

The Gospel According to Mark - Seven Leadership Principles The Disciples Missed

April 7th, 2019

Seven Leadership Principles The Disciples Missed

Mark 9:30-37

“And the enemy can't take what I have Or change who I am, I belong to You”

How cool is that? Very!!! As I've said many times before, once you allow Jesus to be your Savior, Satan looses your soul, you are now a child of God and Satan can't change that ever! You now belong to God! However, there's something we must remember. A child of God still has a daily choice to make when it comes to allowing Jesus to be the Lord of your life for that day. Once your Savior always your Savior, but Lordship is a daily decision! Here's the deal, if you want to be a godly leader, you must allow Jesus to be your Lord and you'll have to learn seven leadership principles the disciples missed! Oh they eventually got it, but it took a while!! Let's pray and ask God to help us not to miss these very important leadership principles. Prayer

Let's read our text today. It's found in Mark's gospel chapter 9:30-37

Mark 9:30 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were,

Mark 9:31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise."

Mark 9:32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

Mark 9:33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?"

Mark 9:34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Mark 9:36 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them,

Mark 9:37 "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

What was going on with the disciples in this story? They were struggling with an attitude we all struggle with at some point in our lives...

The Universe Revolves Around ME!

Maybe they were arguing about who was the greatest or most important member of the 12 disciples! It may have went something like this...

James says: "Well, He took me up on the mountain of transfiguration!"

John says: Don't forget I was there too and we've always been really close friends, like brothers!

Peter says: "Well, I was on that mountain also, and you might remember He called me the rock!"

Judas says: "Yeah, but He lets me keep the money bag!"

Nathaniel says: "He said I was a true Israelite and that there is nothing false about me!"

Or maybe they were arguing about who would be greatest in Jesus' new administration once He took over the government from Rome and reestablished Israel as a world power and became it's King! As I read this, I'm thinking, you've got to be kidding! Jesus just told you guys...

Mark 9:31 ..."The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise."

And all they could think about was their own positions in God's Kingdom! Well I can't really point a finger at them because so many times in my life I'm thinking about me, myself and I rather than Jesus and His glory, His will, and His purpose!

Gene Wilkes, wrote a book called "Jesus On Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader."

C. Gene Wilkes, Jesus On Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader (Nashville: Lifeway, 1996)

I studied his book when I was working on my doctorate on leadership! My main points today come from the wisdom Gene Wilkes presented in this book. Thanks Gene!! So let's look at...

Missed Principle #1

“Servant leaders humble themselves and wait for God to exalt them.” Wilkes

Mark 9:33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?"

Mark 9:34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

See how the disciples were missing principle one?

“Servant leaders humble themselves and wait for God to exalt them.”

Where is this principle found in the Bible? Many places! Jesus said this...

Mat 23:11 The greatest among you will be your servant.

Mat 23:12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

And then we read these words in 1Peter 5:5-6...

1 Pet 5:5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1 Pet 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

J. Oswald Sanders said this...

“True greatness, true leadership, is achieved not by reducing men to one's service but in giving oneself in selfless service to them. And this is never done without cost. . . . The true spiritual leader is concerned infinitely more with the service he can render God and his fellow men than with the benefits and pleasures he can extract from life. He aims to put more into life than he takes out of it.”

The opposite of humility would be selfish pride and God's Word contrast pride and humility in the book of proverbs...

Prov 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Prov 18:12 Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.

Prov 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.

Missed Principle #2

“Servant leaders follow Jesus rather than seek a position.” Wilkes

Mark 9:34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

Paul had these words to say . . .

1 Cor 10:33 . . . For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

1 Cor 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

James adds this warning . . .

James 3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

In the world men seek positions, but in the church, positions should be held by those who are called. Notice I said called, not super talented! It's not that we don't want talented people in the church, we do! But availability is more important than ability and if God calls you to do something He will equip you! This is true for the most visible as well as the least recognized positions. I heard it put this way...

“God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called!”

When God called me, I can tell you emphatically, I was not equipped! I had been miraculously and gloriously saved from my sin and my lostness, but I was no Biblical Scholar and had no talent whatsoever at public speaking! Then one night in an old Sunday School classroom at my home church, at the ripe old age of sixteen, I got on my knees and began praying and asking God what He wanted me to do with my life! I opened my Bible and read the story of the Crucifixion in Matthew's Gospel and then turned a few pages over and read this...

Mat 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Mat 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
Mat 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

I knew right then and there that I was to spend my life sharing the good news that had so radically changed my life! I didn't seek a position or a spiritual gift, I just sought the Lord and asked Him for His guidance in life. He did not disappoint! At 17 the church that thought I was bound for the state penitentiary licensed me into the Gospel ministry and God began the life-long process of equipping me. I'm still a work in progress!!

Here's a good rule of thumb: seek the giver of the gifts, not the gifts! This is true for spiritual gifts, leadership positions, material provision, etc. Jesus said as much in His sermon on the mount...

Mat 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Missed Principle #3

Godly leaders follow the example of Jesus and live to serve! Wilkes

Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

We're going to see this principle again in a few weeks in Mark 10! But for today I want to show you an example of this principle played out in Jesus' own life. It's found in John's Gospel...

John 13:1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

John 13:2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.

John 13:3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;

John 13:4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

What Jesus did next set Him apart from all the other leaders of His day.

John 13:5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

How absolutely amazing is that? Jesus, The Son of God, God in the flesh, getting on His knees and washing the feet of the disciples! What a servant leader!

The world, on the other hand, has a very different view of leadership! A man by the name of Wess Roberts wrote a book titled "Leadership Secrets of Attila The Hun." Here's what he said...

"Lust for Leadership: 'You've got to want to be in charge. Above all other traits, one who desires to lead must possess an intrinsic desire to achieve substantial personal recognition and be willing to earn it. . . . You must have the courage, creativity and stamina to focus on accomplishing your responsibilities through the directed, delegated efforts of subordinates."

Wess Roberts, Leadership Secrets of Attila The Hun (New York: Warner Books, 1987), 26.

Another writer, Stacy T. Rinehart, wrote about the contrast between the world's ways and the ways of Jesus in a book titled "Upside Down"...

"Jesus contradicted everything I had thought, learned and experienced concerning the subject of

leadership. Leading from a position of authority and power might be the accepted way of the world, but Jesus said it must not be so among His people.”

Stacy T. Rinehart, *Upside Down* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998), 20.

Okay...

Missed Principle #4

“Servant leaders can risk serving others because they trust that God is in control of their lives.”
Wilkes

Again, listen to the words of Jesus in our text...

Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

The Psalmist said it beautifully in Psalm 37...

Psa 37:3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

Psa 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psa 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:

Psa 37:6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

A good example...

Many of you may not know this, but Jay, our Executive Pastor and his wife Bronie, left a senior pastor position to move to Slidell to help us plant Northshore Church back in 2001. They had two young children at the time, but stepped out on faith because they trusted God to be in control of their lives and that He would take care of them and meet their needs! Those of you who know Jay, know he has a servant's heart and just wants to build God's Kingdom by doing the thankless jobs in the background that make so much of what we do on Sunday's possible! He understands principle #4...

“Servant leaders can risk serving others because they trust that God is in control of their lives.”

Let me put it this way: Whether you are balancing the books, handling the maintenance needs of the church building, leading a small group, serving in children's ministry, helping Zach with the student ministry, leading worship, running a camera or computer, greeting, ushering, or coming early to pray for the service, if you're serving God by serving others you'll find great peace and fulfillment knowing God's will is being done in your life! And let me say this: God's economy works different than the world's. You don't have to be the CEO to be used of God in powerful ways. Here's another example.

A man by the name of Mr. Kimbell, a Sunday School teacher, led D.L. Moody, who was a shoe salesman, to the Lord. Moody led a man to the Lord who led a guy named Billy Sunday to the Lord. Billy Sunday led Mordicia Ham to the Lord. Mordicia Ham led Billy Graham to the Lord. And only God knows how many people Billy Graham led to the Lord during his ministry! But the only way for us know we are being used of God is if we understand...

Missed Principle #5

“Servant leaders give up personal rights to find greatness in service to others.” Wilkes

Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Jesus said in John 10:10...

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. NIV

Jesus gave up His personal rights over and over in His life, and then gave His life so you and I could find life! What about you and me? Are we willing to give up personal rights to find greatness in service to others? We talked about this a few weeks ago! Remember, Mark 8:34-35?

Mark 8:34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after

me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Calvin Miller put it this way...

Once we have given up all rights to reputation, we may begin the walk of faith with nothing crucial to be lost!"

Calvin Miller, *The Empowered Leader*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 40.

Wilkes said the disciples "learned that servant leadership ultimately means giving up yourself so that others can have the life God desires for them."

And Paul wrote these words which we recently read but that are so important and truly speak to this principle...

Phil 2:1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,

Phil 2:2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Phil 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Phil 2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Phil 2:5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Only two more missed principles, but they are quite important!

Missed Principle #6

Servant leaders share their responsibility and authority with others to meet a greater need." Wilkes

Hans Finzel, a modern day leadership expert said this...

"Nothing destroys morale more than a 'control freak'—the old-fashioned kind of leader who still wants to make all the decisions, call all the shots, and be the sole captain of the ship."

What a blessing for the New Testament Church that it's leaders understood sharing responsibility! Had they not, then the spread of the Gospel would have been greatly hindered and it might mean that you and I would never have heard the good news. Listen to this example of how the New Testament Church's leaders handled a very difficult situation...

Acts 6:1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

Acts 6:2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

Acts 6:3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them

Acts 6:4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

Acts 6:5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

Acts 6:6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 6:7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

See the big picture! No one person can do it all! It takes all of us working in concert together! No one has all the skills! No one has all the answers! We must work together!! Without teamwork, the church ceases to be the church and simply becomes an organization! Jesus wants His church to be so much more than that! We are the Body of Christ, and as such we are an organism, rather than just an organization! However, for an organism to live it must have organization, and when we work together by sharing responsibilities and authority and by serving one another, we function as the Body of Christ and are able to be His hands, His feet, His mouthpiece speaking His heart! If we can accomplish this we will understand...

Missed Principle #7

Servant leaders have God's priorities as their own! Wilkes

God cares about those whom the world has forgotten!

Mark 9:36 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them,
Mark 9:37 "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

James wrote this...

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Max Lucado put it this way...

"When our deepest desire is not the things of God, or a favor from God, but God Himself, we cross a threshold. Less self-focus, more God-focus. Less about me, more about Him."

When we adopt God's priorities as our own, our lives become unentangled by the world and we are free to lead by serving! This service to God and those whom He so dearly loves brings a purpose into your life you won't find anywhere else. King David's words sum up this desire of a servant of God to have God's priorities as their own...

Psa 143:8 Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.

Psa 143:9 Rescue me from my enemies, O LORD, for I hide myself in you.

Psa 143:10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Let's pray!