

Principles of Leadership

Sermon #0726

Study by W. D. Frazee—November 6, 1964

It would be well for us to spend time each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We are to take it point by point, and let the imagination vividly grasp each scene. As we dwell upon His great sacrifice our love for Him will be quickened, and our faith strengthened, and we will be more imbued with His Spirit. This is one of the ways we are to be drawn nearer to Christ as we behold.

"And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" Luke 22:24.

We just had an election. In all fifty states I suppose this experience has been repeated. All the way through men are seeking the highest place. An election is to determine who gets it. The difficulty this night was that there were twelve candidates and only one office. The greatest is only one. So there was a strife as to which of them should be accounted the greatest.

Jesus had told them on the way to Jerusalem that all things would be fulfilled that the prophets had spoken. They had preached at Christ's direction that the kingdom of God was at hand, and that meant crowns and thrones and rulership. Of course, Jesus was to be the King. He had allowed the multitude to hail Him as King. He mounted the colt and rode into Jerusalem and received the acclimation of the multitude. They thought that the kingdom was going to be set up any time. This is the hour. But Jesus hadn't said yet who was to be the prime minister. There was a strife among them as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. Human nature dies hard and human principles fade out very slowly in most lives.

"And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as He that serveth" Luke 22:25-27.

Jesus had been demonstrated that to them all His life, and now He crowned that example by girding Himself with a towel and washing their feet. Having served them He spoke of that example.

I would like to have us review the lesson that Jesus has given regarding leadership. I would like to have us think of the principles that underlie it.

"The principles of heaven are to be carried out in every family, in the discipline of every church, in every establishment, in every institution, in every school, and in everything that shall be managed" *Sons and Daughters of God*, page 255.

How many of you are part of a family? How many of you are part of a school? How many are part of an institution? How many are part of a church? It would be too bad to come to a picnic dinner and find that there was plenty left to take provided someone had brought a basket to carry it home. Let's learn these principles. If you are a member of a home or a church this applies to you whether you are a leader or a follower.

A certain university sent out an application blank. One of the questions on that application was whether you are a leader. A prospective student thought about it and frankly put down that he wasn't a leader, he was a follower. When the response came back the college said they were glad to accept him because they had several hundred responses of leaders, and they thought there should be at least one follower.

If you can't be a leader, remember that every leader needs at least one follower. Some leaders need more than one. However, there is a relationship between those two things. There is a relationship between the follower and leader in God's plan. The man that God is getting ready to be a leader is first a follower.

"They must learn to obey before they are fitted to command" *Gospel Workers*, page 75.

Joshua learned that with Moses. He served Moses for forty years. Some people would think that was a long apprenticeship. Forty minutes would be long enough for some. But with Joshua it was forty years. Did he turn out a good leader? Yes. He made a wonderful record. He had a wonderful training.

Elisha served as a trainee under Elijah. How long we don't know, but it was a period of time. Some of his work was menial. After Elijah had gone to heaven and the people were looking for a prophet, someone said, Here is Elisha, and he used to pour water on the hands of Elijah. So the people said, Send for him.

One thing about helping a leader is that the more you help him the closer you get to him, and the more you can learn. If you are one of the followers now it could be that God has you in training to be a great leader whether you are a fourteen year old boy or girl, or whatever you age or position. God has His eye on you and He knows what you can be.

One of the greatest joys I have had in my life is to see men and women that I have helped to train develop into leadership. Some of them are doing a greater work than I could ever do. I get the joy of seeing what God has helped them. God has His eye on you. You may be a leader. But you must learn first to obey before you are fitted to command.

The disciples are wondering who is going to be the chief leader under Christ. Would it be Judas? Judas thought he would be a good leader. Would it be Peter? Peter thought he would be a good leader. James and John had already announced their candidacy. They had gotten their mother to lobby for them. I wonder why Jesus didn't kick them all out and start over with some decent people? There are some people who think that is what God ought to do today.

There are reasons why God didn't do that. In the first place He couldn't find anyone better. Also He loved those men. He looked ahead and saw Pentecost. He saw those twelve men, save for Judas, standing before that vast multitude and witnessing in a way that men had never witnessed in all the years of human history, and with results that had never appeared. He saw those very men under the baptism of the Holy Spirit. How powerful are the motives of faith and hope and love, and Jesus had them all. He had faith in what God would do through those men. He had hope and love. And if God can give us faith and hope and love we can work with men who are as faulty as those men were.

There are three things that will be a lesson to us. First is the nature of the kingdom. It is God's kingdom, not man's. Christ had taught His disciples to pray:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" Matthew 6:9-10.

It is not the kingdom of man. It is the kingdom of God. Therefore God is the ruler, not man. This is not democracy. This is theocracy. You know the difference. Democracy is the government of the people. It may be very well for human governments today. But God's government is a theocracy. He is King. He is the ruler.

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." If Jesus' disciples had understood that they wouldn't have been worrying about who would be the greatest. They would have already known that God was the greatest. If they understood the nature of the kingdom they would have been so happy for the tiniest place in it that their hearts would have been filled with joy, and they would have been perfectly willing to leave the matter of position with God.

But they were thinking of a human government. They were thinking of generals and captains and prime ministers and treasurers. They misunderstood. God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom.

"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" Luke 17:20-21.

If the disciples had understood that they would not have been arguing among themselves. They would have been seeking a spiritual experience with God. I want you to notice that in Christ's effort to explain the nature of the kingdom He shows it is

a government of love and not force. He pointed out to the Gentiles that they exercise lordship. In the clinched fist or shoe that pounds, and in the raising of the voice they exercised authority. Indeed they did. "But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

The leader is to be the leader or minister in what? Serving. The Spirit of Prophecy says a minister is to minister. We have a book called, *Ministry of Healing*. We are all in a sense to be a minister. We have come to a time when every member of the church is to take hold of medical ministry work. The One who knows has told us that every minister and Bible worker should be as well prepared by training and experience to meet the needs of the body as to heal the sin-sick soul. God wants everyone of us to be ministers, hunting for people to help. If you are a leader you are supposed to be out in front helping people in many ways. If the disciples had understood this they wouldn't have been trying to have an election there. They would have gotten busy with the basin and the towel, for the opportunity to serve was there. They didn't need to have an election to do that. Neither did they need to have any strife.

If Peter had reached for the pan would John have grabbed it out of his hand? I think not. If Matthew had taken the picher and poured the water Thomas would have said, Don't do that. Those things are usually not grabbed out of the hand. Those opportunities are not usually an occasion of strife. It is what men think of as the honorable thing, the prizes. And it all comes from false conceptions. But remember, Jesus sought to get those ideas clear out of the minds of His disciples for He knew that they could never be leaders in His kingdom until they understood what the kingdom was and what it was about. It was a kingdom of love and service, not a kingdom of force for authority and human advantage. And these principles are to be carried out in every family, in every church, in every institution, in every school, and in every thing that is managed. A government of love for service, not a government of force.

When the nominating committee asks me to be Sabbath School Superintendent isn't that so I can get a chance to do what I want? I know how it ought to be done. Oh, I hope they will ask me to be the elder, because that has more power than the superintendent. I think there are some things that need to be straightened out. And if I could just get to be the elder I would do it.

Isn't it interesting the ideas of what leadership is? That leads me to the next point—the work of leaders. It is to lead, not drive.

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" John 10:2-4.

I know there are some other ways of doing things with sheep. I have been out in the west where they have thousands and thousands of sheep. They are not

shepherds, but sheep herder. There is one thing a sheep herder needs. It is some good dogs, for he drives. I shall not criticize the sheep herders of the West. I simply say that the shepherds of the East that Jesus is talking about were something different. That we must understand. And it is possible in family and church and institution government to be a sheep herder instead of a shepherd. It is possible to drive. But oh, to be a shepherd to lead. The sheep follow the shepherd because they hear his voice. He goes where? Before them, and they follow. Why?

"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" John 10:5.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" John 10:11.

The shepherd gives his life. It may be like Christ in actually giving it in sacrifice. But Christ gave it in service before he ever gave it on the cross. It wasn't just at Calvary that He laid down His life. Day by day as He was with His disciples and the multitudes He was pouring out His life for them, and those who were His sheep recognized that love and were drawn to Him and wanted to be with Him. They wanted to go where He went.

Judas came and said, Master, I will follow Thee where You go. It is true he has some selfish motives, but it is also true that deep in his heart he had a sense of need, and he hoped that need would be met by connecting himself with Jesus. He got so close to getting that need that when Christ was bathing those soiled feet he almost yielded and went with the Lord.

Oh, the power of loving leadership. How different it is from the barking sergeant who says, Do this. Why? That is the order.

I don't mean that Christ was lacking in authority. After He had washed their feet He asked them if they understood what He had done to them. He didn't resign His position when He washed their feet. He didn't cease to give directions because He had served them. And we are not studying a weak, sentimental, lack of leadership. Not so. A leader must be strong and aggressive, forward thinking and forward moving. But a leader leads, not drives.

"Ever try to lead them, but never drive them" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 653.

Why does it say try to lead them? Because when you are dealing with human beings they have a choice. Jesus tried to lead His disciples. Up in heaven He tried to lead the heavenly host. A third of them rebelled.

Being elected to an office does not make you a leader. It merely gives you an opportunity to exercise your gift. That's all. I can illustrate it. Some of you might have spent time in hunting or fishing. You are supposed to get a hunting license. Do they furnish a deer or a quail when you get a license? No. When you get a license it means you can go and try and see what you can do.

If you are a parent it is your license to try your skill in leadership. If you are a Sabbath School teacher it is your license to try your skill. Whether it is in an institution or a factory, in the home or school, a position of responsibility is just like a license. It doesn't give you success at all. It doesn't mean that you automatically succeed. And if you try to do what you see someone else do, remember that Saul's armor didn't fit young David. Be sure of the facilities that God wants you to use.

The shepherd draws by love. He calls and the sheep follow. There are his sheep. He gives his life for them, even as the Son of Man came to minister and give His life a ransom for many.

Who decides who shall be a leader? That's the question. Who decides who shall be the elder or the superintendant? Who decides who shall be the teacher? Who decides who will be the leader and who will follow? The answer is simple. God decides, for this is a theocracy. If this were a democracy the people would decide.

You say, But don't we have an election and vote?

Yes, we do. And right there lies the danger. Why do we vote in a church election? It is not to find out who the people want. If you are on a nominating committee and don't understand that, you will make a mistake in your work. The purpose is to find out who God wants. That's all. That is the only purpose. And the fact that God has let His people have a part in finding out who it is, they should never usurp God's place. That is the spirit of anti-Christ. That is the spirit of the papacy. We are not to worship the beast or his image. Nothing like it.

The disciples had learned some things after fifty days. After they had some seasons of prayer and humiliation, and had gotten close in love and unity, Peter recognized there was a lack in the total leadership. They recognized that Jesus had chosen twelve, and they needed twelve, so they set about to find out who that twelfth one would be. They talked it over and studied and then they prayed and said:

"Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen" Acts 1:24.

Whether you serve in an institution or in any capacity in helping to decide who shall serve high or low, take this verse. Know it by heart. They got down on their knees and said, Lord, You know the hearts of all men. Lord, You know which one You have already chosen.

I have been made sad on more than one occasion by seeing committees rush in to a nomination, and sometimes not pausing to get on their knees. Just get on with the business. But this is God's government, not man's. This is not a democracy. This is a theocracy. And men have a part in it because God in His great love longs to include all of His children in helping to find out His will. That simplifies the whole matter, and it exalts the whole matter. Oh, with what glad confidence should we come to every opportunity of choosing men and women to hold positions. Notice a comment on this statement in Acts 1:

"From these scriptures we learn that the Lord has certain men to fill certain positions" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, page 264.

Has God the Lord got a place for you? Whose place do you want? Do you want my place? The dear man who trained me in the ministry has said a hundred times, "I covet no man's position." And you can't fulfill another man's position anyway. You may think of it as higher or lower than yours, but it doesn't make any difference. There is only one place you can fulfill, and that is yours. And you will have to have God to help you fill it.

The difficulty with Lucifer was that he coveted someone else's position. That is where sin started. Don't covet what is your neighbors. And the other half of that wonderful truth is that no one can take your position away from you but you. Lucifer left his position, and a third of the angels left with him. That is one way to lose your position. But if you are willing to be restful in God's hands, and do what He wants you to do, it is up to Him to keep you in your position. You never have to fight for it.

We once had a leader among us that had been the leader for a long time. The time came when his brethren thought that the Lord wanted a change. It was very hard for him. He prayed about it, and said the Lord showed him what he ought to do. It wasn't very long before that dear brother was happy to devote the closing years of his life in holding up the hands of the other men that God had put in the position of leadership. God's government is a wonderful government.

"God will teach His people to move carefully and to make wise choice of men who will not betray sacred trusts. . . . We are to present every case before God and in earnest prayer ask Him to choose for us" *Ibid.*

"The president of the General Conference should have the privilege of deciding who shall stand by his side as counselors. . . . It was his privilege at least to express his preference as to the men who should be his counselors" *Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 342,343.

Every leader needs counselors. In the light of this statement, who should that nominating committee concern itself with? The overall leader. He ought to be given the opportunity to suggest the helpers. Do you see why that is? It is very simple. If the brethren should ask me to be the Sabbath School superintendent, I would like to have the opportunity to suggest who would be my helpers. It recognizes the principle of God that He has arranged certain people to work together in various capacities. This doesn't mean that we should be a dictator, but we should at least have the opportunity to express our preference.

"It would be well for all our ministers to give heed to these words and not hurry men into office without due consideration and much prayer that God would designate by His Holy Spirit whom He will accept" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 617.

It might be possible for a committee to select certain men for elders and deacons and the Lord wouldn't accept them. That is what this says. How would we know the difference? God pity us as when we are that blind and dumb. Let us sense the fact that unless God anoints men with His Spirit all our elections don't mean a thing. Through much prayer we are to find out who God will accept. We had better ask Him. And if you think that God has called you to be a leader, God will have ways of letting His people know it. If He doesn't, you had better wait, and don't let it worry you. Leave the problem with God.

God has problems on His hands. He selected Saul. For awhile Saul did beautifully. But he got puffed up and rebellious. God had to set him aside. For a long time he continued to be king. Why? God was getting another man to be king. It was David. Some people wondered why they couldn't have David now. Why did they have to put up with that man who was a maniac? David wasn't ready. It took years to get David ready.

"God permits men to be placed in positions of responsibility. When they err, He has power to correct or to remove them. We should be careful not to take into our hands the work of judging that belongs to God"
Ministry of Healing, page 484.

This is God's government. The nature is a spiritual kingdom, not one of this world. It is based on love and not on force. The work of the leader is to lead through love. How are leaders chosen? By God. He uses people to find out who He has already chosen.

Dear Lord, we thank Thee with all our hearts for a little heaven below to go to heaven in. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

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