

Session 3 - Leadership Lessons and Traits Learned from Bible Characters

In the previous sessions, you considered many aspects of leadership. You also identified the various stages of leadership growth over a lifetime. Now, we want to look at leadership qualities found in several biblical characters and discover how they grew through the various stages of their life. **Assignment: Work in small groups or on your own. Read the verse(s).** What do you observe about each person's character, situation, or actions that may help you understand leadership? Be sure to note their relationships to God and others around them. **Answer the questions;** they may prompt your thinking. **Draw from any other texts** you may have studied about these characters that might expand your ideas about leadership. See what leadership principles you can find.

Noah - Noah lived at a time when men's hearts had become wicked, thinking of evil all the time. God was grieved that he made men and his heart was filled with pain. So, the Lord decided that he would use a flood to wipe out all that he created. As he observed Noah's heart, God decided to save Noah telling him to build an ark. Noah obeyed and led his family into the ark. The rains came, the flood rose but God remembered Noah and saved him.



Genesis 6:8, 9

Genesis 7:5

Genesis 7:1

How many people did Noah lead onto and out of the ark? (6:18; 9:18) Read 9:18 again and skim chapter 10, what do you realized about who was really saved? Can you take this even further into time than those mentioned in chapter 10?

Genesis 7:11; Genesis 8:13,14

How long was Noah in the ark? Added to that was to the time it took to find the materials and build the ark. Think about time and leadership. What was invested? What character traits does this require?

(For further study read Genesis 6:5-9:17)



is known as the Father or Patriarch of the nation of Israel. He led his family away from Haran and settled in the land promised by God.

Genesis 12:1, Genesis 12:4, Hebrews 11:8-10

What didn't the Lord tell him? What would it mean to leave everything you know? How risky was this? How is Abraham a "trailblazer" and how does that relate to leadership?

Genesis 26:24, 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23

What else do these verses tell you about Abraham's character and relationships?

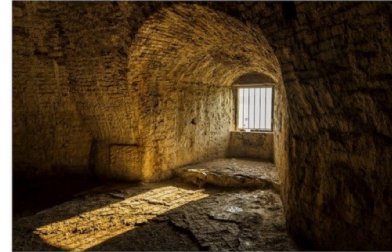
(For further study read Genesis 12-25)

Joseph – One of the twelve sons of Jacob, Joseph was hated by his brothers particularly because he was the favorite son. Rather than kill him, his brothers devised a scheme to sell him into slavery. He was taken from the Promised Land to Egypt where, according to God’s plan he rose to power. In the midst of a worldwide famine, God, through Joseph’s leadership, saved not only his family but all of Egypt and beyond.

*Genesis 39:2-6 – **Joseph in Potiphar’s house,***

*Genesis 39:20-23 – **Joseph in Prison***

What do you learn about Joseph’s character and his relationship with God? What is it about Joseph that made Potiphar and the jailer give Joseph the lead in these places?



Joseph’s Dreams

Genesis 37: 5,6 – “Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, ‘Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.’ His brothers said to him, ‘Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?’”

Joseph is taken to Egypt and eventually ends up in prison. In prison he meets two men...
Genesis 40:8 “‘We both had dreams,’ they answered, ‘but there is no one to interpret them.’ Then Joseph said to them, ‘Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams.’”
Genesis 40:21 “He restored the chief cupbearer to his position..., but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.”

Joseph remains in prison for 10 years until...*Genesis 41:9-* The chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh after his unsettling dreams, “...*We told him our dreams and he interpreted them for us giving each man the interpretation of his dream and things turned out exactly as he interpreted them...*” Joseph interprets the Pharaoh’s dreams and the Pharaoh said...
Genesis 41:38-40 “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God? Since God made all of this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders...”

Joseph had an unusual gift to interpret dreams. Notice how God allows his dream experiences to build on each other – where does he begin interpreting his dreams and where does he end up doing this? How may this “journey” have helped him grow in his character and as a leader?

God’s Work Through Joseph – Joseph experienced one bad circumstance after another. First, his brothers hate him and instead of murdering him, he was sold into slavery. Then he was framed by his boss’s wife and unjustly imprisoned. He helped two prisoners giving them the meaning of their dreams, one is reinstated but then he forgot all about Joseph. Finally, Joseph rises and is put in charge of all of Egypt by the Pharaoh.

Genesis 45:78, Genesis 50:19-21 - How might Joseph’s leadership character have developed through these experiences? What do you see as God’s role in all of this?

(For further study read Genesis chapters 37, 39 – 47)

Moses - For God to fulfil his promises to the children of Israel - to deliver them from the captivity of Pharaoh and take them back to the promised land, “*the land flowing with milk and honey*” (Exodus 3:8) - required a strong, courageous and uncompromising leader to carry out this colossal job. God appointed Moses supported by his brother Aaron as the best candidates to take on this task.



Calling - Appearing in a burning bush, God calls Moses to go back to Pharaoh and lead His people out of Egypt.

Exodus 3:1-6, 9-14; 4:1, 8-17.

Describe the relationship between God and Moses in verses 1-6? How did God get Moses attention so that Moses will lead this rescue ministry for him? How does Moses respond in these verses? What excuses does he use? How does God respond? How does all of this help Moses as he begins to lead?

Exodus 3: 16-21

Who all is responsible for carrying out God’s plan? What might this tell you about leadership in the church?

Rebellion - As the Israelites journey through the wilderness, the book of Numbers tells different stories about people who complain, grumble and quarrel with Moses. There are different types of rebellion and different reasons why they rebelled while he was their leader.

* “*And the people complained about their hardships.*” (11:1)

* “*And the rabble among them had greedy desires... and said ‘Who will give us meat?!’*” (11:4)

* “*And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses.*” (12:1)

* “*And all the community raised their voice... and grumbled against Moses and Aaron.*” (14:1-2)

* “*And Korah... with Nathan and Abiram... with two hundred and fifty leaders of the community...rose up against Moses.*” (16:1-3)

* “*And the entire community grumbled against Moses and Aaron.*” (16:41)

* “*And the people quarreled with Moses.*” (20:3)

* “*And the people spoke against God and Moses.*” (21:5)

So, how does Moses deal with different kinds of rebellion in the camp? Let’s look at one of these rebellions. (On your own you may look at the others to see how Moses handles them.)

Leadership Conflicts: *Numbers 12:1-13* Aaron and Miriam

How do Aaron and Miriam’s character contrast with Moses’ character in verses 1-3? What is the conflict and, in this case, how was it handled in verses 6-8? In verses 10-13? What does this teach you about leadership?

Management Problems: *Exodus 18:13-24*

What flaws does Moses have as a leader? What makes it possible for Moses to listen to and act on Jethro's criticism? What do we learn from Jethro's counsel about leading and organizing people? What does this teach us about control, delegation and doing it all yourself?

Mentoring and Transfer of Leadership – In each of the following verses, how does Moses demonstrate mentoring and handing over leadership to the next generation? What principles do you find in his relationship with Joshua?

Exodus 17:14

Exodus 24:13

Exodus 33:11

Numbers 11:28

Numbers 27:18

Numbers 27:22

Deuteronomy 1:38

Deuteronomy 3:28

Deuteronomy 3:3

Deuteronomy 31:7

Deuteronomy 32:44

(For further study read Exodus 2:11-25; 4:27-31; Numbers 11:1-35; 14:13-25; 36:1-13; Deuteronomy 1:9-18, 31:1-13)



Gideon - Israel was in need of being saved from the Midianites; Gideon was God's choice to lead them. As he did what the Lord had asked him to do, Gideon became a victorious leader.

Judges 6:11-16, 25-32.

What do you observe about Gideon's calling and his response to lead?

Notice where he is and what he is doing. What does the angel call him in verse 12? What about the "But sir" and "But Lord" in verses 13 and 15?

On his first task (6:27), who and how many people does he take? What does this verse tell you about his character at this time?

His second task begins in Judges 6:33-35. Who are his opponents now and who are following Gideon? How many he is leading in verse 7:3? And then in verses 7:4-8? What can you learn about leadership from this?

As things ramp up, Gideon is still afraid. Read Judges 7:10-17. What do we learn about God and leadership from this text?

Judges 7:17, 18. What can we take away about leadership from these verses?

(For further study read Judges 6-8)

David– David rose from keeping sheep in the fields to become one of the greatest warrior kings to lead Israel.

David Anointed to be King

I Samuel 16: 1, 6, 7, 11-13; Psalm 78:70-72



How do people pick leaders? How does God pick leaders? What has David been doing and how might this help him to become a good leader?

David “Kills His Ten Thousands”

I Samuel 18:5-16, 29

What happened to Saul as a younger David began to take the lead? How might understanding Saul’s response help us in our leadership responsibilities?

David Spares Saul

I Samuel 24:1-13

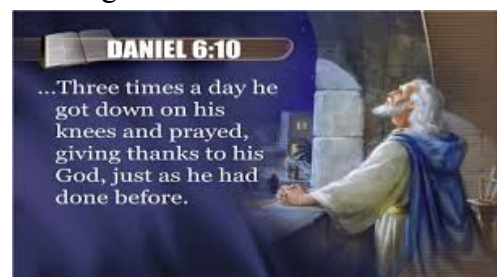
How can those around a leader affect him? (verses 4 and 9) Why didn’t David kill Saul when he had the chance? In contrast to “helping” God out, what does this event teach an emerging leader about God’s will and His timing?

(For further study read I Samuel 16-27, 29, 30; 2 Samuel; I Kings 1:1 – 2:46)

Daniel – Daniel is one of several godly young men taken in exile from Israel to Babylon. He and many others were trained for three years to enter into the king’s service. As he held firm to his faith, God blessed him with great knowledge and wisdom. Daniel rose through the ranks to be an important person among the king’s advisors and nobles.

Daniel 6: 1-28 – Catching Daniel

What do you notice about Daniel’s character and habits?



How do the other rulers respond to Daniel and his character? What might this tell you about leadership?

How does Daniel respond to the edict drawn up by his enemies? What does this tell you about this leader?

What about the king? How would you characterize his relationship to Daniel through all of this? What does this cause him to do in verses 25-27? How was Daniel saved?

(For further study read Daniel Chapters 1-6)



John the Baptist – The forerunner of Jesus, called to “prepare the way for the Lord.”

Matthew 3:7-10 - As a leader, what is John not afraid to do?

John 3:30 - What might this verse tell you about John and his leadership?

(For further study read Matthew 3:1, Mark 1:3-8, Luke 3:2-17, John 3:22- 36)

Peter – Once a fisherman, Jesus called Peter to be one of his twelve disciples. He was known to quickly respond with words and actions sometimes without thinking things through. He grew to be one of the leaders of the early church.

Mark 14:27-31, 66-72 – Peter follows Jesus to the High Priest’s House

Peter bravely follows Jesus to the High Priest’s House, but what happens to this future leader? What impact could a failure like this have on him as a leader?



John 21:15-19 - “Feed my Lambs”

Why do you think Jesus addressed Peter three times with the same question?

At this point in Peter’s life, does he seem “leadership worthy?” As you observe how Jesus interacts with Peter, what do you discover about a leader that has made a big mistake?

How does a leader feed his sheep?

Acts 2:14, 40,41 – Peter addresses the Crowd
Acts 15:6,7 – How has Peter grown in leadership?

*(For further study read Mark 1:16-18, Mark 9:2-10,
Matthew 16: 13-20, John 13:6-9, Mark 14:32-38, Acts 10-12:17)*

Paul – Before his conversion, Paul was very religious. His training under Gamaliel was the best he could have had. His intentions and efforts were sincere. He was a good Pharisee who knew the scriptures and sincerely believed that this Christian movement was dangerous to Judaism. That is why he hated this movement and went on to persecute the church of God without mercy. The journey to Damascus to persecute the Christians was a turning point for him as the Lord Jesus met and spoke to him to stop persecuting and killing his people. God calls the Apostle Paul and “throws” him into leadership to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.



Acts 17:1 -4; 10- 12 – How did Paul handle God’s word in the many churches he planted?
Acts 17: 5-9, 13-16 – How do others respond to Paul’s leadership in God’s Word?

Galatians 2:11-21; Acts 15: 36-41 – How did Paul handle people who opposed and disagreed with him? Be sure to read I Peter 5:13 and 2 Timothy 4:11 to see how things played out. What does that tell you about a leader?

1 Peter 2:21, 1 Corinthians 4: 16, 11:1, – How did Paul mentor others?

Philippians 3:1-14 – In these verses, how do we see Paul’s humility?

What does it mean to be humble as a leader and why is that important? (Note who else is humble in Numbers 12:3)

(For further study read Acts 13:42- 50, 14:21 -28)

Let’s Think About Session 3!

Can you think of any other Bible characters, besides Jesus, that were good leaders? What was it that made them stand out as leaders?

After studying these Bible characters, what are three (3) things that you learned about leadership that are important to implement in your life as a leader?

Session 4 - Review of Part-1

Together, we have considered several important principles on the topic of servant leadership. Putting these principles into action will help you grow as a Christian leader. Before returning to your villages and homes, review the key themes by answering the following questions. After 15 minutes, be prepared to share your thoughts in the large group setting. Also, as others share, jot down their lessons learned during this time. Following this review, look at page 18 for your home assignment in preparation for Part-2 of *Servant Leadership for Today*. (Date for Part 2 of Seminar 4 will be determined). Go home and put servant leadership into practice.

What did you learn from Jesus' teaching on servant leadership?

What character traits does Jesus think are essential for ministry leadership?

Why are character, knowledge, skill, and emotional make-up essential elements for servant leadership in the place where you serve?

With God's help, in what areas do you need to grow as a leader?

Write a Prayer describing your desire to be a leader with God's heart and mind for this world.

Out of Class Assignment for Seminar 4 – Part 2

Read the entire book of Nehemiah with leadership principles in mind. As you read, write down several qualities Nehemiah demonstrated in the following areas of his life. (Be sure to note the chapter and verse where you find them.) Bring your discoveries to Part 2 of Seminar 4, when we will consider several ministry leadership challenges.

Nehemiah - Nehemiah knew that God could use his talents to get the job done. From the moment he arrived in Jerusalem, everyone knew who was in charge. He organized, managed, supervised, encouraged, met opposition, confronted injustice, and kept going until the walls were built. Nehemiah was a man of action.

Prayer:

His relationships with others:

Handling opposition:

Defending the oppressed:

Reforms and order returned to Jerusalem:

Leadership principles and observations: