**RELATIONSHIP WITH LEADERSHIP**

Sunday School Lesson 12

*Building Right Relationships*

1 Timothy 2:1-3

5/28/2023

**Introduction:** Last week, we looked at the proper relationship that we ought to have with our co-workers. As a reminder, we spend a good portion of our week with these individuals, and this makes it extremely important that we maintain the right kind of relationship. Let’s briefly recap the principles that we considered in the previous lesson. First, the right co-worker relationship starts with a personal testimony of being diligent in our labor. We need to be an example to others of Christian character by giving our all in everything that we do. Second, the right co-worker relationship requires for you to have spiritual consistency in the workplace. It’s important that we do not send mixed messages of what we believe to the non-believers that work around us. Third, the right co-worker relationship embraces unity in labor but does not neglect Biblical principles. A Christian worker ought to be a team player. Fourth, the right co-worker relationship should balance friendliness against a proper caution toward entering into friendships. While it is important for the sake of the Gospel to build a rapport with your co-workers, you must be careful not to enter into a relationship that will be hurtful to your own Christian walk. Fifth, the right co-worker relationship needs a gracious and wise believer. Lastly, the right co-worker relationship is persistent in pointing others to Christ. You never know when that co-worker might finally respond to the Gospel! As for today’s lesson, we are going to be looking at the proper relationship we ought to have with leadership. We will look at this relationship from the standpoint of both the leader and the follower, as we all will fall under both categories while we navigate life’s relationships.

1. **PRAYER OUGHT TO BE REGULARLY MADE FOR ALL OF THE LEADERS THAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR LIFE.**

* 1 Timothy 2:1-3 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, **supplications, prayers, intercessions,** and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; We are commanded to pray for all that are in authority. This is not just speaking of spiritual authority that we have. This passage is clearly speaking of all authority whether secular, familial, governmental, or spiritual. If we are going to have a right relationship with leadership, then we have to have them in our mind as we go before the Lord. When dealing with secular or just generally difficult leadership, we are usually not inclined to pray much for them. We would rather complain to others. This does nothing in helping us in our relationship with that leader. If we have complaints about the leader, then we can take those to the Lord. A wicked leader is hard to deal with for anyone, especially a believer (Proverbs 29:2). While we don’t have to follow that leader into sin, we may still have to deal with that leader in other areas. Praying for them helps us to be the right kind of follower in difficult times. It keeps us from allowing resentment or anger to infect our followship.

1. **GIVING THANKS FOR YOUR LEADERS HELPS YOU TO MAINTAIN A PROPER RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MOST IMPORTANT LEADER – THE LORD.**
   * 1 Timothy 2:1-3 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, **and giving of thanks,** be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; If it’s difficult to pray for wicked or challenging leaders, then this next command for us to give thanks is going to be even more challenging. Why does the Lord want us to give thanks to Him for all of the leadership in our life whether good or bad? The best answer we can see from Scripture for this is that we know the Lord will even use wicked leaders for His purposes. There are plenty of examples for this in the Bible with Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus being the two that are probably the most prominent. Perhaps, the Lord will use a wicked leader in a job as a way to direct you to a different place of employment, or He may be using that leader to teach you how to be patient and gracious. Regardless of what the reason is, we can have confidence in the Lord’s purposes and give Him thanks for whatever followship situation we find ourselves in. Thanking Him helps us to be a good follower of Him.
2. **A LEADER MUST FIRST BE ABLE TO SEE HIMSELF AS A FOLLOWER IF HE DESIRES TO HAVE THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH THOSE WHO FOLLOW HIM.**

* 1 Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. John 7:16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. Matthew 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. Let’s consider this principles of leader followship by looking to the examples in the Bible. Jesus is the greatest leader this world has even seen. He is the epitome of our example of leadership. When He addressed His potential followers, He made it clear to them that He was also following His Father. He made disciples who were followers of Him, and those same disciples had followers of them. We continue that line of leadership until you get to today’s church. If you as a leader are going to have the right relationship with your followers, you must remember that you yourself are a follower. The most difficult leaders are those who see themselves as the be-all-end-all of leadership. The reality is that every single leader ought to be a follower of someone. Even those who are in charge of their own company had to follow someone to get where they are at today. There are no self-made men in this world. **We have to get egotism (pride) out of leadership in order to be the right kind of leader.** Additionally, the Christian leader is always to be following the Lord, so there never comes a point where we are to be without a leader of our own.

1. **A LEADER MUST UNDERSTAND WHERE HIS FOLLOWERS ARE AT AND WHERE HE IS TRYING TO TAKE THEM.**

* 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, 22-23 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. This principle was given regarding the parent/child relationship, but it is needful to bring it back as we consider the general leader/follower relationships that we have. A leader must understand where his followers are at. If they are lost, he ought to know it. If they are struggling, he ought to know it. If they are exceling, he ought to know it. If they are fighting among themselves, he ought to know it. If they are sluggish, he ought to know it. A leader cannot only be focused on the goal. He has to be focused on helping his followers reach that goal. Followers ought to know that their leader is engaged and aware of their present circumstances. Isn’t this what we desire of the Lord as He leads us? Additionally, the leader ought to have clear objectives for his followers. These ought to be clearly communicated to them to avoid any confusion or frustration on their part.

1. **LEADERSHIP IS NOT POSITIONAL; IT IS INFLUENTIAL. THE LEADER SHOULD ASSESS WHETHER HE ONLY HAS AUTHORITY OR ACTUAL INFLUENCE.**

* 1 Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Hebrews 13:7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. Leaders should understand that there is a difference between leadership and authority. There are plenty of people who have authority that either followers ignore or submit to begrudgingly and with as minimal effort as possible. These people might be in what they consider a position of leadership, but they are not really leading anybody anywhere. They might lead even in the overall vision, direction, and initiatives of a company, but nobody actually looks to them to follow them. Real leadership has an influence over followers. Think of Christ as our example. He has all of the authority. He has given us the commands to follow. Yet, He went even further and gave us His Spirit to help lead us along the way. He does not just want us to fear His position, but He wants for us to submit to following Him.