

Looking at Leadership

Are all Christians leaders?

A careful search of Scripture does not reveal a specific command from Jesus to “be a leader.” It does, however, issue a call to a kind of revolutionary discipleship and commitment that regularly places followers of Christ squarely in the middle of situations that demand clear thinking, positive speaking and decisive action.

That sounds like leadership, doesn’t it?

Following Christ means that leadership opportunities will regularly arise. Few Christians are leaders in every situation, all of the time. But all are called to lead as a result of their obedience to Jesus’ commands to actively engage with the world at every level.

At its heart, leadership for the Christian means loving God, walking in God’s ways, acknowledging God’s blessing, confessing personal limitations and corporate failures, doing justice, seeking peace and asking God for the gift of discernment.

Those are responsibilities of every Christian.

To that end, Acacia Resources, BCE’s publishing imprint, will release in December a new, undated Sunday school curriculum designed to help adults better live out those responsibilities. [Looking at Leadership: Lessons from 1 and 2 Kings](#), examines traits of faithful leaders, actions of failed leaders and knotty experiences for leaders.

Looking at leadership honestly means looking at the best and the worst. Scripture offers examples of both. We see ourselves in people like Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Ahab, Elijah, Naaman, Gehazi and Josiah.

Qualities such as love for God, wisdom, placing priority on worship and an insistence on high moral standards are easy to embrace but hard to live. Solomon

was successful at times; on other occasions he struggled. So do we.

Solomon was far from perfect. In fact, he lost focus and turned away from God when he was old and experienced failure as a result. Rehoboam also faced failure, because he refused to listen to the people. Jeroboam, unable to trust God with the future, offered false gods for the people to worship. Ahab refused to listen to the truth coming from a single critic, instead enjoying the affirmation of the crowd—a temptation we often face.

All leaders eventually must deal with burnout and with knowing when to step down or step aside. Elijah's example can help us do both.

Leaders face decisions that are not always clear cut. Naaman set aside arrogance and power to act boldly and make the risky decision that changed his life.

Greed is a temptation for many leaders. By looking at the consequences of impure motives and selfish actions by Elisha's servant Gehazi, we can prepare ourselves to turn from those temptations when they come.

Wise leaders do what is right, regardless of the outcome. Though Josiah pursued rightness, he met with failure. Yet Scripture says of him: "Before him there was no king like him . . . nor did any like him arise after him (1 Kings 23:25).

Since you likely both lead and follow, lessons from 1 and 2 Kings offer helpful examples that can enable you to do each more wisely, effectively and faithfully.

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