



Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

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Samuel, Godly Leadership

Lesson #3

Overall Lesson #48

1 Samuel 7:3-6

3 Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, "If you want to return to the Lord with all your hearts, get rid of your foreign gods and your images of Ashtoreth. Turn your hearts to the Lord and obey him alone; then he will rescue you from the Philistines." 4 So the Israelites got rid of their images of Baal and Ashtoreth and worshiped only the Lord.

5 Then Samuel told them, "Gather all of Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you." 6 So they gathered at Mizpah and, in a great ceremony, drew water from a well and poured it out before the Lord. They also went without food all day and confessed that they had sinned against the Lord. (It was at Mizpah that Samuel became Israel's judge.)

A quick search of books on Amazon.com on the topic of “leadership” currently yields 137,827 results, with new titles added regularly. There are countless experts and self-proclaimed gurus who speak often on the topic. And, if you don’t believe me, search #leadership on Twitter and you’ll find some of them.

Yet with all of this at our fingertips, we still suffer from leadership deficiency – in our nation, workplaces, churches and homes. We have too many leaders who believe their position mandates their influence, rather than their influence enabling them to be effective in their position. Many of today’s leaders lead by forced coercion - a “my way or the highway” mindset that makes them more like dictators. President Theodore Roosevelt once said, “The leader leads, and the boss drives.” The Boss often plays the Boss Card. They force obedience, strictly because of their position and status. But, as author and expert John Maxwell says, “Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It’s about one life influencing another.”

As you are reading this, odds are you are picturing someone you know in a leadership position that drives more than they lead. I know I am picturing someone as I write. I also have to quickly examine my own life. God has placed all of us in a position of leadership, if not in our workplaces or churches, then certainly in our homes as parents. I know there have been times when I don’t exemplify the qualities of a Godly leader.

I don’t want to knock all of the great books out there on leadership. There are some terrific resources available from people who know far more about the topic than many of us do. But, there’s one resource that has a lot to say on the topic of effective leadership, and it’s available for free. You can actually access it right on your phone. It’s the Bible, and the passage is Proverbs 16. Go ahead and read it. I’ll wait.

This chapter is chock full of leadership lessons. Below are nine principles that are critical characteristics of a good, godly leader.

A good leader seeks God's direction. Is there anything more important in a leader than he or she seeking God's direction? Proverbs 16:1 says "The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord." Verse 3 adds, "Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established." And verse 9, "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." A good leader seeks the Lord, commits his way to the Lord, and the Lord establishes the next steps.

A good leader is modest, not arrogant. We've all encountered the know-it-all leader, the "submit-or-else" type of leader. But Proverbs 16:5 says, "Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished." I don't know about you, but I definitely don't want to be referred to as an abomination to the Lord. That's some pretty scary stuff.

A good leader is a peacemaker. Proverbs 16:7 says "When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." Yet so many leaders aren't interested in examining an opposing viewpoint or other ideas. We've lost the ability to empathize with others, and compromise has become a bad word. There's something to be said of sticking to principles. I believe God calls us to be steadfast. He doesn't however, call us to be jerks. And, when our "boldness" is interpreted as "coldness," we are not doing it right.

A good leader is fair and just. "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice" (Proverbs 16:8). I believe in goals and working hard to achieve them. But, the end always justifying the means is simply not true. A good leader is more interested in doing things the right way.

A good leader surrounds himself or herself with honest, trustworthy counselors ... and then listens to them. “Righteous lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right” (Proverbs 16:13). Do you know leaders who surround themselves with “yes” people? Personal insecurity drives them to seek only positive reinforcement for every decision they make. A smart leader surrounds himself or herself with smarter people, who are willing to speak their minds and offer sound counsel. After all, “Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed” (Proverbs 15:22).

A good leader is a good learner. Proverbs 16:16 says, “How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.” A good leader should always be learning, growing and improving. The day you feel there is nothing left to learn is the day that pride and arrogance have taken root. And, we’ve already discussed how the Lord feels about arrogance.

A good leader is humble. We’ve seen countless prominent examples of Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” From politicians and celebrities to CEOs and pastors, many have grabbed headlines as their empires have fallen. In most of these cases, it’s pride that has crept in. They thought themselves invincible, but quickly found out that no one is. “It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud” (Proverbs 16:19).

A good leader is sensible and kind. “Good sense is a fountain of life to him who has it, but the instruction of fools is folly. The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips” (Proverbs 16:22-23). Being smart and sensible makes a good leader more persuasive and effective. A good leader uses “gracious words” (verse 24), not speech that is “like a scorching fire” (verse 27).

A good leader is slow to anger. We've all seen the caricatures in movies and television of the angry boss; the person who yells for no reason, barks orders and berates and demoralizes the staff. Perhaps you've even worked for such a person. The Bible says that "Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."

As you read through these qualities of a good leader, hopefully you find them as challenging as I do. God tells us how to be effective, godly leaders. It's up to us to put our human tendencies aside and embrace these principles. It's also up to us to pray for those under which we serve, that they too would be the good leaders God wants them to be.

Application/Activity

Begin each day reading this to remind yourself that we are called upon to be leaders in every area of our lives. Look for opportunities this week to display Godly leadership!!!

Proverbs 16 New Living Translation (NLT)

- 1 We can make our own plans,
but the Lord gives the right answer.
- 2 People may be pure in their own eyes,
but the Lord examines their motives.
- 3 Commit your actions to the Lord,
and your plans will succeed.

4 The Lord has made everything for his own purposes,
even the wicked for a day of disaster.

5 The Lord detests the proud;
they will surely be punished.

6 Unfailing love and faithfulness make atonement for sin.
By fearing the Lord, people avoid evil.

7 When people's lives please the Lord,
even their enemies are at peace with them.

8 Better to have little, with godliness,
than to be rich and dishonest.

9 We can make our plans,
but the Lord determines our steps.

10 The king speaks with divine wisdom;
he must never judge unfairly.

11 The Lord demands accurate scales and balances;
he sets the standards for fairness.

12 A king detests wrongdoing,
for his rule is built on justice.

13 The king is pleased with words from righteous lips;
he loves those who speak honestly.

14 The anger of the king is a deadly threat;
the wise will try to appease it.

- 15 When the king smiles, there is life;
his favor refreshes like a spring rain.
- 16 How much better to get wisdom than gold,
and good judgment than silver!
- 17 The path of the virtuous leads away from evil;
whoever follows that path is safe.
- 18 Pride goes before destruction,
and haughtiness before a fall.
- 19 Better to live humbly with the poor
than to share plunder with the proud.
- 20 Those who listen to instruction will prosper;
those who trust the Lord will be joyful.
- 21 The wise are known for their understanding,
and pleasant words are persuasive.
- 22 Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who possess it,
but discipline is wasted on fools.
- 23 From a wise mind comes wise speech;
the words of the wise are persuasive.
- 24 Kind words are like honey—
sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.
- 25 There is a path before each person that seems right,
but it ends in death.

- 26 It is good for workers to have an appetite;
an empty stomach drives them on.
- 27 Scoundrels create trouble;
their words are a destructive blaze.
- 28 A troublemaker plants seeds of strife;
gossip separates the best of friends.
- 29 Violent people mislead their companions,
leading them down a harmful path.
- 30 With narrowed eyes, people plot evil;
with a smirk, they plan their mischief.
- 31 Gray hair is a crown of glory;
it is gained by living a godly life.
- 32 Better to be patient than powerful;
better to have self-control than to conquer a city.
- 33 We may throw the dice,
but the Lord determines how they fall.