

The Top Ten Leadership Principles of Jesus

Jesus is the ultimate leader. During His life on earth, he turned three years of ministry into a worldwide movement that changed history. Today, more people follow Him than any other leader in the world. As a model leader, Jesus practiced the most vital principles of leadership-and he provides an example for us to imitate. Here are some observations.

1. Leadership is servanthood. (Mark 8:35, Matthew 20:25)

"He who is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew 23:11)

At the last supper, Jesus modeled servanthood by washing His disciples feet-including Judas Iscariot, the one who would betray Him! He showed us that servanthood begins with a secure leader (John 13:3). Jesus knew His position and was willing not to flaunt it. He knew His calling, and was willing to be faithful to it. He knew His future and was willing to submit to it. He had nothing to prove, nothing to lose and nothing to hide. He was into towels not titles.

2. Let your purpose prioritize your life. (Luke 19:10, Matthew 6:33)

"Father, I have glorified you on earth, having accomplished the purpose you have given Me to do (John 17:4)."

In many ways, the entire life and ministry of Jesus was about setting priorities and living by them. When He said, "Let the dead bury their own dead," Jesus spoke to the need to not be distracted from the real and most important goal, even those emergency situations that claim our attention (Matthew 8:22). When His friend Lazarus died, he stayed focused on what He was doing, and didn't leave to visit him for two days. He was a man on a mission (Luke 9:51). Leadership must be driven, not by the whims of people but by your God-given purpose.

3. Live the life before you lead others. (Luke 7:22, John 14:11)

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good, the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth what is evil" (Matthew 12:35)

Jesus taught us to put "being" before "doing." At one point, John the Baptist sent a question to Jesus: "Are You the coming One, or do we look for another?"

Jesus could have answered indignantly. Instead, He said, "Go, and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear and the gospel is preached to the poor (Luke 7:22)." Jesus let His actions speak for Him. He knew that people do what people see, not necessarily what they *hear*.

4. Impact comes from relationships not positions. (John 4:5-30, 8:1-11)

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

Jesus knew the importance of relationships. He did not set up a throne in the middle of each city and say, "This is my palace. This is the only place you can see Me." He went to the marketplace. He went to the boats of fishermen. He went to the synagogue. He went to the homes of people. He went everywhere. He "went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere (Luke 9:6)."

5. Leaders must replenish themselves. (Mark 3:7-10, Luke 4:42-43)

"Come yourselves out apart into a desert place, and rest a while." (Mark 6:31)

Life is demanding. People are demanding. The more you succeed, the more you lead, and the more people will demand of you. Replenishing yourself requires your attention. Many times, Jesus would leave a crowd of people-the very people He was sent to serve-and depart into a place of solitude. He knew that times of solitude with His Father in heaven would enable Him to regain perspective and refuel Himself for what was to come. If Jesus needed to replenish Himself, how much more do we need to as well!

6. Great leaders call for great commitment. (John 6:53, Matthew 16:24)

"And He summoned the multitude with the disciples and said to them, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up His cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save His life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it (Mark 8:34-35)."

Jesus had the greatest product on earth: salvation. He offered the human race an opportunity to have a relationship with God. He spoke of heaven and angels, joy and peace, and mansions in glory. But, He never painted a distorted picture. He warned His disciples of persecution. (Matthew 10:17) He cautioned them about afflictions. (Matthew 24:9)

He spoke of loneliness. (Matthew 8:20) Jesus continually prepared His followers for the tough times.

7. Leaders show security and strength when handling tough issues. (Luke 20:20-26, Matthew 22:23-46)

"And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time. Then, He came to the disciples, and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand! (Matthew 26:44-46)

Jesus handled tough issues, by:

1. Rising early and gaining perspective.
2. Remaining calm during difficult times.
3. Agreeing with His adversary quickly.
4. Handling wrongdoing immediately.
5. Finishing what He started.

8. Great leaders lead on a higher level. (John 16:33, Matthew 16:24)

"In the world the Gentiles lord it over one another, but it shall not be so among you." (Matthew 20:25)

Jesus led on a higher level than others, and called for a higher commitment from His followers. Jesus demonstrated leadership that was never satisfied with mediocrity. Leaders do not merely get by, and maintain what has already been. Jesus knew credibility comes from solving problems. His leadership surpassed normal expectations. Despite His own lowly beginnings, He led people to a life they could never achieve on their own.

9. Leaders choose and develop their key people. (Luke 10:1, Matt. 10:1)

"Jesus chose the twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach." (Mark 3:14)

Effective leaders know their success is impacted by those who are closest to them. They do not leave this issue to chance. They select who will be on their team, and pay close attention to who will play crucial roles on that team. Jesus never took a vote; He made deliberate choices about everything, and even stayed up all night praying before He chose His disciples. He consistently challenged

people to take deeper steps on commitment to the cause of the Kingdom.

Principles of Jesus' plan of team building included selection, impartation, delegation, supervision and reproduction.

10. Great leaders know that there is no success without a successor. (Matthew 28:18-20, John 20:21-22)

"The works that I do, you shall do, and greater works, because I go to the Father." (John 14:12)

Almost from the first day He was with them, Jesus told His followers that he would be with them only a short time. From time to time they argued with Him about the limited tenure He described, but He continued to reiterate that it was right for Him to go. From the beginning, He prepared them for life when He was gone. He modeled how to depend on the Holy Spirit and impact others.

Jesus IDEA of mentoring:

I - Instruction in a life related context. He taught them with his words.

D - Demonstration in a life related context. He taught them by His example.

E - Experience in a life related context. He taught them with their own experience.

A - Assessment in a life related context. He taught them through evaluating their growth.

"Jesus said, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.'" (Matthew 4:19)

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