**RELATIONSHIP WITH LEADERSHIP**

Sunday School Lesson 14

*Building Right Relationships*

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

6/11/2023

**Introduction:** Today, we are going to spend one more lesson looking at the leadership/follower relationship. We are taking extra time on this particular relationship because the principles given can apply to many of the other relationships that we have considered in this lesson series. Ultimately, every relationship we have is either going to have a leader/follower dynamic, or it will have a peer dynamic to it. In last week’s lesson, we looked at three principles for leaders. 1. A leader must exercise patience while helping his followers get to the place where he is leading them. If the followers were already in the place a leader was trying to lead them to, then they would not need a leader in the first place. We must be patient with the growth of followers. 2. A leader must keep moving in order to give space to his followers to grow and advance as far as possible. Leadership is meant to be active. We must keep moving and growing ourselves in order to position our followers in the best place. 3. A leader must be willing to bear leadership’s weight and responsibility. Leadership is tough, and there is accountability attached to it. Every leader ought to understand the cost and expectations of leadership. In addition to leadership principles, we also looked at two more followership principles. 1. A follower must exercise patience in following in order to avoid losing confidence in a leader. There is no perfect leader other than the Lord Himself. We must understand that leaders are growing. 2. A follower should strive to make leadership easier for the leader. We ought to strive to make our leaders successful.

1. **A LEADER SHOULD TEACH HIS FOLLOWERS HOW TO BE GOOD FOLLOWERS TOWARD ALL OF THEIR LEADERS.**

* 1 Corinthians 16:15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) 16 that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. 17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. 18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such. (1 Peter 2:13; 5:5) Leaders should be very careful to teach proper followership to their followers. Many leaders tend to only focus on their followers following of them. This speaks to our selfish nature. A Godly leader will teach their followers the general principle of followership. He will strive carefully not to undermine the leadership of another whenever possible. When a leader undermines another leader, he not only hinders that leader’s ability to lead, but he actually hinders his own leadership ability as well. He teaches the spirit of rebellion in his followers, and that same rebellion may show itself in the follower’s relationship with the leader. Paul encouraged the churches to submit to those leaders that they had in place. He was careful to only confront that leadership when it was leading inconsistently with the leading of the Lord.

1. **A LEADER SHOULD NOT COMPETE AGAINST OTHER GODLY LEADERS FOR THE LOYALTY OF A FOLLOWER. (DON’T TRY TO BUILD YOUR OWN KINGDOM.)**
   * 1 Corinthians 1:12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. We should not be in competition with other Godly leaders for the loyalty of our followers. As we noted in the first lesson, we are striving to point people to Christ and His kingdom. We are not striving to build our own kingdom and followers. This speaks to the pride of our hearts when we think that we are the only ones that can help someone and lead them in the way they ought to go. On the other hand, this may also speak to our insecurities when we feel the need to compete against other leaders for the loyalty or affection of a follower. This can be applied secularly as well. If we as leaders focus first on doing what we ought to do and making sure the goal is accomplished, then we shouldn’t have to compete with other proper leaders.
2. **A LEADER SHOULD BE WILLING TO HEAR FROM HIS FOLLOWERS.**

* James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: (Matthew 21:15-17) Being in a position of leadership does not negate our responsibility to be effective listeners. The Bible commands us to let every man be swift to hear and slow to speak. It does not exclude those in leadership from this directive. Leaders ought to be willing to hear from their followers. A will man will hear and will increase learning. If you want to be the best leader, you will need to be a good listener. A leader doesn’t listen just for the sake of knowing where his follower is at. A leader also listens because he desires to make good decisions and grow in wisdom.

1. **A LEADER IS WILLING TO SHARE SUCCESS WITH HIS FOLLOWERS AND TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAILURES.**

* Luke 14:11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Philippians 1:3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 6 being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (Matthew 25:21; 1 Kings 18:17-18) A good leader is willing to share successes with his followers. More importantly, a good leader will first give praise over successes to the Lord. A good leader will seek to stay humble and administer praise to others and bear the responsibility of failures without casting blame where it is not warranted. King Ahab was a wicked leader, and he sought to blame Elijah for all of the problems that the nation faced. Many leaders are afraid to apply these principles because they think that it will undermine their standing with their followers or others. Ultimately, Godly followers will appreciate a leader who shares in successes and isn’t afraid to take responsibility for failures.

1. **A FOLLOWER MUST ACCEPT THAT HE MAY HAVE LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OR UNDERSTANDING COMPARED TO WHAT THE LEADER HAS.**

* John 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Matthew 26:8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? 9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. The disciples rarely understood what Jesus was doing and teaching. In John 6, many of His followers left Him because they did not like what He had to say. Judas betrayed Jesus because he did not understand the usage of the ointment. We see some of the worst followers in the Bible making foolish decisions from a position of ignorance. A follower must be willing to accept that there may be times where he is lacking in information or understand compared to the leader. This requires humility on the part of the follower.

1. **A FOLLOWER SHOULD SEE THE HONOR OF FOLLOWING GODLY LEADERSHIP.**

* Luke 9:61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 22:24-27) We have done a great disservice to the work of the Lord by placing such a heavy emphasis on leadership and overlooking followership. How many Christian leadership books are there in print? We glorify leadership, and we end up with many people who have no business being in leadership. We should consider the honor of being a follower. In many ways, it’s much harder to follow than it is lead. Let’s praise the Lord for all who rightly follow.

1. **A FOLLOWER SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE KEY TO FOLLOWING IS SUBMISSION.**

* 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. The word *submit* in the Bible comes from the Greek word *hupotasso* which means “to place or put under.” This is the key work of followership. It is a willingness to place ourselves under the leadership of another person. It is a willingness to prefer them over yourself. This is why the Bible tells us to submit to one another. As believers, we ought to look to put the needs of others above our own. If we do this in our followership and leadership, the relationship will be a great success!