

March 10, 2021

Characteristics of Leadership

Last week we looked at the importance of respecting and honoring spiritual leadership. This week I want to take a closer look at the characteristics of leadership. These characteristics are not only requirements for spiritual leaders but are essential for all those in leadership positions. Let's begin in **Exodus 18:21**. Moses was judging the children of Israel. It was a task and responsibility that was too much for one man. Read **verses 13-18**. How much time each day did Moses spend judging the people? What was Jethro's counsel to Moses to lighten the burden? In verse 21, Jethro identifies four characteristics of leadership. 1. They were to be able men. 2. They were to fear God. 3. They were to be men of truth. 4. They were to hate covetousness.

Ableness simply speaks of one's ability to do a task. Not everyone is gifted or equipped to be a leader. Fearing God speaks of their spirituality. It also means that they understand their responsibility before and accountability to God. A leader who fears God understands that he must give account for his leadership to a higher authority and therefore he does not act as though he is above the law. Truthfulness and a hater of covetousness speak of his desire to make right decisions based on Biblical principles and is not easily influenced by bribes or promises of promotion, position, or prosperity. How many politicians and judges could pass all four of these tests? What about employers at work or parents in the home?

Now turn to **Acts 6:3**. In this passage the apostles have instructed the church to appoint deacons for the purposes of assisting with the widows of the church. This verse identifies three characteristics of leadership. 1. They were to be men of honest report. 2. They were to be full of the Holy Ghost. 3. They were to be full of wisdom.

Of honest report speaks of one's truthfulness or trustworthiness. Full of the Holy Ghost speaks of their spirituality, not only in terms of their responsibility and accountability to God, but also in terms of their Christian walk, being led of the Spirit. Men of wisdom speaks of one's ability to make right decisions based on the principles of God. Essentially the two lists are the same. Certainly, there are many additional characteristics of leadership that can be found throughout scripture, especially in the book of Proverbs. Take a moment to make a list of the characteristics you expect in your leaders.

There are two additional passages of scripture worthy of our study. In **I Timothy 3:1-13** and in **Titus 1:5-11**, Paul gives additional qualifications for the office of pastor (bishop or elder) and deacon. Using these two passages, make a list of qualifications and then compare it to the previous list you made. How are the lists the same and how are they different? Perhaps the greatest need in America today, in our homes, in our churches, in our schools, in our places of employment, in our courtrooms, and in our government is godly leadership. How is God preparing you to be a leader? What characteristics do you need to work on the most?