously. He believed God and God gave him the victory.

2. It's about Jesus first.

At this point, I feel most pressed to tell you as clearly as I can—you aren't Moses! The main point of this story is not for you to put yourself in his shoes, or sandals, or whatever he wore, only to imagine that if you just believe enough, then your big plan for your fourth quarter at work will be successful and you'll make budget. No, this story, more than anything else, tells us something about God and what he has done for us in Christ. Because of our sin, you and I faced the impossible scenario of receiving God's good wrath in hell for eternity. There was no hope in sight. And

then . . the unthinkable happened. God sent his only Son to take on our sin by dying in our place as a man and perfect sacrifice. If we trust in Jesus, God attributes our sin to him and his righteousness to us, effectively leading us through the sea of our sin and death and delivering us safely to the other side.

So if you don't exactly draw a Christian leadership lesson from the Red Sea crossing, but you learn to appreciate more what Jesus has done for you, then I am content. If you've never trusted in Jesus before, I hope you feel like the Israelites felt trapped between Egypt's armies and the sea. Your only hope is to trust in Jesus. If you do, you will be led safely to the other side. So, Jesus is by far the most important thing you could walk away from this story understanding. This is the ultimate goal of spiritual leadership.

3. Good leaders are courageous.

Nonetheless, a leadership in the Bible principle is available to us in this story. . . though admittedly it's situated significantly far down the ladder of importance. The lesson is this—leadership requires courage. I remember once sailing off the coast of North Carolina by about fifty miles or so. As the sea swallowed the sun, the winds picked up, and the waters got rough. The boat creaked and groaned as though at any moment it would split in two. I am not going to lie, I was scared. Not only was this boat my dream, but my sister was onboard. I thought there was a real possibility we were going to sink.

Thankfully, I had hired a captain to help me sail to our final destination, which was Virginia. His name was John, and he was the definition of an old salt. John was leathered from years of sun and salt. He had seen it all. This wasn't his first rodeo. I remember asking him, "John, are we in trouble?" "We're doing just fine. This boat is made for this kind of ride", he responded. Turns out, John was right. Ten hours later, we put into Beaufort for refuge. The boat and the crew were okay.

I learned some important lessons that night on the ocean. For one thing, I learned by experience how comforting it is to be under a courageous leader who practices servant leadership. John was courageous and, without him, I don't know how we would have made it. Second, courage is contagious. When you see your leader displaying courage, you want to do the same and draw confidence from their example.

If you're leading people today, ask yourself, "Am I displaying courage in my decision making?" If not, you shouldn't be surprised to find out that your people are nervous about where you're taking them. Moses was courageous, and his people followed him. I want to be courageous for my family, my friends, my church, and my colleagues. This is a vital part of your leadership training. How about you?

Discussion Questions:

1. What are examples of leaders you've been under who had vision and courage? How were you helped to follow them because of their vision and courage?

2. Are you ever tempted to use your leadership solely for temporal gains, failing to recognize that with it, God means for you to help others understand him? If so, talk to your mentor about this and pray that the Lord will help you have a bigger vision for the authority he has given you.
3. What vision do you have for those you lead?
4. How are you growing in courage to lead others in the direction you think you all should go?

4:

WHAT GOOD LEADERSHIP IS: OBEDIENCE

When I was a kid, I got in trouble. . . a lot. My mom has sometimes joked that she had to tan my hide daily, irrespective of a known offense, because she was so sure that an offense had been committed. As much as I hate to admit it, she's probably right. I was always doing something I knew I wasn't supposed to do.

My sister, on the other hand, well, she is a totally different story. She never got in trouble! My mom would contest that. Fine. She almost never got in trouble! As an eight, nine, and ten-year-old, it seemed like mom and dad simply favored her. But now as an adult, I know that one of the reasons why she didn't get "it" (if you had loving parents like mine, then you know what "it" is) very often is because she obeyed our parents. She followed their lead. She walked in their ways. She submitted her will to theirs.

1. Good leaders submit to God.

Friends, being a leader may mean that other people have to submit to you. You're their authority, and they really should do what you say. But have you ever stopped to think that you also are under authority? Even you, business owner, who reports to no one but yourself. . . you are under authority. Who's? Well, if no one else's in this world, you're still under

God's authority. You must answer to him for every decision you make. This is a core part of leadership ethics.

What does that mean? It means (and it pains me to write these words) that you should be more like my sister and less like me. You should give yourself to obeying God in all circumstances, even when you don't want to. His Word is better than your ideas. His way will work out better than yours. As a leader, you need to be marked by your radical commitment to obey God. This is the foundation of Christian leadership.

Obedience is undoubtedly one of the things that marked Moses in the Bible. Of course, Moses's obedience wasn't perfect. There was the whole striking the rock when God said to speak to it ordeal (Num. 20:10-13). And yet, Moses sincerely desired to lead Israel in the way of their God. Nowhere is this more evidenced than at Sinai, where Moses received from God his Law on behalf of Israel. Now, the breadth of the Sinai code is far greater than we have time to cover in detail here in this guide. Nonetheless, in Exodus 24, before Moses ascended Sinai to meet with the Lord, he "wrote down all the words of the Lord. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. . . Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." (Ex. 24:4-7).

Moses understood that belonging to God meant obeying God. Israel couldn't be God's people if they constantly refused to follow in his ways. This is a primary lesson in what does the Bible say about leadership. While

under the care of Moses, the need for obedience was kept right under their noses lest they forget it. Israel was to be a people who obeyed God.

My friends, we too are God's people if we are trusting in Christ. We, too, must then seek to obey God in everything we do. Does the emphasis on obedience come as a surprise to you? Maybe you came to faith in Christ after hearing a preacher say, "There is nothing you can do to make yourself right with God. All that is necessary to be made right with God has been provided by Jesus. Trust in Jesus alone for the forgiveness of sins!" Praise the Lord for that preacher. He is spot on. All that is necessary to be saved is to trust in the finished work of Christ.

And yet, Christ's finished work and our receiving it by faith do not nullify the need for obedience. Of course, our obedience isn't the ground of our salvation—the ground is Christ alone. But obedience is the evidence of our salvation. Obedience to God is what signals to the world that we love God and are following him. Isn't this exactly what Jesus said to his disciples on the night he was taken captive? "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). This reflects a true servant heart.

What's all this got to do with leadership? It's got everything to do with it. Regardless of whether your leadership position is formal or informal, with whatever authority you have, you must obey the Lord. This is a pillar of spiritual leadership. And because you're in leadership, you must understand that whether you obey him or not will have ramifications for those under you.

You know who the best kinds of leaders are to follow? The godly ones. When I was coming up, my friends often wanted to spend the night at my house. You know why? Because I had amazing parents. They feared the Lord and tried to obey him as best they could. They believed that by serving us, they were obeying him. They were representing God to us, showing us what God was like. This is the heart of servant leadership.

I could keep telling stories of godly leaders I have had the privilege of being under. My Papaw, my high school basketball coach, my Hebrew professor at college, my current bosses. God has blessed me so much with godly leaders who first seek to obey the Lord in all they do.

Are you a leader like that? One way to know is to ask whether those who follow you like being under your leadership. Sure, their sins could get in the way of their appreciating your best efforts to obey the Lord. Even still, it is the case that when leaders obey the Lord, those under their authority benefit whether they know it or not. This is where leadership principles meet daily life.

God's Word is full of instruction for how you are to live. If you're Christian, you have God's Spirit living within you, helping you to obey all his commands. So, give yourself this day to obeying. Read his Word, attempt to understand what he would have you do, and then go do it. Be honest, generous, loving, just, patient, self-controlled, and kind. Do these things and more in obedience to the Lord and for the good of those under your authority. This involves effective communication in leadership—not just with words, but through an obedient life.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you have an example of a godly leader in your life? If so, tell your mentor how you benefit(ed) from being under their care. What kind of characteristics did you learn from them that you want to implement in your own leading of others.
2. In what ways are you actively trying to obey the Lord in exercising your leadership responsibilities?
3. How is obedience to the Lord in leadership difficult?
4. How can you further obey the Lord in executing your various leadership responsibilities?



CONCLUSION

There is much more we could say about Moses and the part he played in the Bible's story of redemption. There is also much more we could say about biblical leadership. Nonetheless, it's my prayer that this guide has helped you and your mentor/mentee develop a fear of the Lord and grow in your desire to use your leadership responsibilities for his glory. I also hope this guide will have encouraged you to understand that doing good to those you lead is a primary reason the Lord has made you a leader in the first place.



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