

The Journey to Biblical Manhood

Challenge 11: Leadership

Session 1: What We Learn About Leadership From Jesus

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Well, good morning, men. Please turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter nine verse 33. As we get going this morning, let's do a shout out. We have a group. We want to welcome this morning New Life Men. They are a group of men. They meet on Saturdays at 8:00 AM at their church. "We are struggling men who desire to grow in Christ and help each other along our journey." They're led by Douglas Finn. Part of New Life Christian Church in Hudson, New Hampshire. I think this might be the first shout out we've done in New Hampshire. In any event, I wonder if you would join me in giving a warm and a rousing welcome to New Life Men here. One, two, three, hoorah. Welcome, guys. We're so honored and pleased to have you with us.

We are in this series, The Journey to Biblical Manhood. We're beginning the 11th challenge this morning on leadership. The title, well, the faith and life objectives are on your table. We'll be looking at basically the leadership principles from a Biblical perspective this morning, the headpiece. You can look at the other faith and life objectives. The message today is titled What We Learn About Leadership from Jesus. Napoleon said, "Give me the lucky generals." In other words, when he looked at all of his generals, some of them had really outstanding results and others looked on paper like they ought to be really outstanding generals didn't necessarily do so well. There is something going on beyond what was on the surface of things. We're going to look at things like that in this series.

There is a book called Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership. I have the third edition. The fourth edition is out but it costs 100 bucks. I don't know. I'm happy with my third edition. It's basically these guys, and this goes back for decades they've been doing this book, and they have read the entire literature on leadership, every study that's ever been done on leadership. Of course, the study of leadership formally is only about 100 years old anyway. All of that is in here. There's just a little something in here I thought, right at the beginning, that might be interesting to read because one of the most important things that, I'm not going to be able to communicate anything to you about leadership this morning until you are able to agree with this statement that you are a leader. Now, my experience is that most men do not feel comfortable being called a leader. I'm going to show you that you are in fact a leader. I'm going to give you permission to consider yourself a leader this morning, but I'm going to have to persuade you that you are one. First, in other words, I'm going to have to lead you agree that you are a leader.

YOU ARE A LEADER

I want to start by reading something from this book because I think it will be helpful. "Despite the skepticism about the reality and importance of leadership, all social and political movements require leaders to begin them." They cover all different kinds of leadership. Don't get stuck on the idea of social and political movements. "A leaderless movement is naturally out of the question. This does not mean that formal institutionalized leadership is required. In fact, no leader in an institutional form appeared in numerous peasant revolts from the 16th to the 19th century in southern Germany. The same was true for journeyman's strikes during the 18th century." Then he goes on to talk about many other things like that. Then he goes on to say, "Indeed, leadership is often regarded as the single most critical factor in the success or failure of institutions." Actually, there's so many things in here just in the first few pages that are so intriguing and interesting.

The starting point is for us is that our leader is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, if you are a disciple of his, makes you his leader. You are a leader if you are a disciple of Jesus. Now, you might say, "Well, you know, my gift is service." If your gift is service, that's wonderful but that doesn't mean that you're not a leader. To say that you're not a leader would be to say that like someone with the gift of evangelism, let's just say somebody has the gift of evangelism and you don't have the gift of evangelism, it would be like to say, "Well, I have no responsibility to evangelize because I don't have the gift of evangelism." You may not have the gift. There is a spiritual gift of leadership. Romans chapter 12 verse eight. There is a spiritual gift of leadership. Some of you might have that gift of leadership. By the way, how many of you, just raise your hands, do have the gift of leadership? Raise your hands. Wow. Gosh. That's incredible. Many of you do. This, by the way, doesn't surprise me. This has always been a leadership Bible study anyway. Even if you don't have the gift of leadership, you do have the responsibility of leadership in the same way that if you don't have the gift of evangelism, you still have the responsibility of evangelism.

With that said, those of you who do not have the gift of leadership, how many of you understand that you have and accept that you have the responsibility of leadership? Would you raise your hands? All right. You understand that you are a leader, but yet even so, many men do not find it comfortable when people refer to them as leaders. I know this is true because this is my own personal experience. I have always been a leader. I have always actually, looking back on it, I've always been a leader of leaders, but you may find it interesting that I never felt comfortable being referred to as a leader until I was way into my 40s. I was a leader in high school. I was a leader in the army. I was a leader in college. I've been a leader in business. I've been a leader in the community. I've been a leader in church. I've been a leader in my businesses. I've been a leader here. I've been a leader everywhere I've ever been, but it was like when people would compliment me or something or refer to me as a leader, I use to always feel so uncomfortable with that. It was a good 25 years into my adult life til one day I just said, "You know, maybe I am. Maybe I actually am a leader."

One of the things that I want to make very sure is that if you have any discomfort being thought of as a leader, that you will walk out of here today understanding that it doesn't make any difference if you, even if you don't have anybody following you, I'm going to show you how you still are a leader if you are ... Well, you're a leader, even if you're not a disciple of Jesus Christ, you're a human being, because it's just so important to the whole structure of what it means to be a human being. To be a leader, in the dictionary, to lead means to show the way. To lead means to influence. I think that might be the word. Some of you are John Maxwell fans. I think that he refers to leadership as influence. That's one of the dictionary definitions. Or it means to guide. To lead is to guide. It's to influence. It's to show the way. Let me give you some examples.

Leadership is just so fundamental and so organic to the human experience that you can easily overlook some of these things. Number one, a father who teaches his children right from wrong. That's showing the way. That's leadership. If you are a parent, you are, inherently by nature, you are a leader. A leader, letting someone pull into the main traffic off of a side road. If you do that, you are a leader because you are showing the way. You are influencing. There are other people around you who are observing your example and so forth and say, "Oh, look what that guy just did. He let somebody pull into the traffic. Maybe that's something I should do." A way of changing the behavior of others. See how it's everywhere. Then, doing your work with excellence. To do your work with excellence, to set that example, to show the way, another way that you can be a leader. Even if you don't have anybody working for you, if you do your work with excellence, you are influencing other people.

As a disciple, the exercise of your spiritual gifts is a way you can be a leader. To pray for people. When you invite the Holy Spirit of God to invade the circumstances of another person, you're asking the Holy Spirit to influence, you're asking to influence, to change the way, to guide that person. Prayer is a form of leadership. See how I'm trying to airbrush out the hard lines of defining leadership as something formal and structured? To share your faith with another person. When you share your faith with another person, what are you doing? You're leading that person. We actually use the words, "We led somebody to Jesus," or, "We tried to lead somebody to Christ." When we share our faith, we're seeking to influence and that's an act of leadership. To bring a guest here on Friday morning is an act of leadership because you're showing them the way or seeking to show them the way.

When you meet with a man for lunch who is struggling and listen to his story and ask him questions, you don't even have to say anything, but you just ask him questions and those questions, though, are coming out of the wisdom that God has given you and your experience. Those questions guide the conversation. In other words, show him the way. Do you see how that's an act of leadership? Or it could be more formal. It could be that you become an elder or a deacon and go through some more formal leadership process or you have a position in a business where you actually have people working for you or you're an elected official or some sort of appointed administrative official where you actually have formal leadership. That's certainly possible. Basically, any time you offer your opinion about what ought to be done, you are influencing the conversation and showing the way. That is an act of leadership.

By the way, this wasn't the first thought off the top of my head at the beginning of the week when I started thinking about this. Just as I got deeper into it, I just realized during the week that leadership is intrinsic in what it means to be a human being. Everybody's leading everybody. Children are leading parents, unfortunately. Hey, I even thought about this. You're leading when you're backseat driving. I mean, leadership is everywhere. It's just part of who you are. The title of the talk, What We Learn About Leadership From Jesus. I want to give you the Big Idea today and then we're going to dive into this a little bit through the scriptures. **Everything I need to know about leadership, I can learn by staring at Jesus.** Now, why did I pick the word staring? Well, just to make you think about this in a little bit of a different way because I'm trying to lead you. I'm trying to influence you. I could have put everything I need to know about leadership, I can learn by studying Jesus, the life of Jesus. Well, that's what everybody says, but I'm trying to influence you so I tried to pick a word that would make you go a little aha or something like that.

THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF JESUS

Everything I need to know about leadership, I can learn by looking at the life of Jesus. Let's look at the leadership style of Jesus. I have a PhD in leadership and organizational change. It's interesting because I

find leadership the most difficult topic to talk about of all the topics I ever talk about. That's a little weird. I'll tell you why it's true. It's because of what my dissertation chair said, Jim Bowman. He's a political ... Anyway, he's a professor at Florida State. He said, when he ripped me, he said, "You got to stop talking about all these 'glittering generalities,'" because so much of the writings and discussion and talk about leadership is all these glittering generalities that don't really get you down into the specific things. It would be so easy to talk to you about the glittering generalities of leadership, but what we're going to do instead, we're going to burrow down into kind of like one strand of the principles that Jesus puts forth.

THREE PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

Now, I'm going to go ahead and alert you that the third circle is entitled Three Principles to Remember. On your questions, question number two is: What are the three principles to remember from today's scriptures? We're going to do a little twist from a learning theory perspective today. I'm not going to tell you what those three principles are. You're going to come up with them for yourselves. As we read these scriptures, what I want to ask you is to: What are the principles that really resonate with you about these scriptures? Then you write them down and you're going to come up with the three points that you want to remember from these scriptures. Okay? "Oh, I can't just sit back and Pat's going to tell me today." No, that's exactly right. You're going to tell yourself. Let's take a look.

We're going to start, as I said, at Mark chapter nine verse 33. We're going to look at four passages that really burrow down, drill down, not on a glittering generality, but a very important part of leadership. It is the thing that I think is the most distinctive of all the things we learn about leadership from Jesus. It's this idea of how he looks at leadership from a very counterculture perspective. Mark chapter nine verse 33. He has just healed a young boy who was having convulsions. He couldn't talk and he was having convulsions. Jesus had invited his disciples to be with him. He was a peripatetic, a walking around teacher, which was the custom of that day. A teacher would gather some disciples, some followers, and they would follow him around and they would learn from him. He had these disciples with him. They had tried to help this young guy, but the father said, "You know, your disciples weren't able to help at all." He said, "If you can help me, would you?" Jesus said over in verse 23, "If you can," Jesus said, "everything is possible for him who has faith."

It's interesting, this question, "If you can." Actually in that passage, which it's not really the one we're looking at. It's the one right before the one we're looking at, the one leading up to the passage we're looking at. I counted. Jesus, I read a book once. I've read several books on preaching and this one, Learning to Preach Like Jesus by Lewis and Lewis, noted that Jesus in his 34,450 words that he spoke, which would amount to about 10 30-minute sermons. Everything Jesus said, the 34,450 words that he said, would fit into about 10 of these Bible study lessons, 10 30-minute messages. Very interesting. In those 34,450 words, Jesus asked 153 questions. 15.3 questions that he would ask per 30-minute sermon. That's not the way it was distributed, but if it were done that way. In this text about this healing of the boy with convulsions, whenever I read that when I was reading through my Bible, every time I saw a question mark after red letters, I put a circle around it. I have, in this passage, one, two, three, four, five. Five questions that Jesus asked just in that one story. What an incredible teaching tool, to ask questions rather than give answers, which is why I decided to ask you the question, "What are the principles you see this morning?"

Then, right after that, verse 33. "They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them a question, 'What were you arguing about on the road?'" Now, in his omniscience, Jesus already knew the

answer to that question, but it's part of his leadership style to ask questions. Verse 34, "But they kept quiet because on the way, they had argued about who was the greatest." Now, we have followers arguing about which of them is the greatest. All kinds of principles here. Pick three that you like. Verse 35, "Sitting down, Jesus called the 12," the 12 disciples, "and he said to them, 'If any one wants to be first,'" megas, "'first, then he must be the very last and the servant of all.'" Jesus now introduces the most countercultural idea that he has about leadership. That is the concept of the servant leader. By the way, in the last 20 years, the concept of servant leadership has absorbed the academic world that studies leadership. It's like they finally discovered servant leadership and it's a hot topic. 2,000 year old hot topic. "'If any one wants to be first, he must be the last and the servant of all,' then he took a child," and so forth. You can read that.

Now, if you would, turn over a page to Mark chapter 10 verse 35. This is a little later now. This is just before the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Verse 35, "Then James and John," now, think about James and John. These are two of the 12, two of Jesus's most trusted associates. John, James, Peter, were they not the three most trusted associates? Was it James, Peter, and John? Uh huh. I think it was. They came to him. Actually, in the Matthew passage, you learn their mother came along too and she did the talking. "Teacher," they said, "We want you to do for us whatever we ask." And Jesus, what does he do? He asks a question. "What do you want me to do for you?" They replied, "Let one of us sit on your right and the other on your left in glory." They were just discussing on the road, arguing on the road, about who is the greatest. Jesus said if you want to be the first, be the last. Not long after that, two of his three closest buds come to him and say, "Hey, can we be on your left and your right when you come in your glory?"

Jesus in verse 30 says, "You don't know what you're asking. Can you drink the cup," here's another question. "Can you drink the cup I drank or be baptized with the baptism I'm baptized with?" They answer, "We can. Yeah. We can do that." Jesus said, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with." Incidentally, James we know was run through by Herod with the sword and tradition has it that Paul was thrown into a boiling cauldron of oil. They did. "'To sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those who they have been prepared.' When the 10 heard this, they became indignant." I love this word, indignant. I've kind of got, before I was teaching this message from a couple weeks ago, I started thinking about this word, indignant right here in this passage because it was in my one-year Bible reading a couple weeks ago. It's this idea to be put off. You can look it up. It's a very nice word because there is some sort of being put off by some kind of a moral injustice, by something that's actually being done that's wrong. It's not just feeling disrespected because of my human pride. There is like this legitimacy to this feeling of feeling indignant with James and John.

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers," or leaders, "of the Gentiles," or the nations, ethnos. The word Gentile is ethnos, E-T-H-N-O-S. "The leaders of the nations, they lorded over them," the people with formal authority. "Their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you." Counterculture. "Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great," megas, mega, "among you must be your servant." That's the word diakonos. It's the word from which we get deacon. "Must be your servant. Whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." That's doulas, D-O-U-L-A-S. Like a bond servant. "For even the son of man," watch this. "For even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." Now, there might be a principle there that would be worth you thinking about being one of your three. The example of Jesus, his mission.

Now, let's take a look back at Matthew 23 verse one. What I want you to see here is that it's not necessarily just political leaders, but it's also religious leaders can misuse their authority. Since you're a

leader and since you're religious, you're a religious leader. This could even pertain to you perhaps. Jesus said to the crowds and his disciples, I don't think it does, but it could. From time to time, perhaps it might. "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses's seat so you must obey them and do everything they tell you, but do not do what they do. For they do not practice what they preach." This is the whole concept of hypocrisy. They don't do what they tell you to do. That's the whole concept of hypocrisy. "They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders." In other words, telling other people what they ought to do, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to help, a finger to move them.

"Everything they do is done for men to see," putting on a show. "They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels of the prayer shawls long. They love the places of honor at banquets." I've made that mistake. "And the more important seats in the synagogues. They love to be greeted in the marketplace and to have men call them rabbi." There's some other things that are said there by Jesus. Then, in verse 11, "The greatest among you will be your servant." Here we go again. Third time. "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted." There might be another principle or two in there to think about. Jesus puts some distance between himself and religious leaders who have motives that are not to serve others. Then, the last one we'll look at, that was right after the triumphal entry, by the way.

Now, at the Last Supper in Luke chapter 22. We're drilling down, obviously, on this idea of being a servant leader. The greatest shall be the least. The first shall be the last. The humble will be exalted. Now, after all of this, now, it's interesting. I haven't had time to study this, but what I do know is that in the Bible, if something's repeated twice, it's important. If it's repeated three times, it's very important like, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty." Whenever the Lord repeats something three times in scripture, it's extremely important. I haven't had time to study this, but this is the first time I've actually seen something, that I can remember seeing, that's been repeated four times. This is the fourth time now. You know, I'm just speculating but it seems to me that this is something that is like uber important to the Lord to get across to us.

Again, he's just completed the Last Supper. They've just broken the bread. They've just had the wine. Jesus is right on the cusp of the passion, his passion. Verse 24, right after that, "Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was to be considered the greatest." Fascinating. There might be a principle in there. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles," or, again, the leaders of the nations, "lorded over them and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors," or good people. "But not you. You are not like this. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest and the one who rules," or leader, "like the youngest and the leader like the one who serves. For," now we're back to the question. Might be a principle in here. Now we're back to another question or two from Jesus. "For who is greater? The one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves." Might be a principle there. The example of Jesus. Might be a principle there. Could be a principle there.

Again, the Big Idea today, **Everything I need to know about leadership I can learn by just staring at Jesus.** 34,450 words. Three principles to remember. You decide what they are for you today. I've decided what they are for me. I do know this. Whatever it is that I need to know about leadership, I can learn that by just staring at this life of Jesus. Maybe it's what he said. Maybe it's what he did. Maybe it's the example he set. Again, you decide. All right. Now what we're going to do is we're going to have some table discussion time. What I'd like you to do is when we come back together with maybe five, six minutes left, if you have a principle that just you really feel like is riveted in your brain about what it

means to be a leader, it might be the idea that the principle you might be taking away here is, "Oh, I really am a leader even though I don't have a crew. I don't have disciples, I see that I am a leader and I see." You figure out what that is and then we'll take some one sentence principles here at the end.

If you're visiting for the first time this morning, we want to welcome you. Would you raise your hand if you're a first time visitor? We'll just see where you are. Okay. Here, here, here and back there. I especially like to welcome Matt Maxwell from Hattiesburg, Mississippi. For those of you who are online and here too that are donors and so forth, this is what your dollars are going to. We had seven men in town for boot camp training. Last night, we had this lovely commissioning dinner. Matt Maxwell stayed over and has decided to attend this morning. One of our newest field team members from Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Matt, just raise your hand and let everybody see who you are. Say hello to Matt, everybody. First timers, if you would, when we break in a moment, if you come up to this card table at the front right hand corner, I'd love to have a chance to meet you and just speak with you for a few minutes and hear a little bit from you. Break to the tables and we'll come right back together again towards the end.