

Leadership

Sermon #0950
1980

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—January 15,

If I should ask this morning how many of you folks were leaders, not all of your hands would go up. Not all of you know it, but you all are, whether you know it or not. I take it that you are all interested in learning to be better leaders. A leader is someone who has influence in getting other people to do things. You all have that influence. It may be very unconscious.

Usually when we think of the term “leadership” we are thinking of a person who has influence over a large number of people like a general of an army, a governor of a state, a president of a nation, or prime-minister. These are various degrees of leadership, but the principles are the same at all levels.

You remember in the parable that Jesus told about the talents, one man was given one talent, and another two, and another five. They were all talents. It was a matter of how many. And so each one of you has influence with somebody. You parents are leaders of your children. Teachers are leaders in classes. The older students have influence with younger students, whether that age is by the calendar, or by experience. Paul says to Timothy, “Stir up the gift ... which is in thee.” 2 Timothy 1:6.

Now this evening I have been impressed to study with you how God made a leader out of a young man thousands of years ago. His name was Joshua. He spent much of his time getting ready for the great leadership which crowned his career. He was the one that God used to bring Israel into the land of Canaan. He was a type of Christ. In fact, his name Joshua is the Hebrew word for which our word “Jesus” is in the Greek. Jesus and Joshua are the same word. Just Greek and Hebrew.

So Joshua is a type of Christ. As Joshua led ancient Israel into the earthly Canaan, so our Savior is to lead the remnant church into the heavenly Canaan. And so we can study the experience of Joshua.

Turn to Numbers the twenty-seventh chapter, beginning with the fifteenth verse. That which we shall notice especially in this text is the fact that leadership is something that God must decide. Leadership is not something that we should aspire to or have ambition for in the political sense. None of us is running to be president of the United States. I hope none of us is running to be elected or appointed to any other office of position.

The kingdoms of this world, the nations of this world run on entirely different principles than the government of God. Now notice how Joshua got to be appointed a leader.

“And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying, Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd” Numbers 27:15-17.

Who is praying this prayer? Moses. Who was Moses at this time? He was the leader of Israel. Who had appointed him? God. Directly. Now as he comes to the end of his life, he knows that he must lay down the burden. He prays earnestly, “Oh let God set a man over the congregation which may lead them, lead them out, and bring them in.”

Did God do it? Yes. The eighteenth verse.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom *is* the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put *some* of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation” Numbers 27:18-21.

That is the way Joshua got to be a leader. The man who was the leader earnestly sought the Lord, and God heard his prayer to give him someone to take his place. But God didn't wait until that day to answer that prayer. You remember the Bible says “before they call, I will answer.” Isaiah 65:24. God had been arranging this for many, many years. God had been training Joshua for leadership. As a young man, he was Moses' attendant.

I was thinking of it in that early experience on Mt. Sinai. You remember that God called Moses up into the mount to communicate with Him. And how long was it that he was shut in there in the cloud with God? Forty days. You know who was up there with him? Joshua. But Joshua was not shut in with that cloud. Joshua just waited on the outside. Moses was supernaturally sustained so that he didn't have to eat or drink during that time, but we are told that Joshua ate of the manna every day and drank from a stream or spring that was there and just waited.

Now if you had been the attendant to somebody, and he was shut away for forty days, and you didn't know of course how long it would be, I wonder how that would work out? I was trying to think of how I would feel in that. There could be a tendency to think, “What am I sitting around here for? I think I will get off to the camp where something is happening.”

No. He had been left there to wait for Moses, so he just waited for forty days. Do you know how long forty days is? Almost six weeks. That is a long time. Some people find it difficult to wait for forty minutes. But Joshua waited forty days. And that doesn't mean that he was slow or lazy, or anything of that kind. He was a man of action. Just a few weeks before this, remember, he was the one who was selected by the Lord through Moses to lead the armies of Israel in the first battle that they had on the way to Canaan.

You remember who he had to contend with? The Amalekites. A fierce war-like tribe. But with God's help he gained the victory. You remember what was taught at that time of the power of prevailing prayer? While Joshua was leading the armies of Israel, where was Moses? Up on the hillside. What was he doing? Holding up his hands in prayer. And soon it was observed as long as his hands were lifted up in prayer, Israel prevailed. And when he got weary and his hands went down, Amalek prevailed. So they caught on fast. Aaron stood on one side and Hur on the other and held up his hands till the going down of the sun.

What a precious experience in the power of prayer. The Bible is so full of precious experiences that show how differently God runs things from the way people do apart from God. And one of our greatest jobs at Wildwood, dear friends, to learn is this—that success comes from doing what God says. This was the lesson that was impressed upon Joshua.

Turn to the book of Joshua the first chapter. Joshua one, beginning with the first verse.

“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel” Joshua 1:1-2.

Then He told them He was going to give him the whole land like He had promised. The fifth verse:

“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life” *Ibid*, verse 5.

Wasn't that a wonderful promise? Wouldn't you like to have that promise? To the extent of your influence, to the extent of your responsibility, God wants it to be true with you.

“As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” *Ibid*.

The seventh verse:

“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest” Joshua 1:7.

What was Joshua to study? The book of the law. This means the first five books of the Bible. That is what had been written by Moses. Genesis—Exodus—Leviticus—Numbers—Deuteronomy. Joshua had these scrolls available. And God said to him, You are to “observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left.” *Ibid*. And if you will do that, He says, If you will keep going right ahead and not turn to the right hand or to the left, you will prosper wherever you go. This is successful Christian leadership.

Now in order that he might have that kind of success, notice the eighth verse.

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” Joshua 1:8.

What a recipe for success in leadership. But notice that this was a twenty-four hour a day program. How do I know? What does it say here? Day and night. What was he to be doing day and night? Meditating in what? In the book of the law—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy. Meditate in it day and night.

Now remember, he had lived through most of the experiences, not through Genesis, but through Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. He had been through all of that. He had been over the ground. He had heard Moses say everything that was in there. But God said, “That isn’t enough, Joshua, you must keep going over it and over it and over it.”

Dear doctors in our sanitarium, thank God for the instructions in *Medical Ministry, Counsels on Health, Ministry of Healing, Counsels on Diet and Foods*. God wants us our physicians to be meditating in these things day and night. So with our nurses. Dear parents, all of you dear ones that have children, either children of your own, or those that God has given you responsibility with. Think of the wonderful instruction in the book *Education, Christ’s Object Lessons, Ministry of Healing, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, Fundamentals of Christian Education*.

Meditate in these things how often? Day and night. Every one of you that is seeking to reach people in their homes, either in the Colporteur ministry or in house to house work, think of the hundreds of pages that have been given us in *Christian Service, Colporteur Ministry*, in the volumes of the *Testimonies*, in how to reach people in their homes, what to say, and what not to say. Hundreds of pages. Study these things and meditate in them how often? Day and night.

Most of us are engaged one way or another in the Sabbath school work as Sabbath school officers, Sabbath school teachers in the various departments. Have we been given instruction on how to do it? Yes. And oh how wonderful it is to have inspired instruction direct from Headquarters. And we are to observe these things, study them, and meditate in them how often? Day and night.

I could go on with other phases of our work. Let me put it very simply this way, if there is any phase of work in which you and I are engaged in that is not covered by this instruction, I would suggest that we get into something that is covered by it. I would hate to be in something where I was out on my own, left to my own devices. I need the chart and compass.

So a Christian leader is not like a leader out in the world. In the world of business, in the world of politics, a man may think of most anything, dream up anything, get ideas and try them out at his own expense or at the expense of the public. But a Christian leader is not like that. A Christian leader is one who is looking earnestly to God for God's leadership and he recognizes that he is a helper.

Notice this contrast, how it is brought out in this wonderful statement from the Lords' messenger in the *Review and Herald* of July 4, 1893.

"In the sight of men the self-sufficient worker may seem to be moving the world; but in the sight of God the humble wrestler moves heaven. The hosts of God are interested in the humble, praying man, who dares not make a move without first coming in prayer into the presence of God to counsel with the Omnipotent"
Review and Herald, July 4, 1893.

That is Christian leadership at its best, my friends. And what a contrast, I repeat, between that and the people of this world. I am not trying to blame the people of this world. Some of them I am sure are doing the best they know. But you and I, for two reasons, are in an entirely different program. First, we have access to a wisdom that they know nothing of. Second, we are in a program where God Himself has made the rules and given instruction.

Let me read this again.

"In the sight of men the self-sufficient worker may seem to be moving the world; but in the sight of God the humble wrestler moves heaven. The hosts of God are interested in the humble, praying man, who dares not make a move without first coming in prayer into the presence of God to counsel with the Omnipotent" *Ibid.*

Now notice how this is brought out in the experience of Joshua. You remember that God miraculously opened up the Jordan, that river when it was at the spring tide, when it was at its highest. It was opened up by the command of God and all Israel went over. It was a wonderful experience. God had told them to

conquer the land, and they might have said, "Well, God has worked this miracle for us. It is time to get going. We will go right ahead and take Jericho."

But in the fifth chapter, the thirteenth verse, we see Joshua out by himself, and we are told in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets* by inspiration that Joshua was out in meditation and prayer. He, the leader of Israel, felt a great longing to find out God's plans for the capture of Jericho. And God rewarded his faith. As he was out there by himself seeking God humbly and earnestly, a man appeared who identified himself on challenge as the Captain of the Lord's host. It was Christ. Often the invisible, not the visible leader of God's people, and He revealed to Joshua a marvelous plan of action.

You remember what it was? They were to go around Jericho once. Then go home, wait until the next day, and do it again. And again. And again. For six days. And on the seventh day, what were they to do? Go around seven times and then shout for the Lord had given them the city. Did it work? Yes. Why did it work? Because God had told them to do it. That is Christian leadership—to find out God's answer and then carry it out.

Now that particular plan, had it ever been done that way before? No. Was it ever done that way again? Not that I ever heard of. And so the great lesson is not to learn how to conquer cities by marching around them, that wasn't the great lesson. The great lesson was to learn to solve problems by seeking God and finding God's instruction and carrying it out. That was the lesson.

And so inspiration says that obedience was what God was trying to teach them. Obedience in something in which they could see no success. Humanly speaking what difference would it make whether they marched around and how many times and whether they kept quiet or whether they shouted and all that? But in every detail they were to find and follow God's will. I repeat, did it work? Yes. And so it is written:

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down" Hebrews 11:30.

And in all this Joshua was the great leader seeking God earnestly in faith, and carrying out His instructions. One of the greatest marks of Joshua's leadership was his ability given him of God, of course, to get all the congregation to move with him in this things. And this is one of the most important things in Christian leadership. I want you to take from this little class this evening a very practical piece of laboratory work. I want you to between now and the next time we meet in this series to ask God to help you to find somebody that has a problem that you can help solve. Take this little piece of laboratory assignment and find somebody that has a problem that God will help you help solve by prayer and the study of His Word.

Now, I brought along something tonight which to me is a little sample of the thousands of details of instruction that God has given us in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Acquaintance with which, and following which will bring success. I have been studying the *Testimonies* for sixty-five years and I just discovered this one a little while ago. It was not in one of the published books, but it was written long before anyone here was born. I am going to read it to you, and see if there is in it

some precious instruction which will help somebody to have good success. Of course, it takes a heart of faith to believe it, and a heart of faith to do what it says. But there is at least one person here tonight whose life will be changed by listening to what I am going to read. If you don't want to be changed, put your fingers in your ears.

“By studying after nine o'clock, there is nothing gained but much lost. Teach and practice that the time can be systematically employed, one duty after another attended to promptly, not allowed to lag, so that midnight hours will not have to be employed in laborious studies”

Manuscript Releases, Vol 8, page 330, 331. (See also *Letter 85*, 1888.)

“I know from the testimonies given me from time to time for brain workers, that sleep is worth far more before than after midnight. Two hours' good sleep before twelve o'clock is worth more than four hours after twelve o'clock”

Manuscript Releases, Vol 7, page 224. (See also *Letter 85*, 1888.)

Did anybody learn something?

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” Joshua 1:8.

Now like everything else that is written, this one can be misapplied and used to discourage some dear night nurse that has to stay up all night, or some physician that is called out in the middle of the night to take care of some emergency. Let's use it for what it was written for. What do you say, friends? Let's do our best to cooperate with God in this instruction.

Christian leadership is in getting our orders from Christ, carrying them out the very best that we can in our own lives, and involving other people with us, getting them to see the joy of following God's beautiful way.

Copyright 2019. All rights reserved.

W.D. Frazee Sermons
PO Box 129, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org