

## HUMILITY: *The Key to Godly Leadership*

*Got Hope? Messages from 1 Peter*

April 24 & 25, 2010 • 1 Peter 5

### Intro:

I read a definition of leadership. It said, *Leadership is getting people to do what they don't want to do.* I thought, *well, that's one way to look at it, but the emphasis seems to be wrong.* I'd like the definition better if it used the word *influence*, or if it said we *motivate* and *mobilize* others toward a goal. As is, it is too easily misunderstood. To *get* someone do something sounds like you're *making* them, it sounds *coercive* and *manipulative*. Leadership *helps* people to accomplish what they couldn't otherwise do. Which *may be* what they didn't originally want to do, but what is *always* a higher good.

The Biblical pattern of leadership is not *top-down control*, pressuring others to conform. It emphasizes servanthood. It sets an example that *lifts others up*; it doesn't just lay down the law, putting people in their place. Biblical leadership is *leading with your life*, not merely *the authority of your position*.

Jesus said, *Matt. 20:25-28 - You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* Jesus didn't just talk about humble leadership; he modeled it to the nth degree. Many management gurus are now recognizing that *servant leadership is not only Christlike, it also works*: Ken Blanchard, bestselling author of *The One Minute Manager*: “After studying both the theory and practice of leadership for more than 35 years, I have found that *Jesus is the greatest leadership role model of all time.*” Gary Collins, in his groundbreaking masterpiece, *Built to Last*, concluded that a *key quality* shared by the most successful CEO's is *humility!* We've been studying 1 Peter and today

we come to the last chapter. It has a lot to say about being a humble leader.

**1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:** He's not just addressing *older* people, but recognized leaders. There is an authority structure in the church. Phil 1:1 mentions two offices: *deacons* and *overseers, equated with elders* in vs 2 and Acts 20. The word *elder* emphasizes their maturity, and *overseer* emphasizes their responsibility. *Deacon* emphasizes service. 1 Tim. 3 & Titus 1 list qualifications for elders and deacons. Acts 6 explains *the need that led to the formation of 2 groups*.

The fact that Peter identified himself as an elder must have been an encouragement - *I'm one of you!* And his reminder about the sufferings of Christ was also an encouragement; remember that they were about to experience persecution. Here are two leadership lessons already: *identify with the people you lead and point them to Christ!* **T** - Now, here's what he calls them to do:

**2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;** Elders are to shepherd. Notice that their service is not to be as a begrudging obligation, but willing and eager. When someone does something for you because they have to or for the money, it doesn't mean much, does it? We are more influenced by the people who are not in it only for what they can get out of it, but for what they can give. **T** - Now he tells us something about *how* we lead. This echoes what we hear in Christ's teaching. **3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.** Lead; don't drive. You drive cattle but lead sheep. People are often compared to sheep, not to cows. Ps 23 doesn't say, *The Lord is my wrangler. I shall not rest. He drives me through the dust all day. He brands my hide.*

He makes me into burgers. Surely catsup and pickles will crown me after the all the days of my life. No, we're not cattle and he's not a cowboy. He calls us sheep and he's the shepherd. *Ps 100:3 We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.* He asks us to emulate this same style of loving leadership.

**4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.** Leaders report to the ultimate leader and when he comes back, it will be payday. Leadership can be tough, even thankless, but it is all for when the Master says, *Well done....*

T - The challenge that comes from these first 4 verses is that we must • **Redefine leadership according to the truth about what leaders are to be and do.** Biblical leaders are *shepherds* and our responsibility is to *shepherd the flock*. That means we're to lead, feed, and protect! (MM.) Remember the Easter message on John 21? This is just what Jesus told Peter to do: *care for his sheep*. Our main method is *leading by example*. *Your life is your most valuable tool in influencing others*. *Pushing people around isn't biblical leadership and neither is bullying or manipulation*. Loving leadership makes *followership* much easier. And it works in parenting as well. A dad can't be *only a friend* to his kids but neither should he be a dictator. And elders are to be *overseers*, not *overlords*.

Like Peter, Paul unapologetically led with his life.

*Phil. 3:17 - Join with others in following my example. 2 Thes 3:7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example.*

Leaders are to set an example that can be emulated. When leaders only look out for themselves, lording it over others, that isn't pleasing to God. *Ezek 34:2 - Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.* That's not what we want to hear when we give an account. So we need to redefine leadership and lead God's way, not as authoritarian tyrants, but models and mentors.

Leadership by example works! *1 Thes 1:5 ... You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord... 7 And so you became a model to all the believers.... The baton passed!* It was the same way with Timothy. Paul told him to *follow his lead* and in turn to *set an example*. And *he did*. This can happen as we set an example for our kids - they can live as examples for others!

**5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."** *Young men* here contrasts with elders and essentially pertains to everyone else. There is a responsibility to submit to those in authority over us.

*Heb 13:7 - Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 17 - Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.* A common problem with being young is the tendency to believe that *only you* know what is best and the person over you is an idiot. *Remember feeling that way on your first job? The key character quality for Christian leadership is humility.*

**6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.** Who do you hope will lift you up? *Your adoring fans?* No. God is the one who lifts us. When? In due time. In his time. Leave your status to him. He's in charge of your image. Don't protect or promote yourself. A leader full of himself is terribly empty. Jesus said, *Luke 18: 14 - everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.* The lesson here is to

• **Reassess who you are before God and others; adopt a realistic view of yourself.** *Rom. 12:3 - Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought.* Remember that *pride was the original sin*: Lucifer *lifted* himself up but was *cast down*. *Clothe yourself with humility* like Jesus did in John 13 - he clothed himself with a towel. *John 13:15 - I have*

*set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.* To follow Christ's example as a leader is to serve others. The more we see him for who he is, the more we see ourselves for who we are. It's like the thief on the cross next to Jesus: being close to Jesus gave this man a clear view of himself. He saw who he was and who he wasn't. As we get close to Jesus, this is our experience. The most vehement enemies of Jesus were the self-righteous. The outcast sinners had no illusions of their own righteousness. Religious people are probably those who most need to *reassess who we are before God and others and adopt a realistic view of ourselves.*

**7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.**

*Anxiety translates a word that lit means being pulled apart. Cast - a decisive act. Make a choice. Jesus said Mt 6:34 - do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. We were just talking about having an accurate view of yourself. This reminds us how important it is to have an accurate view of God. The challenge for us here is to trust the shepherd.*

• **Rely on God as the one who is over you, who cares for you, and will reward you.** Our lives are in his hands. We are invited to lay down our burdens. We can trust in God with our every worry. *Vs 2 - It is God's church: The big problem that is dominating your thinking is really His problem. Why stew over it? God is in control on the throne.*

We don't have to look out for ourselves because God is. It is all in his hands, even our glory, so we shouldn't grasp for it ourselves. I think a lot of leaders push people around because they are insecure. For others, their insecurity turns them into people pleasers. But God is the one we serve and he is the one who deals out the rewards. Several times this has been mentioned: *1 share in the glory to be revealed. 4 you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. 6 God will lift you up in due time. 10 God called you to his eternal glory in Christ.* We can rely on God to eventually reward us, we

don't have to try to orchestrate it on our own down here. God alone is our source of approval. Fred Smith - *"A shepherd does not expect... blessing or reward to come from the sheep. He expects it to come from the owner of the sheep. Sheep are the work, not the wage. If we don't watch ourselves, we start manipulating things to get strokes from the sheep. As leaders, we need to get our ultimate strokes from God."* People say, *It must be hard to keep all those people happy.* That's not my job. If I aimed at that, I've never hit it. I've only got one person to please - God. And when I do that, some people will understand and appreciate it, but I'll leave that up to God. Let's rely on him as the one over us who cares for us and will reward us.

**8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

Don't be caught off guard. Lions prey on the ones who are not alert and all alone. Some leaders act like they are above accountability. Different from and above others. Satan will tell you to *take matters into your own hands, and make it all about you, insinuating that God doesn't matter and doesn't care.*

**9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.** *You're not the only one. Why does he say this? There is comfort in knowing you're not going through this alone. We're in this together.*

**10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.** When the trials and temptations are the worst, you'll find that God is with you. You are in his hands. When you think of this, it gets to you. Praise God! **11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.** The central point here is to

• **Resist your adversary, being vigilant and strong, not complacent and vulnerable.** In a similar context that

pertains to humility, **James 4:7** says, *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* <sup>8</sup> *Come near to God and he will come near to you.*

**T** - Let's finish off the chapter and conclude. This next verse declares the purpose of the letter. **12** *With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.* AKA: Silvanus was the amanuensis. Peter dictated this. **13** *She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.* Probably referring to the church in Rome. Mark is John Mark, who wrote the gospel account. **14** *Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.* Ends as it began, with peace.

**Concl:** We know the enemy's objective. He wants us to have an inaccurate view of ourselves and of God. He's still whispering that God doesn't have ultimate authority and that we really deserve to be in charge. And when we start to slip, we end up with an inaccurate view of leadership. We rule as tyrants rather than serving with humility. But Jesus said, it's not to be that way with us. We've read today that we are to serve by setting an example. We lead with our lives. So, how's your life? How's the example you're setting?

### **Unused ideas and verses (More Meat):**

**2** How many things do you do because you have to? If the ratio is high, you'll burn out. You'll lose passion.

Notice that he uses two contrasts.

Not because you have to. It is not to obligatory. Not for human reward, but for the end.

*not greedy* - Don't serve just to make a buck: 1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7,11.

**4** Example: There is nothing as important as setting an example as a follower of Christ if you want to successfully pass the baton of your faith to the next generation.

Acts 20:28 *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock... of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.* If you don't, you won't have anything to offer!

The example passes on. **2 Tim 2:2** And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. This can happen as we set an example for our kids. They will be examples for others: **1 Tim. 4:12** - Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

Phil 4:9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice.

**6** Why exercise humility? Two reasons. It works and God is opposed to the proud!

Luke 17:7-10

Rom 12:10 - *Honor one another above yourselves*

James 4:1-6

**7** God is not indifferent to any of our sufferings, so we can lay down our burdens and joyfully praise him.

Like casting a rod. Ps 55:22 - *cast your cares on the Lord.*

**8** Devil is *diabolos* - the slanderer. He says, *you can't do it.*

**9** Resisting involves standing strong, with protective armor (Eph 6:10-18).

He deceives 2 Cor 11:3,13.

Don't get picked off the back of the heard.

Remember that it was pride that made him fall. Is 14:12-15.)

**10** steadfast: Matt 7:24. Restore: make complete. Strength - given power to act. Establish - put you on a firm foundation.

2 Cor 4:17 - *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

#### **Other:**

Have an accurate view of leadership, of yourself, of God, and of your adversary.

For an example to be good, it must be of both outstanding quality and consistency. It must also be visible (seen) or no one can follow it.

Servant leadership is characterized by humility. A servant leader knows he is part of a team and respect others.

**2 Thes 3:9** We did what we did ...in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.

Examine the four words in verse 10 which describe what God will do to us. What comfort do you find in these words? How can each of them enhance your ability to bear up under adversity?

There is an authority structure, but we're not to be tyrants.

To influence is to lead. And to lead is to influence! That means that leadership principles apply to parenting.

Servant leadership doesn't get high on the status of being in charge.

Being a good example involves being a servant, which is not easy. To serve is to meet the needs of others and not your own. Putting others before yourself has a cost to it, but that is the attitude of Christ. Following Jesus in this way requires laying down your life.

### **Church leadership:**

#### **The Job Titles**

The word in 1 Timothy 3:1, "overseer," is "episkopos" and can also be translated "bishop." This title emphasizes the function of an elder. The overseer is to watch over the congregation, caring for the people and managing their spiritual welfare. The word, "superintendent" describes this function in modern terminology.

In the parallel passage (Titus 1:5), these officers are called "elders," which is "presbuteroi." This is the most common designation for those in this office. It emphasizes maturity and dignity.

"Pastor" is another synonym for those occupying this position. In Acts 20:28 overseers are instructed to be on guard for the flock by shepherding them. This admonition is addressed to elders ("presbuteroi" in Acts 20:17). This passage equates the words elder, overseer and pastor. 1 Peter 5:1,2 is another place in which these terms are used synonymously. There we read that elders are to shepherd (the work of a pastor) and exercise oversight (the work of an overseer). The word "pastor" is actually only used one time (Eph. 4:11). The Greek term is usually translated "shepherd."

#### **The Job Description**

The biblical material on the function of an elder might be classified under the headings: Lead, Feed and Protect. This breakdown only works if we understand the breadth of what is involved in the concept of servant leadership. If another heading was added to these three we would want to classify some of the instructions under the title "Give Care," but it is best to recognize the way in which pastoral care falls under the biblical concept of leadership.

**Lead** (the flock of God) - managing the affairs of the church (1 Tim. 3:5). This involves ruling, literally "standing before" the people (1 Tim. 5:17). Leading involves keeping careful watch over the lives of the flock (Heb. 13:17). Exercising general oversight with eagerness (1 Pet. 5:2) also falls under this rubric.

**Feed** - providing exhortation in sound doctrine (Titus 1:9) and a Godly example (1 Pet. 5:3; Heb. 13:7).

**Protect** - guarding against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31) and refuting those who contradict true doctrine (2 Tim. 2:24-26).