

# Traits of an Ineffective Leader

## Biblical Leadership – Part 2

*“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.”* Proverbs 19:21

by BJ Rudge, Ph.D.

**W**hether you are in a leadership role or not, this study on biblical principles of leadership is essential for every Christian for growth and maturity.

### Making Excuses

A few years ago I wanted to teach my soccer team the importance of keeping their focus and not becoming complacent, so I brought a jar of 18 marbles to practice. Each marble represented how many games the team had to play in the regular season. I explained that each season they are only given a limited number of marbles (games), and they must decide what to do with each one. Once the marbles were gone they could never get them back.

In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus instructs on how we should live as we await His return. He reminds us that, like the master who provided each of his servants with talents, we are to be faithful with what we have been given. By contrast, verses 24 - 30 focus on the wicked and lazy servant who wasted opportunities and lived a fruitless life.

As in the team parallel given above, in life, we all are given only so many “marbles.” Will we waste our opportunities, making excuses for inaction and failure? These are traits exhibited in bad leadership. Or will we use our opportunities to live fruitful lives for Jesus Christ?

### Impulsive Decisions

Consider Esau who, because he was hungry, sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew (Genesis 25:29-34). As the firstborn son, Esau’s birthright entitled him to several blessings including a double portion of the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). However, Esau rashly gave all this up for a bowl of stew.

Impulsive decisions can have adverse effects, not only for the leader but also for those affected by his/her decisions. For personal study, ponder the disastrous consequences of King Saul’s hasty decision to consult the witch at Endor (1 Samuel 28:7).

### All About Me

Our culture may view bragging and self-praise as a sign of confidence and leadership

ability, but the Bible makes it clear that God opposes the proud (1 Peter 5:5). Boasting in one’s own strength and bragging about one’s feats without acknowledging God is self-glorification – a sure road to eventual defeat and humiliation.

Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, surveyed his empire then made the following boastful claim:

*Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty? (Daniel 4:30).*

Babylon was certainly a place of beauty and majesty under Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. Not only did he construct the hanging gardens (recognized as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world), his capital city was surrounded by a double wall that was 10 miles in length highlighted by the elaborate Ishtar Gate. He expanded the empire (becoming the first Babylonian king to rule over Egypt) and brought Babylon to world dominance. However, in the midst of boasting about his great accomplishments, the following occurred:

*While the word was still in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!” (Daniel 4:31).*

Nebuchadnezzar is a real example of the biblical truth that pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 16:18). The passage in Daniel goes on to tell us that Nebuchadnezzar was driven away from his people and lived like a wild animal until he realized that the Most High is ruler over the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:32, 33). Nebuchadnezzar was restored to power after he recognized that honor and glory belong to God alone (Daniel 4:34-37).

Saddam Hussein ruled over the nation of Iraq and desired to be the next Nebuchadnezzar. He wanted to rebuild Babylon and gain prominence over surrounding nations. This proud and boastful man lived in opulence while his subjects lived in poverty. But Saddam was eventually humbled. He was captured by American forces



Photo by Frank Rudge

– found hiding like an animal in a hole in the ground. Put on trial, he was executed for his crimes against the Iraqi people.

Self-exalting pride leads down a dangerous and destructive path; it hinders one from being an effective leader for God. True humility acknowledges that it is not “all about me” but testifies that everything one has and everything that one accomplishes comes from the Lord.

### Controlled By Fear

In my coaching I have seen many players fall short of their potential. The most common reason is fear: fear of failure; fear of incompetence; fear of disappointing others. As in sports, fear has a crippling effect in leadership. Moses had to face this reality when God told him to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. Moses’ response echoes his fear of inadequacy:

*Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since You have spoken to Your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue (Exodus 3:11; 4:10).*

With God’s help Moses was able to move beyond his fear and lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and through the wilderness to the edge of the land God promised them.

A sad reality is that people who are dominated by fear forfeit opportunities to be used by God. This loss is due not to their own shortcomings, but to their lack of trust in God – not believing He can use them to make a difference in the lives of others. Never forget, friend, the key to being used by God is not based on your *ability*, but on your *availability*.

### Give In to Compromise

King Saul is an example of compromise. In the early chapters of 1 Samuel, we find a man who had been chosen by God as the first king of Israel (1 Samuel 10:24). However, because Saul constantly compromised (1 Samuel 13:7-14; 15:1-23) God eventually rejected him (1 Samuel 15) and no longer answered him (1 Samuel 28:6).

King Ahab is another example of how compromise destroyed a leader. He not only allowed his wicked wife Jezebel to influence him, but he allowed her to lead the people of Israel into idolatry through Baal worship. His life of compromise not only resulted in his death but that of his entire family (1 Kings 22:29-40; 2 Kings 10:17).

While leaders need to be adaptable and sometimes have to make concessions, never compromise your convictions or commitment to the Lord as Saul and Ahab did.

### Dictate to God What They Want

The account of the prophet Jonah is a reminder to not set limitations on God. Jonah wanted God to destroy

the wicked city of Nineveh. Unwilling to obey God’s command to call the city to repentance, Jonah initially ran away (Jonah 1:1-3).

In biblical leadership, God will not put up with those who approach Him with a sense of entitlement or pre-determined expectations of what He must do for them. A friend of mine learned this lesson when he began the process of planting a church. He told me he would not accept anything less than planting a mega-church. He felt that a small church would not be worth his time and energy. After a year of little success, the church he planted failed and he left the ministry. He later learned that while there is nothing wrong with wanting to be successful, this must never take precedence over being faithful. My friend was eventually restored to another pastoral position where he is faithfully serving the Lord.

As leaders (and believers), our ultimate goal should be to seek and yield to God’s will. Dictating what we want, imposing our expectations, or attempting to manipulate God is futile. In the end His plan will succeed:

*Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails (Proverbs 19:21).*

### Complain In Difficulty

Under the leadership of Moses, God had taken the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. He supernaturally provided for their needs during their wilderness journey. As they approached the promised land, Moses selected twelve men – tribal leaders – to scout the land.

They all came back and reported that the land was just as God promised – flowing with milk and honey (Numbers 13:27). However, ten of the spies pronounced they could not conquer the land because it was inhabited by powerful people who lived in fortified cities (Numbers 13:28).

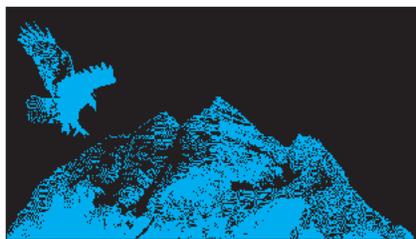
This negative report caused such grumbling and rebellion among the Israelites that God made them wander forty years until all those age twenty and older died in the wilderness. Of the older generation, only Caleb and Joshua (the two spies who remained faithful to God) entered the promised land (Numbers 14:24, 30).

### Reaps Destructive Fruit

It is imperative that we do not become, or follow leaders who habitually use excuses, make impulsive decisions, are “all about me,” or are controlled by fear; who give in to compromise, dictate to God what they want, or grumble and rebel in the face of difficulties.

If we are to be the leaders God has called us to be, then we need to avoid that which is displeasing to the Lord. Instead, let’s embrace the qualities and characteristics that honor the Lord and make *great* leaders for Him.

*In future newsletters we will examine the qualities of successful leaders.* 



# THE STANDARD OF LEADERSHIP

by Bill Rudge

Speaking at a pastor's conference I asked, "How many of you believe in God? How many of you truly believe the Bible is God's Word? How many of you really believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead? Enthusiastic affirmation followed each question.

"Then live like you believe it." I said. "If you really believe in God and Jesus Christ and that the Bible is God's Word, it should affect every aspect of your life. It should influence the way you live, what you say and what you do!" Sadly, however, the words, beliefs and behavior of many believers and Christian leaders today indicate they do not *really* believe what they profess.

Repeatedly falling into immorality and harboring secret sins or addictions not only violate scriptural guidelines but disqualifies one for leadership in the body of Christ. While God forgives as Scripture promises: "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1), every Christian leader needs to review 1 Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:6-9.

God holds leaders to a higher standard. James 3:1 cautions: "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment." If we assume leadership positions then we must also accept the responsibilities that go with them – as well as the consequences if we fail. True repentance and the fruit of genuine repentance should be visible before restoration to leadership in the body of Christ.

The focus and ultimate goal of every Christian leader's life and ministry should be, with the help of God's Spirit, to be conformed to the image (likeness) of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

Live with no excuses and love with no regrets.

Author Unknown

To forgive is to set a prisoner free – and discover that the prisoner was you. Lewis B. Smedes

## Change Your Future

John Wilkes Booth shocked the world by assassinating President Abraham Lincoln. At the time, Booth's brother Edwin was considered one of the greatest actors in America. Believing the family name had been shamed forever, he retired from acting and went into seclusion. But his legacy turned out not to be one of death and disappointment, but of life and influence. A few years before Lincoln's assassination, Edwin was at a train station in Jersey City, New Jersey. He was standing nearby when a young man lost his footing on the platform and almost fell into the path of a moving train. Without hesitation, Edwin rescued the young man by reaching down and pulling him up by his collar. There was a brief exchange of gratitude, but Edwin never dreamed how significant that moment would become. Some years later he received a letter from then President Ulysses Grant thanking him for his heroic deed. Why? Because the young man he had saved was Robert Todd Lincoln, the son of Abraham Lincoln. Edwin Booth took that letter to his grave; a reminder that we may not be able to change our past but we can certainly change our future. And by God's grace you can change yours too!

Excerpted from *Daily Devotionals*, Bob Gass Ministries

## Commended

by Bill Rudge

It is not the one who commends himself or herself, or even the one who is commended by others, but the one who is commended by the Lord (2 Corinthians 10:12, 18). When all is said and done, the only opinion that really matters is the Lord's. He is the One we stand before to give an account of our lives. He is the One who holds our destiny in His hands.

There is an eternal difference between seeking the *praises of men* and seeking the *favor of God*. The first focuses on oneself and temporal recognition while the latter focuses on Jesus and heavenly honor. Both provide *rewards*. Praise from people may last a lifetime but bearing fruit for Christ's Kingdom will last an eternity.

A heart examination can reveal whether we are self-centered, self motivated and self exalting; or whether we are Christ-centered, Christ-motivated and Christ-exalting. After reading the following scripture ponder whether you love praise from people more than praise from God:

**Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in Him [Jesus]. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God (John 12:42, 43).**

**Do not allow the:  
praises of people  
prestige  
popularity  
personal gain  
pursuits of pleasure**

to undermine your commitment to Jesus Christ. If the relationship you *desire* to have with the Lord is not the relationship you are *having* with Him, it is time to:

**reevaluate  
repent  
recommit.**

Instead of seeking recognition from and the praises of people, cultivate an attitude and lifestyle that gain approval from the Lord.

## Not Supernatural to God

by Jim Weikal

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is considered a supernatural event. An event is deemed supernatural when it is caused by “some force beyond our scientific understanding or the laws of nature.”

However, the resurrection of Christ is a supernatural event from a human perspective only. As Christians, we know the ‘force’ mentioned in the dictionary definition above is the God of the Bible.

Think about this for a moment. The resurrection of the Son of God is not supernatural from God’s perspective. This is the world where God exists. This ability, this power to resurrect is as natural to God as breathing air is to us.

For example, take the opening chapter of Genesis where God speaks: “Let there be light.” “Let there be an expanse.” “Let the dry land appear.” “Let Us make man in Our image.” These references record some of the natural acts of God in creation. Natural to Him but supernatural to us.

What an awesome Being is this God, this holy righteous Creator, this merciful compassionate Father who would save us from our sins through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross at Calvary.

This Resurrection Sunday give to God the glory He deserves. Consider the power He exerted to raise your Redeemer, your Sanctifier, your coming King from the dead! Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Jesus came to die to satisfy the infinitely holy demands of His Father so sinful man could be restored to fellowship and enjoy God forever. *Marvin J. Rosenthal*

## Meet Our Staff – Bruce Adams

Bruce Adams has volunteered at the Bill Rudge Ministries for over 35 years helping with radio broadcasts, audio messages, video duplication and web site production. His focus is on putting out the highest quality product for the glory of God.

Bruce also helps with various special projects and maintenance needs. He is a humble man of God who is willing to help in any way possible. He is a great asset to the ministry. His wife, Janet, is very supportive. They have been a witness to the many miracles as this ministry has grown in obedience to God’s will.

### In Bruce’s Words

I have been a volunteer at Bill Rudge Ministries for over 35 years. Working here is like being on a mission field without leaving town and reaching the world without leaving Sharon.

## BILL RUDGE MINISTRIES

P.O. Box 108, Sharon, PA 16146  
• brm7@me.com • 724-983-1223  
• www.billrudge.org



**Jamie Wilson** (in Army Reserves) visited with BJ before participating in a military funeral. Jamie is standing in front of the Sergeant York display at the ministry center. Jamie and BJ were friends in their youth and both participated in various Bill Rudge Ministries’ activities such as Kids Life, Teen Life, Total Health and Fitness, Self-Defense, and Obstacle Course. Pray for Jamie and all the brave men and women who serve in uniform.



Bruce and Janet Adams

## The Race Is Almost Over

Our mission is to tell the world about Jesus Christ and motivate believers and Christian leaders to walk in faithfulness to Him and His Word until He comes.

Many have faithfully supported this ministry to the final days of their lives. Their desire was to be good stewards of the finances and resources God entrusted to them.

Many of our supporters are nearing the finish line of this life. The race is almost over! Together, let’s fulfill God’s purpose of sharing His amazing Gospel with a searching and spiritually hungry world. What an excellent way to be wise stewards who will receive the Lord’s eternal rewards.

When He comes, or we go to be with Him, may we all be found faithful – servants who helped proclaim His Gospel and advance His Kingdom till our final day.

We so appreciate our ministry friends and partners. Remain faithful to the Lord, stand in faith, walk in obedience and patiently persevere until the very end.

Shalom and Maranatha!

*Bill & Karen Rudge*

### In Memory Of

**Ruth & Emerson Frost**

by Bob & Carolyn Mild

**Rose Marie Young**

Would you like to leave a legacy that will bear fruit after you have gone to be with the LORD?

Please consider including Bill Rudge Ministries in your will.