**RELATIONSHIP WITH LEADERSHIP**

Sunday School Lesson 13

*Building Right Relationships*

Hebrews 13:17

6/4/2023

**Introduction:** In our first lesson dealing with the leadership/follower relation, we looked at five primary principles to consider when dealing with this relationship dynamic. The first principle was that prayer ought to be regularly made for all of the leaders that you have in your life. Prayer for leadership allows us to go to the ultimate Leader, the Lord, to deal with any issues with the leaders that we have. Prayer also allows us to help leaders, even if they do not want that help. We can and should pray for leaders, even if they are not good leaders. The second principle was that giving of thanks for your leaders helps you to maintain a proper relationship with the Lord. It’s very difficult to be thankful for leaders who are cruel or wicked. Yet, the Lord will use even these types of leaders to accomplish His purposes. He can also use these leaders to help build us up to be the type of leader that we ought to be. Giving thanks to the Lord shows Him that we trust Him and appreciate His leadership. Of course, giving thanks also helps us to maintain the right spirit toward our leaders. It’s hard to be bitter and angry at them when we are continually praying and giving thanks for them. The third principle was that a leader must be able to see himself as a follower. There are no self-made leaders other than the Lord. We are all following someone. When leaders realize that they are also followers, it helps to keep themselves humble and to treat their followers with proper respect and understanding. The fourth principle was that a leader must understand where his followers are at and where he is leading them. The last principle was that leadership is influential and not position. Leading is more than just being a boss! Let’s consider some more thoughts:

1. **A LEADER MUST EXERCISE PATIENCE WHILE HELPING HIS FOLLOWERS GET TO THE PLACE WHERE HE IS LEADING THEM.**

* Ecclesiastes 7:8 Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Romans 5:3-4 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (Isaiah 42:16) Patience in leadership is critically important. Consider the patience that the Lord showed to His disciples. They continually failed Him and lacked in understanding. Yet, He continued to be patience with them and teach them. Consider the very definition of leadership. To lead means to cause one to move forward. It is generally understood that the forward position is where the leader is already at. If your follower is already positionally in the same place with you, then where are you going to lead him? The Bible tells us that patience produces experience. We have to give opportunity for those who are following us to actually follow us. We cannot put unreasonable expectations on them. Many leaders fail in this area, and they put expectations on them that the leader himself would have never been able to meet.

1. **A LEADER MUST KEEP MOVING IN ORDER TO GIVE SPACE TO HIS FOLLOWERS TO GROW AND ADVANCE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.**
   * Exodus 13:21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: Revelation 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Acts 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. Leadership inclines itself unto action. Examples of leadership in the Bible are generally seen with one person moving and another following. The Lord actively led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Leadership is not just a sequence of commands. It is in an active task that prompts others to move. Additionally, we think of the necessity for growth in leaders (except the Lord) to properly help their followers. You don’t want only to lead the followers to where you are at. You want to keep growing to give space for more growth for them. It seems that there are times when even good leaders are short-sighted on how they limit their followers by not increasing space to follow.
2. **A LEADER MUST BE WILLING TO BEAR LEADERSHIP’S WEIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY.**

* Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, **as they that must give account**, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Psalm 61:2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Isaiah 9:16 For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed. Matthew 15:14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. There is a great burden of responsibility in leadership. You are responsible for the direction that another person goes in. As a believer, you don’t want to lead someone in the way of error. You don’t want to lead them into a ditch. You also understand that you are accountable for the leadership that you provide. While the burden is heavy, a good leader will pick up the weight of it and carry it with him in sobriety. The weight is necessary to help us as leaders to stay on the proper path ourselves. An ungodly leader shirks the responsibilities and does everything that he can to avoid the weight. Remember that everyone will lead in some facet; thus, we all must be willing to bear that burden of leadership in life.

1. **A FOLLOWER MUST EXERCISE PATIENCE IN FOLLOWING IN ORDER TO AVOID LOSING CONFIDENCE IN THE LEADER.**

* Psalm 37:7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. 2 Corinthians 6:4 but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, Are we there yet? This is a question that a follower might ask of his leader, or a child might ask of his parents on a long car ride! We’ve already observed how important it is for the leader to be patient with the follower, but we must equally see how important it is for a follower to be patient with a leader. We like instant results. If we are following someone somewhere, we want them to get there already. We do not like the waiting that is naturally involved in following. The Scriptures speak of this dynamic in our following of the Lord. We are told to wait patiently for Him. How many followers have quit their following of a leader because they did not like the learning time involved in it? How many Christians have done the same in their own Christian walk? A lack of patience will always lead to undermining in one way or another the leader who we are following. Once the confidence is lost in a leader, it is very difficult for the follower to continue following. Trust is essential to the follower/leader dynamic.

1. **A FOLLOWER SHOULD STRIVE TO MAKE LEADING EASIER FOR THE LEADER, AND HE SHOULD DESIRE THE SUCCESS OF THAT LEADER.**

* Exodus 32:9 And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Numbers 11:11 And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Numbers 20:10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? 11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. Can you think of a worse leadership position to be in than the position that Moses was in when he led the Israelites? The Lord acknowledged to Moses on several occasions that the people he was leading were a stiffnecked people. They did not make Moses’ job very easy. They continually undermined his leadership and the leadership of the One that Moses was following. In Numbers 11, we find Moses breaking down. He’s tired of dealing with these difficult people. Moses’ failure by striking the rock twice came as a result of his anger toward his followers. What the people did not realize was that the failure of leadership is felt by everyone. Followers always suffer when leadership fails. Let’s do everything that we can to make leadership easy for those who we are following.