

Qualities of a Successful Leader

Biblical Leadership – Part 3

"Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisors they succeed." Proverbs 15:22

by BJ Rudge, Ph.D.

This month we continue our series on the principles of Biblical leadership. Whether you are in the role of leader or not, this study can contribute to the growth and maturity of every Christian.

Show Humility

Humility may be the key characteristic God looks for in choosing a leader.

But this is the one to whom I will look [esteem]: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word (Isaiah 66:2).

When I choose captains for my soccer team, I emphasize that an attitude of humility is essential if they want to be effective leaders. They must put the needs of their teammates ahead of their own. Their influence on the team is most evident when they embrace "servant leadership."

This is the exact view of leadership we find in the Bible. Contrary to being arrogant and boastful, God calls us to an attitude of humility. Jesus, Himself, provides the greatest example. Although God incarnate, Jesus willingly *humbled* Himself to provide salvation. As the apostle Paul admonishes:

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:5-8).

Jesus' humility is clearly demonstrated as He washes His disciples feet (John 13:12-17). Although the washing of feet was typically carried out by the lowest of

slaves, Jesus performed this action to show His disciples that true leadership, love and strength are demonstrated when we serve others – not the other way around.



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Great leaders lead through humble service:

And Jesus called them [disciples] to Him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).

Communicate Effectively

Nehemiah was given the task of returning to Jerusalem – which had been destroyed by the Babylonians – and rebuilding the walls of the city. After inspecting the walls, he clearly communicated to the Israelites the plans God had laid on his heart for Jerusalem:

Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may

no longer suffer derision." And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work (Nehemiah 2:17, 18).

As with Nehemiah, effective communication begins in laying out the vision. *Vision* states the purpose of *why* we are doing *what* we are doing. As a coach I understand how vital this is to build a soccer program. I know what I want to accomplish (win our region and district), but I need to go deeper and identify the *why*. Doing this allows my coaches and players and myself, to identify who we are as a team and why we exist as a program. The purpose statement for our program:

... is to inspire our athletes towards excellence by fostering an environment that seeks to instill conviction, passion, confidence and authentic relationships among the players.



photo by Bill Rudge

Along with *defined vision, effective communication* requires a leader to set expectations, address conflicts, listen, empathize with others and be honest; saying what others may not want, but need, to hear.

A prominent church in our area suffered through the experience of poor communication. When the congregation was provided *no* information as to why a pastor was fired, the firestorm of rumors ensued, eventually leading to a split. The unfortunate result could have been avoided, or at least minimized, had the leadership provided proper communication.

[On a side note, great leaders respect confidentiality and do not engage in gossip and slander. As it says in Proverbs 20:19: *A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much.*]

Possess Conviction

Daniel embodied this quality. Daniel was one of the Jews taken exile into Babylon following the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Over the passage of time he was elevated in status from captive to ruler of the entire province of Babylon and chief over all the wise men (Daniel 2:48). Later, when the Medes and Persians destroyed Babylon, Daniel was again promoted to a position of prominence (Daniel 6:1-3). God was able to use Daniel in positions of great influence in his pagan world because Daniel was a man of conviction. In fact, he lived such a life of integrity that when the other advisors became jealous, they could not find any charge to bring against him, except in relation to the God he served:

Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. Then these men said, “We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God (Daniel 6:4, 5).

Like Daniel, people of conviction possess *unwavering commitment*. They know *what* they believe and *why* they believe it. They live by what they say and hold themselves accountable when they fail. They display courage as they choose to stand for what they know to be right, even if that means standing alone.

In addition to being unwavering in commitment, being authentic, and displaying courage, leaders of conviction create safeguards in their lives. The importance of this came to mind when I read the inspiring story of Charlotte Brown. In the spring of 2015, she won the bronze medal for pole vault in the state of Texas. While winning a state medal is a great accomplishment, this is not what

caught my attention. Charlotte ran down the over 130 feet runway, carrying a pole about 10 feet in length, and vaulted over 11 feet in the air to win the medal – all while being blind.

Brown had to count her steps and incorporate a beeper to tell her when to plant the pole. Without these safeguards in place she would not have known where she was on the runway, which in turn would have prevented her from successfully making the vault. So, too, if we want to be *leaders of conviction*, we need to create safeguards that provide guidance and direction. The Word of God, prayer, and input from other believers (mentors) are some of the safeguards that can keep us on the right path.

Leaders of conviction are the exception in a day defined by compromise. But when we choose to live faithful and upright lives before God we will find ourselves, just like Daniel, being used by God in powerful ways.

Seek Wise Counsel

There is a Proverb in the Bible that says:

Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisors they succeed (Proverbs 15:22).

I have applied this proverb to my coaching program. When I first took over, I realized that to make the program successful, I needed to surround myself with people who had the same goals and vision and principles I did.

I am grateful for assistant coaches and others who help provide support, counsel, insight and guidance.

Good leaders recognize the importance of having others in their lives to provide them with encouragement and edification. They understand that as “iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). Each of us should have at least one person in our lives who cares enough to encourage us when we are feeling discouraged, gently rebuke us when we need correction and provide godly wisdom as we make decisions.

If we want to be good and effective leaders, we should seek out men and women whose lives have been defined by a consistent walk with God; people, like the apostle Paul, who are examples of what it means to walk in the Lord’s will (Philippians 3:17). Let us ask that God will not only raise up a “Paul” in our lives, but also that we can be a “Paul” in the life of someone else! As the apostle Paul declared to the believers at Philippi:

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:9).

Next month we will conclude this series on Biblical Leadership as we will examine additional qualities of successful leaders.

Seek out women and men whose lives have been defined by a consistent walk with God.

True Greatness

by Bill Rudge

Athletes and soldiers train hard and give their all to hear their coaches and commanders commend them. Their sacrifices and tremendous efforts result in amazing feats that reflect years of discipline and commitment.

But there is greater acclaim than that given by coaches, fans and superior officers – God’s commendation.

Shortly before leading the Israelites into the Promised Land the Lord made a brief, but profound, tribute to Moses with these simple words to Joshua – “Moses My servant is dead” (Joshua 1:2). Ponder that for a moment. The Lord personally recognized Moses as *His* servant. What a great honor.

The ultimate goal of my life – that for which I sacrifice, discipline myself and persevere – is to hear the Lord some day say these six words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Inspire Your Generation...

by Bill Rudge

Following in Moses’ footprints after his death, Joshua’s example of dedication to the Lord inspired his generation. Joshua’s influence was not only felt during his lifetime, but for years after his death.

This profound statement is recorded in Joshua 24:31:

Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua

May our example and the testimony we bear motivate our children and grandchildren to live for the Lord all the days of our lives and their lives. And may they, in turn, influence their children and grandchildren to also serve the Lord after we are gone.

God’s Hall of Fame

by Bill Rudge

As a teenager I wanted to be accepted by a group of older guys, so I was motivated to lift weights and train in the martial arts until I achieved that goal. However, the desire to be accepted by these older guys (which I accomplished) was replaced when I became a Christian at age 18, with a passion to be inducted into God’s Hall of Fame.

The aim of my life since then has been to, hopefully, be included one day in what Hebrews chapter 11 refers to as “heroes of the faith.” What an eternal honor that would be – well worth any sacrifice I may have to make to attain it!

Behind the Scenes

by Jim Weikal

Have you ever watched a sports event as the sideline camera scans the players on the bench, and this big burly athlete mouths to the camera, “Hi, mom”? Sometimes the camera turns to the player’s mother sitting in the stands, and she has a wide tooth-filled smile on her face. When this happens, I wonder how much of a sacrifice this woman made so her son could go to college and end up in the pros.

A certain woman in the Old Testament was also behind the success of her son, Samuel. This humble woman was Hannah (1 Samuel 1 and 2) who worked faithfully and lovingly behind the scenes as a prayer intercessor. Such a mother today stands in a long line of Godly women who gave of themselves to the Lord and their families.

“The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands” (Proverbs 14:1).

May God bless godly mothers who are building godly homes and families!

It’s Your Move, Daughter...Son

I gave you life
but I cannot live it for you.

I can teach you things
but I cannot make you learn.

I can give you directions
but I cannot always be there to lead you.

I can take you to church
but I cannot make you believe.

I can teach you right from wrong
but I can’t always decide for you.

I can advise you about friends
but I cannot choose them for you.

I can teach you about sex
but I cannot keep you pure.

I can tell you about alcohol
but I can’t say NO for you.

I can warn you about drugs
but I can’t prevent you from using them.

I can pray for you.
but I cannot make you walk with God.

I can teach you about Jesus
but I cannot make HIM your Savior.

I can teach you to OBEY
but I cannot make Jesus Your Lord.

I can tell you how to live
but I cannot give you Eternal Life.

Author Unknown



Dave James of DJ's Greenhouse (which has faithfully supported BRM for many years) dropped by the ministry center to share his amazing life story with Bill Rudge. Dave is standing behind Ginny Marsteller and Lois Greathouse (sisters) as they work on receipts and newsletters.

Words of Wisdom

Contributed by Dave James

Dad is the head of the house, but Mom is the heart of the home.

Faults are thick when love is thin.

To improve or be a success in anything – you must keep one room empty in your house... “the room for improvement.”

The door to your heart can only be opened from inside.

We may give without loving, but we cannot love without giving.

The devil has many tools, but a lie is the handle that fits all.

Not enough crutches in the world for all the lame excuses.

What you are is God's gift to you. What you become is your gift to God.

Life is full of joys and sorrows – most of your own making.

Your reputation is what people say about you... your character is what God and your spouse know about you.

Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday.

Yesterday is history – tomorrow is a mystery – today is a gift – that is why it's called the present.

In Memory Of

Maxine Chizmar

by Sam & Kathy Collovecchio

Jason Andrew Dunder

by Mike & Ruthann Dunder

Raymond Ischo

by Ruth Ischo

Sue James

Frank & Anna Krotenak

by Alex Krotenak

Frank Rudge

John Wilson

by Rich & Sandy Wolfgang

Rose Young

by Rich & Sandy Wolfgang

Special Thanks to DJ's Greenhouse

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1004 East Lake Road

Transfer, Pa.

724-962-1230

Visit www.djsgreenhouse.com for information on spring and summer events at DJ's Greenhouse.

Sponsor Needed for Radio Broadcasts into Middle East

Joe Brashier of Voice of Hope recently called Bill to offer him a great ministry opportunity on three powerful radio stations. Joe wants to air *Living Truth for Today with Bill Rudge* on a brand new station in Israel that covers the Middle East and two other stations that cover almost the entire continent of Africa. With these three stations we can proclaim the Gospel to 90% of the Muslim controlled areas.

Bill has worked with Joe Brashier on several other international stations and Joe felt Bill's messages and format were excellent for the Middle East and Africa.

The greatly reduced cost to BRM for a weekly broadcast on all three of these stations is only \$200 per month. Please let us know if you can help with this sponsorship.

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Our Board of Directors, Board of Reference, thirty-plus staff and volunteers, and hundreds of supporters and prayer intercessors are the backbone and heart of this ministry.

BRM is a multi-faceted ministry touching the lives of young people and adults throughout the United States and around the world. We minister through –

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- Leadership training
- Chaplain ministry and crisis intervention
- Street ministry and witness encounters
- Prayer ministry and correspondence

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