

Leadership is the key to the success of any people. You show me your leader and I will show you your future. In any system of authority, the people, with even the best of efforts, cannot rise above the limitation of leadership, nor can they thrive without leadership supporting them in those efforts.

This is true at every level. It is true of nations, businesses, local churches, and families. The future of any group of people, united under authority, is built on the shoulders of the one or ones who lead them.

Sadly, we have all seen the effects of poor leadership. Have you ever had a bad boss? Yeah, I thought so. We won't go any further with that, except to remind you that being under "bad boss's" leadership was frustrating and rendered everyone involved well below their potential.

What does poor leadership look like? Maybe, before we can appreciate great leadership, we should remind ourselves of its opposite. [Photo]. A picture might be worth a thousand words.

I like this photo, and the similar one that will follow it, because this represents any organization of people quite well, be it nation, business, church or home. There is a LEADER. There are PEOPLE. WORK must be done. And all of this is moving to some GOAL that lies ahead.

From a casual observation, at least 3 qualities of poor leadership jump off the screen:

- 1) Poor leaders sit above the people
 - a. He is better, smarter and more important. He needs everyone to see that, so he sits apart and above the people who work "under" him. The relationship is not personal. It is distant. He does not need to know the people. They need to know who he is. He's the boss!
- 2) Poor leaders are above hard work
 - a. Do you notice that this guy, tucked behind his desk, is literally above the work? This man's value is in getting others to do the work for him. He barks, he points, he commands, after all, he has authority! If they struggle, he replaces them. They are to carry the load for him.
- 3) Poor leaders are noisy followers
 - a. You can tell this guy is noisy, but he is actually just a follower. He blazes no trails. He prepares nothing for his people. He is behind them. He is waiting to follow on an easy trail cleared by those whom he commands. This is like dad on the couch: "go mow the lawn!"

History, on a global scale, is chocked full of leaders like this. They are leaders: they have authority and people who submit to that authority. But they are lousy ones. But at times, on all too rare occasions, great leaders rise for the sake of nations, or businesses, or more importantly, local churches and homes!

And this is what the great leader looks like. [Photo]. Note, what he has in common with the other guy. **First**, he is the authority. **Second**, he has people under his command. **Third**, there is work to be done. **Fourth**, the group has some goal to which they strive. This however, is where similarity ends.

- 1) Great leaders march with the people
 - a. All of them, leader and followers, are in this together. There is a relationship, a fellowship for a common goal. He leads through earning their respect, not demanding it. This relationship is personal. They talk, they share, they are literally connected to their goal!
- 2) Great leaders are involved in the work
 - a. The people aren't there to do the work for him. They are there to help him do the work. He needs them to do the most amount of good to the goal. He carries his part and invites them to carry theirs. There is pointing with one hand, but the other hand is on the rope!
- 3) Great leaders are vocal trail blazers
 - a. He is shouting out commands, but not a single thing that he isn't willing to do himself. In fact, not a thing that he is not actually doing himself! If there is an obstacle, he is the first to face it. He doesn't wait for them to clear it, he clears it for them to help them excel.

Again, history is filled with leaders of nations who resemble our “bad boss.” One of three outcomes inevitably come to fruition: 1) He is taken out! 2) The system is replaced. 3) The people are miserable.

Most nations ruled like this have failed on this earth, while those that have not are filled with people who’d give anything not to be there. But what would you say about a Leader who built a nation by only God’s grace and His own love. A leader who started a nation that has amassed millions of people, spread all over the earth, and has sustained its strength and peace and purpose for 2,000 years?

What a leader He must be? HE IS.

Those who choose to serve under Him never want to see Him replaced, and He will never be replaced. They don’t want the system replaced, but find peace in the fact that it will stand all tests of time. And the people are not miserable or oppressed, but inspired and motivated to greater effort!

Jesus: The Leader of His Church

It is obvious to say, but He is the greatest, most powerful, loving leader in the history of the world. And it is also obvious to say that we could study him for hours upon hours as to His glorious authority. But let’s consider some of what makes Him a great leader along the lines of our photo above. We will look at the three points, starting with the last and working backwards.

-- Jesus Went First

- b. Devote your life to doing God’s Will – He went first – (**John 4:31-35; John 8:28-29**).
- c. Submit to the plan of God through baptism – He went first – (**Matthew 3:13-17**).
- d. Give yourself to the betterment of God’s people – He went first – (**I John 3:15-18; John 13**).
- e. Face death with faith and complete trust in God – He went first – (**Luke 23:42-46**).

There is nothing you are asked to do, no attitude to possess, no life to live for God, that Jesus has not led the way home by doing first, and sharing with you, to inspire you to follow!

-- Jesus is Still Working

So, Jesus did much for me, but am I now to carry the rest from here? Does He look at me from heaven and say, “it is your turn?” NO. He is still working to help me reach the goal!

- a. This is not what He was and did, but IS and DOES (**Hebrews 2:17-18**).
- b. He supports me with mercy and grace in times of need (**Hebrews 4:14-16**).
- c. He keeps me from the devil’s touch (**I John 5:18-19**).

-- Jesus is “With You Always”

He is not a distant, impersonal leader, who happens to have gone first and continue to help you carry the load. As He told the 11, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

- a. Even now, His relationship with His people is personal – **John 10:14-16** – He is the King, but He is a King who doesn’t stand above or behind, but with us, He knows us.
- b. His people are not slaves, but friends – **John 15:12-15** – Yes, we obey Him, but He hides nothing from us, nor His love for us, nor His daily desire for our wellbeing.
- c. He will never desert you. You can always count on Him – **Hebrews 7:23-28**.

Conclusion: What are we supposed to do with this information?

- 1) Live with daily gratitude of His greatness! **Philippians 4:4-5** – “*The Lord is near.*”
 - a. If you aren’t in His body, get in, and praise His name all the way.
 - b. If you are in His body, tell Him how thankful you are and reflect on it daily.
- 2) Labor in a manor worthy of His greatness! **Ephesians 3:19-21; 4:1-6**
 - a. **Matthew 16:18,24; Matthew 28:18-20** – His people confess, follow and obey Him!
- 3) Lead others in the footsteps of the Master. Nation, Business, but most importantly Church and Home! Men, be like Jesus. **Ephesians 5:25** – “as Christ ...” Lead, as Christ. Lives will change!

In all of these areas, and every day: Follow Him. Look to Him. Work for Him. Lead like Him. Follow Him.