



## Leadership - It's in You!

Review the story of Jonah (Jonah Chapters 1 - 4)

**Part of understanding our Identity is to acknowledge that God asks us to Lead.**

Many if asked if they are a leader would say – No!

However, leadership by definition is influence. Each of us have some measure of influence.

Influence requires us to ask the question – who am I influencing? What kind of influence am I bringing to others?

At the very least we are responsible for leading ourselves, so the base line of leadership is born in our acknowledgment that we will lead ourselves well to bring Glory to God.

**Based on this definition everyone of us are called to Lead.**

Leadership is not an easy task. God has commissioned us as leaders to do particular things that are not always easy or comfortable. Sometimes, we are asked by God to take a great step of faith and to exercise boldness just like the prophet Jonah. Unfortunately, we do not always act upon God's commands. Sometimes leaders hesitate or even become reluctant to obey. We must remember that hesitation or reluctance is disobedience.

Have you been reluctant to Lead yourself and others?

Reviewing the book of Jonah, we can find some clear principles that will guide us in our response to God as leaders. By God's grace we can learn from Jonah's mistakes and move from a place of reluctance to a place of obedience.

## **1. Great Courage.**

Sometimes God will speak a word that seems a bit extravagant or even ridiculous. There are occasions where the direction from God will require a bold step of faith and will require you as a leader to exhibit great courage. This is often the case when the Lord has called someone to plant a church or go as a missionary to a new location.

## **2. Willingness to go.**

To be God's leader you must be willing to surrender your selfish ambition and say "Yes, Lord. I will go." Paul shared in Romans 15:20, that it was his aim to preach the gospel where Christ was not known. Leaders must have a willing heart and also a desire to extend the Gospel to places far and wide. This does not require one to become an itinerate evangelist, but it does require that you be willing to go where the Lord directs.

Reluctance to obey God will take us down a path that will have grave consequences. Jonah in verse 3, ran away from the Lord and headed to Tarshish, and then on to Joppa where he attempted to escape God by boarding a cargo ship. Nobody, including leaders, can escape the presence of God. Romans 8:38, 39 explain that nothing can separate us from God and His love.

## **3. Disobedience or Reluctance can cause problems for others.**

As Jonah was resting below deck of the cargo ship, a violent storm that was sent by God threatened the safety and lives of all crew and passengers. Jonah was completely unaware of the trouble he had caused until the captain went to him and woke him.

Leaders, who are running from God, often do not know that their disobedience is having disastrous effects on those around them. Often, the leader's family, congregation and sometimes even the community itself feel these effects. Do not be deceived into thinking your disobedience is only having negative effect on you! Read Jonah 1:4-10.

## **4. Human efforts cannot solve spiritual dilemmas.**

Jonah requested that the crew from the ship throw him overboard into the sea. While the sea grew calmer after Jonah was thrown overboard, the problem had not been addressed. Many times, we focus on treating symptoms rather than going to the root of the problem.

God was not done with Jonah, as Jonah was still operating in rebellion. Being swallowed by a large fish, he was forced to deal with his state of disobedience and to repent. After repenting, Jonah was soon delivered from the fish by being vomited onto dry land. Leadership requires courage, faith, obedience, focus and much more. Sometimes the process of repenting and turning back onto track still requires an uncomfortable deliverance as Jonah experienced.

### **5. Our God is a God of second chances.**

Jonah 3:1 shows us that God still had a plan and desire to use Jonah. After repentance "the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time."

This time Jonah obeyed, Jonah 3:3. Jonah completed the task that God had set before him. In the process of obeying God and proclaiming God's word, a **second chance**, was extended to the entire city of Nineveh. God used a man in his second chance to extend a second chance to Nineveh. As Jonah proclaimed God's word to Nineveh he did so under God's anointing. Anointing brings results!

### **6. Preaching with anointing brings results.**

Leaders are often reluctant to get before God and deal with difficult issues of the heart. Leaders generally have to deal with pride and arrogance on a regular basis. These sinful areas block the anointing, and often ministry is then conducted in man's own strength rather than God's anointing. Yet, when ministering in the anointing of God, incredible results happen. Jonah was able to witness an entire city turning towards God. Even the king of Nineveh got off his throne and humbled himself. Jonah 3:6,7. Then he decreed a fast and that repentance take place among all people. An extravagant response to God yielded a result that not even Jonah expected. Jonah 3:10 "God relented."

### **Challenge to Action:**

- Today you can recommit to following Him whole-heartedly
- Repent of your reluctance, rebellion and disobedience.
- Agree to be a Leader in Gods service.

### **We are Slaves by Choose.**

Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:24-26; John 13:12-17; Revelation 19:5

Many times, throughout the Bible, the writers speak of being "*servants of God*" and "*servants of Jesus Christ*." (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; Titus 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1.) Those whose lives are not under the lordship of Christ are "*slaves to sin*" (Romans 6:17), "*slaves of uncleanness*" (Romans 6:19) and "*slaves of corruption*" (2 Peter 2:19). Now that we belong to Christ we are to be "*slaves to God*" and "*slaves of righteousness*." (Romans 6:16-23.) Ultimately, we *will* serve someone: God, the devil or ourselves. Whose slave, are you? As a minister of the gospel, you are called both to lead and to serve. We lead by serving, and there can be no better model than Jesus Himself.

## **1. Jesus is the model servant-leader.**

He is our example of how to minister, how to serve God and how to serve people. (1 Peter 2:21.) God the Father calls His Son, Jesus Christ, "*My servant . . . in whom My soul delights*" (Isaiah 42:1). As we bring every part of our lives under Christ's lordship and serve as He served, we too can delight the heart of our heavenly Father. (Zephaniah 3:17.)

In his book, *Kingdoms in Conflict*, Chuck Colson writes that Jesus "served others first; He spoke to those to whom no one spoke; He dined with the lowest members of society; He touched the untouchables. He had no throne, no crown, no bevy of servants or armored guards. A borrowed manger and a borrowed tomb framed His earthly life." We are to follow the example of our Lord and serve God by serving people. (Matthew 10:24; 1 Peter 2:21-23.)

Jesus modeled true servant leadership, as he humbled himself to wash the feet of the disciples. In doing so, we are charged with the same task of serving others. (John 13:3-17) This servant leadership is frowned upon by the secular world. Where most clamor for power, money and fame Jesus demonstrated that the servant is the greatest.

## **2. True spiritual leaders are slaves by choice.**

*Involuntary* slavery is one of the worst possible sins against humanity. But knowing who we are in Christ, we can *voluntarily choose* to serve others. We serve willingly because we know the dignity of who we are in Christ. We are sons of God and Christ's ambassadors. (John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 5:20.) God has given us this exalted position. From that secure position, we can choose to serve. Paul often referred to himself as a "bond-slave of Jesus Christ." (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1.) A bond-slave was a slave by choice.

Under the Old Covenant, a Hebrew servant had the option to leave his master after a time of service to him. There were times when the slave would choose to stay and volunteer to freely serve his master for the rest of his life. He did this because he loved his master and had found security in his house. In the same way, out of our love for Christ we freely choose to serve Him and His purposes for the rest of our lives. (Exodus 21:1-6.)

### **3. God is fashioning a new kind of leader for this new season.**

The leadership style that Jesus modeled and ordained for His kingdom is exactly the opposite of the heavy-handed leadership often seen in the world. In Christ's kingdom, it is the meek, not the oppressors, who will inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5.) Under the world's system, people lead by threats and force. In Christ's kingdom, we lead by humbling ourselves and serving. (James 4:6,10.)

The new leader God is fashioning has anointing without arrogance, boldness without brashness, and power without pride. (Philippians 2:5-8.) Servant leaders are found to be full of the fruit of the Spirit and having crucified their fleshly desires in exchange for heavenly desires. God's new kind of leader is often fulfilled in the command "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14-26)

Leaders for this season are not focused on receiving glory or accomplishing tasks on their own. Today leadership requires partnership for Kingdom purposes.

### **4. Servant-leaders lead from the heart.**

Many non-Christians have excellent leadership skills. These skills, though important, do not qualify you for spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership flows from a deep, personal relationship with Christ. Spiritual authority is a result of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. A servant-leader delights in glorifying God and lifting other people. He serves Christ by serving needy people. (Matthew 25:34-40.)

A Christ-honoring leader esteems other more highly than himself. (Philippians 2:3-4.) Like his Lord, he is willing to lay down his life for others. (John 10:11.) Jesus displayed His servant's heart by washing his disciples' feet. (John 13:1-17.) John Maxwell calls this the "Law of connection: Leaders touch the heart before they ask for a hand."

### **5. Servant-leaders humble themselves in child-like trust and obedience.**

Reggie McNeal in his book, *A Work of Heart*, observes, "Instead of studying rulers for leadership insight, [Jesus] suggested that his disciples should learn from children." (Matthew 18:1-4.) Just as children are trusting and obedient, we are to trust God and His ways with us and obey all He speaks to our hearts.

To learn from children, it is evident that we as leaders must humble ourselves and be teachable from people of all walks of life from young to old. It is easy to discard opinions and insight from people whom we do not regard as peers or elders in the faith. However, it is the Lord's desire for us to be looking for ways to learn and change, even from children.

## **6. As bond-slaves of Jesus Christ, we must be good teachers without entering into quarrels.**

Godly leaders are prohibited by Scripture from entering into arguments. They only lead to contention with unbelievers. Rather, we are to faithfully teach God's Word and trust the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth to those who hear us. (2 Timothy 2:23-25.)

We should be y to give an account for testimony of our faith at all times. It is a common misconception that we are to be meek and that being meek is to be weak. Standing firm in our faith and conviction is Biblical. We are to be bold without entering quarrels and arguments. We are to be leaders of conviction and not contention.

## **7. As bond-slaves of Jesus Christ, our highest desire must be to please God.**

We should be friendly and kind to people. This will help bring people to Christ. (John 13:20) At the same time, we cannot be concerned with whether or not we please people. We must be gracious, even with those who oppose us. (Galatians 1:10; 1 Peter 2:21.)

Pleasing people is a common trap for pastors and leaders. Many people of leadership have been called "yes men." This means that you answer people with a yes or a positive remark, because that is what will please the person. In some cases, we say things to please a person and choose not to confront sinful behavior or character flaws. Although we should always be courteous, we cannot forsake God's purposes to keep everyone happy.

The Word of God is convicting and will cause people to be uncomfortable. If we keep our focus upon pleasing God, then He will bring in the harvest!

## **8. As bond-slaves of Jesus Christ we are not to judge other believers.**

They are “someone else’s servant” (Christ’s servant). Since they will answer to Him, not us, we should not judge their service. (Romans 14:4.) We should defer all judgment to the Judgment Seat of Christ, where all our works and the motives behind them will receive their true value. (1 Corinthians 4:2-5.)

Although we are not to judge other believers; we are entrusted as stewards of God’s resources. The treasure, talent and resources God has placed in our hands should be handled with care. Many times, God has entrusted people into our hands. This requires great grace and love. We must honor the Lord by caring for that person, training them and equipping them.

## **9. God takes excellent care of His servants.**

He delights in prospering them. (Psalm 35:27.) Faithful servant-leaders will be rewarded with a crown of glory by the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 5:2-4.) God’s promises and blessings are abundant in supply. As we lead by being a true servant of the Lord then He will take care of all of our needs, will bless us with more than enough, and will reward us with the crown of glory!

## **Conclusion**

- Are you serving your own desires or God and His purposes?
- Have you volunteered to be Christ’s bond-slave for the rest of your life?
- In what specific way can you display servant-leadership today?

Make the commitment to become a growing servant-leader.

*"Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:43-45).*