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Leadership Characteristics From The Life Of Moses



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Leadership Characteristics From The Life Of Moses

Few men have been called upon to lead like Moses. The sheer numbers were staggering, a million people plus lowing cattle and bleating sheep. The terrain was inhospitable and the route ambiguous. Moses was met with elation and frustration. He experienced God's miraculous grace and severe judgement. He faithfully led in the face of mutiny and plagues. When he finally reached the Promised Land, his team of spies failed at their purpose. Sent back into the wilderness to wander, Moses, in the sunset years of his life, faithfully led the masses nowhere in particular. No doubt Moses seriously questioned his success as a leader.

Exchange the Israelites for our wives, children, employees and churches. Replace the wilderness with our neighborhoods, communities, places of commerce and roadways. Trade the mutiny with the challenges to our authority and capability. Substitute the plagues with our frequent adversity and the bleating sheep with any other nagging cause for headache in life. We will soon notice that men have a hero in Moses.

This article will be too brief to capture all the characteristics of leadership. However, it will endeavor to glean a few practical points from the life of Moses to encourage men onward in their personal lives and as they lead their families.

Inadequacies: We read of Moses' inadequacies in *Exodus 3*. "Who am I, that I should go?" Moses exclaimed to God. "I AM THAT I AM" was God's reply. Moses countered in *Exodus 4:1*, "But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice." God responded by displaying His power through Moses' staff and leprous hand. Moses submitted himself to God's calling to lead after a stern rebuke for criticizing the stammering tongue that God gave him. As Christian men we have been called to lead. No doubt we all have a list of disqualifying attributes and failures. Settle them on the power of God as Moses did. *Exodus 4* is the last time Moses objects to his calling to lead.

Delegation: From morning until evening Moses sat judging the people (unless of course they were traversing over mountains and through water ways). For hours on end the people barraged Moses with questions, comments, problems and opinions. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, saw this as a problem. Jethro warned, "Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee. . . ." (*Ex. 18:18*). He counseled Moses to select and train rulers to share his load. As Christian men, we need to share the burden of leadership. Utilize grandpas and grandmas and respected brothers and sisters and employ them in the leadership of our families. Support our Sunday School staff in the teaching of our children. Be actively engaged in our children's education. Sometimes by loosening our grip we can follow the example of Moses and be a more effective leader.

Stand in the Gap: It's hard to rank what must have been the lowest of Moses' lows, but the rebellion in *Numbers 14* would certainly be a contender. Twelve spies entered into the Promised Land to search out the inheritance. Ten of the twelve men brought back "an evil report," lacking faith in God's ability to deliver the land into their possession. "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them. . ." God exclaimed. Moses responded, "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy." God replied, "I have pardoned according to thy word." As Christian men we too can stand before God in prayer. On behalf of our families we can appeal to His attributes as Moses did in *Numbers 14:19-20* (*Job 1:5*).

Story Telling: Many of Moses' works from which we benefit are his stories. After all, much of Genesis, Exodus and Numbers are historical accounts of the Hebrews recorded by Moses. Moses painstakingly recorded the law in written form and delivered it orally. It must have been his focus and purpose after they were turned away in the wilderness to wander aimlessly until the rebellious generation had died off. No doubt, he poured himself into teaching the younger generation through written word and voice. He passed on their heritage and gave them hope. Story telling was a practiced skill in days

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gone by, for on it rested the transfer of information. To further accent this point, look no further than Jesus Christ. It could be argued that He authored most of the creative stories in the Bible – parables. Everyone likes stories. What father hasn't heard, "Tell us a story," as we tuck the little ones into bed? As leader in the home, the burden of transfer of heritage and hope rests upon us. Carefully consider the story of salvation God has woven into our lives. Testify of God's mighty works through oral story and written account. Grandparents can record the heritage and hope of Jesus made flesh in their lives and hand it down to the children. It will help get us through the wilderness and into the Promised Land.

Failings: When leaders fail, it is public and with stern consequence. Most people empathize with Moses' most outward transgression – hitting the rock when he should have spoken. It was a particularly trying time in Moses' leadership. *Numbers 20* recounts how the people "chided" with Moses. Moses was worn thin to the breaking. His act of disobedience was an affront to the Holiness of God and an action of unbelief (*Num. 20:12*). God's discipline was swift, heavy and public. News must have spread like wildfire. Moses would not enter into the Promised Land. Moses recounts this painful consequence in *Deuteronomy 3:23-28*. It is in moments like these that leaders are given the opportunity to exhibit one of the most powerful lessons to those that follow – God's redemptive grace. For it is one thing to academically teach our youth the tenants of sin, discipline, repentance, grace and forgiveness. It is altogether most powerful when we walk the road of failure openly and publically bearing the cross of God's discipline for our followers to see. They see us repent, make restitution and receive God's grace. They see forgiveness extended and peace restored. They see us as clay in the Master's hand as opposed to the vase on the Master's shelf, and we have forged a path worth following.

Moses' faithful obedience has sealed him a forever place in the revered halls of Christendom. He ministered to Jesus on the mount of transfiguration (*Luke 9*) and won himself a place among the faithful in *Hebrews 11*. Faith in God freed him to delegate. Faith in God moved him to call upon God's attributes. Faith in God required him to pass on the stories. History does not respect him because he lacked inadequacies or failings. Christian History respects him because God was made strong through his weakness (*2 Cor. 12:9*). So it will be for any man of us who will rise to lead by first falling on our knees in order to follow.