

QUALITIES OF GOD'S LEADERS

- A. There are three divinely ordained institutions: civil government, the home & the church.
1. God has established leaders in each: rulers & officials (**Rom 13**), husbands, fathers & parents (**Eph 6:1-2; 5:22**), elders (**Titus 1:5**).
 2. The importance of good leadership can best be seen in its absence.

Judg 21:25 – [After the death of Joshua & the elders who outlived him the nation fell into chaos] In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

[Leadership is important, but not just anyone can be an effective leader – especially in the church (success in the secular realm does not assure that ability in the spiritual.)

The Bible tells of men who were effective leaders, from them we see qualities required of spiritual leaders.]

I. THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

- A. Abraham lived by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God (**Gen 12**).

Heb 11:8-10 – *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance.* And he went out, not knowing where he was going...

Rom 4:18-25 – who, *contrary to hope, in hope believed*, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” 19 And *not being weak in faith*, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), & the deadness of Sarah’s womb. 20 **He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief**, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 & being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

Gen 22:1-3 – Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, & said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” 2 Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, & go to the land of Moriah, & offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” 3 **So Abraham rose early in the morning** & saddled his donkey, & took two of his young men with him, & Isaac his son; & he split the wood for the burnt offering, & arose & went to the place of which God had told him.

Heb 11:17-19 – *By faith Abraham*, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac**, & he who had received the promises offered up **his only begotten son**, 18 of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” 19 **concluding that God was able to raise him up**, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

[Elders must not only believe *in* God, but believe God by trusting His ability to keep His promises, & by obeying His commands without question or hesitation.]

II. THE MEEKNESS OF MOSES

A. The world measures greatness by one's ability to exert authority over others, but God measures greatness by one's ability to rule & control his spirit

Prov 16:32 – He *who is slow to anger is better than the mighty*, & he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

1. Moses had such self-control; it was called meekness or humility (**Num 12:3**; strength under control).

B. **Moses' greatest challenges** came from the people he was leading, & those challenges brought his meekness to the forefront.

Num 16:1-3 – Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan & Abiram the sons of Eliab, & On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; 2 & they rose up before Moses with some of the children

of Israel, two hundred & fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. 3 They gathered together against Moses & Aaron, & said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, & the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?" 4 **So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face**; 5 & he spoke to Korah & all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the Lord will show who is His & who is holy, & will cause him to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him. **Num 12** – God had settled that issue earlier: God rebuked & Moses prayed for Aaron & Miriam when they challenged his authority

Num 20:2-6 – Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses & Aaron. 3 And the people contended with Moses & spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! 4 Why have you brought up the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we & our animals should die here? 5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink." 6 So **Moses & Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, & they fell on their faces**. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them.

1. The children of Israel criticized Moses, they even tried to depose him & select another leader, but Moses didn't take these attacks as a personal offense, but rather he prayed for them.

[Elders must exhibit that kind of meekness & humility because they will be treated by their spiritual charge, from time to time, as Moses was treated by Israel.]

Titus 1:7 – For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, **not self-willed, not quick-tempered**, not given to wine, **not violent**, not greedy for money

1 Pet 5:2-3 – Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, **not by compulsion** but willingly, **not for dishonest gain** but eagerly; **3 nor as being lords** over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock

III. THE COURAGE OF JOSHUA

A. **After Moses died**, the LORD chose Joshua to lead the people into the land of promise.

Joshua 1:1-9 – After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that **the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying:** 2 “Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you & all this people, to the land which I am giving to them — the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4 From the wilderness & this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, & to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6 **Be strong & of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.** 7 **Only be strong & very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you;** do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day & night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way

prosperous, & then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? **Be strong & of good courage;** do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

1. The strength & courage of Joshua did not come from himself, but from the Lord who was with him as he trusted the promise & obeyed the Law.

B. **Elders** often have to exhibit great courage, because doing the right thing isn't always easy.

1. They must stick out their necks & make the important & sometimes heart breaking decisions.

2. They have to swim against the current of popular opinions & challenge God's people to obey Him.

[Elders, like Joshua, are leading God's people into battle (a spiritual one), & as in Joshua's case the outcome is certain.]

1 Peter 5:4 – and when the Chief Shepherd appears, **you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.**

IV. THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF DAVID

- A. David, the shepherd-king, was a great leader, but he was far from perfect.
1. The way he handled his imperfections gives us another great example of leadership.
 2. When David had carried the weight of his sin as long as he could bear it; he finally confessed it all before the prophet of God & ultimately before the nation (2 Sam 11; 12).
- B. When leaders sin, how they respond to it reveals the type of character they possess.
1. Deny it (Clinton).
 2. Blame it on others (1 Sam. 15:13-15).
 3. Confess it & accept the consequences – go on shepherding if possible (1 Tim 5:19-20).

[Accountability & leadership go hand in hand. Good leaders aren't perfect, but they are willing to accept the blame for their errors.]

V. THE PRAYERS OF NEHEMIAH

- A. Nehemiah took on the task of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, which the Babylonians had torn down.
1. His prayers played a vital role in his life's work.
 2. Out of the thirteen chapters, his prayers are mentioned twelve times (chapter 9 national).

Neh 2:1-5 (Nehemiah's appointment) – In the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine & gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. 2 Therefore the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart." So I became dreadfully afraid, 3 & said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, & its gates are burned with fire?" 4 Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" **So I prayed to the God of heaven.** 5 & I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, & if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."

Neh 6:1-9 (Conspiracy Against Nehemiah) – Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, & the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, & that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), 2 that Sanballat & Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono.” But they thought to do me harm. 3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it & go down to you?” 4 But they sent me this message four times, & I answered them in the same manner. 5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. 6 In it was written: It is reported among the nations, & Geshem says, that you & the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king. 7 & you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, “There is a king in Judah!” Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, & let us consult together. 8 Then I sent to him, saying, “No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart.” 9 For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, “Their hands will be weakened in the work, & it will not be done.” **Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.**

Neh 13:23-31 – In those days I also saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, & Moab. 24 And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, & could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people. 25 So I contended with them & cursed them, struck some of them & pulled out their hair, & made them swear by God, saying, “You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. 26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; & God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. 27 Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?” 28 And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me. 29 **Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood & the covenant of the priesthood & the Levites.** 30 Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests & the Levites, each to his service, 31 & to bringing the wood offering & the firstfruits at appointed times. **Remember me, O my God, for good!**

[There are many lessons in Nehemiah that relate directly to elders in the Lord’s church. The prayers he offered are good examples of that point:

- He prayed for the opportunity to [re] build the nation or kingdom.
- He prayed for strength to overcome the adversaries who would divert God’s people from their work.
- He prayed that God would remember the effort he made to keep the people pure & true to the Law.
- He prayed an intercessory prayer of repentance for the nation.]

CLOSING

- A. [This lesson in leadership](#) can apply to all of us.
 1. Not everyone will be able to serve as an elder or civic leader, but all of us are capable of exerting some amount of influence over others.
 2. Be a leader by your positive example, displaying the qualities that we have studied in this lesson.

GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION:

Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; read it in your Bible: Acts 2; 3; 13; Rom 10:17

Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior: Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4

Repent of your sins: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ: Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins: Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21

Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge: Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48