





# **...He leadeth me...**

Biblical success in leadership

by

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...He leadeth me...  
Biblical success for leaders.

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All scripture quoted from the Holy Bible, King James Version.

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## CONTENTS

Introduction...	7
1...Leaders – born or made...	9
2...Guidance for leaders...	18
3...Setting the Standard...	30
4...Attributes of a Leader...	39
5...Believing...	47
6...Commitment...	54
7...Humility...	58
8...Teachable...	68
9...Transparent...	74
10..Boldness...	83
11..Secure...	89
12..Discipline...	94
13..Motivation...	99
14..Motivating Others...	108
15..Leading from the Front...	115
16..Delegating...	124
17..Confronting resistance...	130
18..Vision...	135
19..The Ultimate Leader...	144

Appendix  
Additional Scripture for further reading

Ambition..157	Idleness..167
Anger..157	Integrity..167
Backbiting..158	Jealousy..168
Boasting...159	Joy..169
Boldness...159	Kindness..170
Compassion..161	Knowledge..170
Counsel...161	Patience..171
Courage...162	Perserverance..172
Cursing...163	Power..173
Deceit...163	Pride..173
Diligence...163	Stubbornness..173
Enemies...164	Tongue..174
Forgiveness..165	Wisdom..175
Humility..166	

## Introduction

The Challenge:

A young man, who had recently started his own business, said to me that there is nothing the Bible could teach him about achieving success. To him it was an old, outdated and impractical book that was quite irrelevant to his business aspirations and plans for success. Two years later he was back. His business was on the verge of collapse and he needed advice to get through the crisis.

I reminded him of the Apostle John's prayer for Gaius:

3John 1:2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

John's desire for Gaius was total prosperity for body, soul and mind. With a challenge in his words the businessman asked, "Is that possible, and , if it is, how can I achieve success?"

I reminded him that a good starting point was the advice God gave to Joshua as he was about to lead the Israelites into the promised land:

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

God's advice to Joshua was: get to know the Word and then do everything according to what

the Word says. The Bible is for more than spiritual guidance, it is applicable to all life's situations.

HE LEADETH ME is a study of one topic that could change the way we approach the situations life throws at us.

This book is a testament to the awesome power of the Word of God and the knowledge that it contains for those who care to look. Within the pages of the Bible we find all we need for life:

2Pe 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Take any situation or need you might have, family, business, learning, leadership, you will find the answers you are looking for within the wonderful pages of God's Book.

## CHAPTER ONE

### LEADERS – BORN OR MADE?

What is it that makes a person a leader? I suppose this is a question that anthropologists and geneticists would like to have answered. If there is a gene or trait within a person that grants him or her some special ability to lead and guide others then it would be easy to groom leaders for the next generation, to program the direction of the human race. But programming humans has never worked in the past because our inherent differences and peculiarities, our upbringing and experiences tend to thwart any attempts to control and order society.

Till now no leadership gene has been discovered so perhaps we should look at talents and traits and see if there is any specific feature of character, emotion or intelligence that defines one as a leader.

To find an answer to our original question, let's investigate by asking a few more. Could it be experience that defines a leader, or perhaps devotion, loyalty or maybe even birth right? Are leadership traits developed over time or can someone be a natural born leader? Has it to do with personality or physique? What unique attribute sets someone apart to be a leader? As a pastor these are questions I have asked myself over and over again in an effort to improve my serve, and each time I think I have discovered the answer I find something new or something happens that turns all the theory and easy answers upside down and brings me right back to the beginning.

Just a quick look at the world's leaders over the last one hundred years or so, the varying

styles and personalities which have led to monumental accomplishments or major disasters makes the head spin – from the megalomaniacs Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, to the men of peace Gandhi and Mandela. There have been women, Emily Pankhurst, Margaret Thatcher and Mother Theresa. They have come from all nations, from Norway's Dag Hammarskjöld to New Zealand's Edmund Hilary.

They have been loud and soft, tall and short, broad and narrow, African and European, Asian and Latin, in fact, the closer one looks at the leaders of the world, that are presently serving and have served, the fewer similarities and defining factors one can find that sets them apart from the rest of us. Be it character or stature, intelligence or upbringing, accomplishments or learning, no singular trait seems to stand out.

For someone like me who looks to the Bible for guidance in all things, it would seem to be an easy place to find a solution to the question but even in the Bible, I see that the leaders, be they kings or prophets, farmers or fishermen are so varied in character and upbringing that I need to dig deeper to answer my questions. My assurance of an answer comes from the words of Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians:

**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:**

**That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

**(2Tim.3:16-17)**

The Bible is my source and the characters within its pages are my examples and through them I hope to learn and improve my own abilities.

Paul, himself would be a good place to start as he, on his various missionary voyages around the Mediterranean Sea, appointed leaders for the newly established churches in Asia Minor and Greece and his testimony witnesses to the fact that what he did in his life was a copy of what Jesus Christ would have done:

**Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. (1Cor.11:1)**

Now what greater motivation for a source document can there be? And to answer the question about the peculiarities that make one a leader, let's begin again by asking another, this time, however, one that Paul would probably have asked: What did God look for when appointing a leader, or to put it another way, what makes a person acceptable as a leader in God's eyes? We can never know God's thoughts, because as Isaiah points out, 'His thoughts are higher than ours' (Isa.55:8-9), but we can see the results of His thoughts. Results that, initially, after a casual glance, brought me back to my original assumption that perhaps a leader is someone who has special abilities, abilities that God needed to accomplish that which He set out to do, but the more I read the stories and biographies of His chosen leaders the more confusing it became. For example I read in the Bible about the faith of Abraham and the wisdom of Solomon, but then I read further and see that Peter had neither; then there is the determination of David to do God's bidding, but then again there are those like Jonah who did everything in their power to avoid His calling. The list of contrasts goes further and encompasses all sorts,

from the caring heart of Jeremiah to the callousness of Samson; there is the direct heavenly calling of men such as Elisha, Samuel and Isaiah, or the call out of necessity that Esther received; there have been men of wealth such as Solomon and Abraham and Matthew, but then again, there have also been those living in extreme poverty like Elijah and John the Baptist; then there are those for whom leadership seemed to be their heritage like Moses or Josiah or Paul or perhaps not like Nehemiah or King Saul; some had a sense of 'destiny' in their leadership calling like Samuel, others not like Moses, some were called to lead only amongst their own people like the various Judges, and, then again, some were sent to the various gentile nations like Joseph and Daniel and Paul.

It is difficult to single out one determining factor, one definitive physical or emotional trait, that one special thing that defines a leader. In the Bible there are many who are surprised by their calling, such as Moses at the burning bush, Samuel in the temple, Elisha behind the plough, and there are others who are thrust into the leadership role by the public stand they take for God and His people, such as Jeremiah and Daniel, some are chosen by birth, like Isaac and Jacob, others again by the gifts they have, such as Joseph, some by special physical abilities such as Samson and Ehud, some by divine intervention such as Peter and Paul, and then again others were called through men, these include Aaron and Barak and Timothy. Not one of all these leaders was the same, not one thought or behaved the same as any other, and not one was to use the same techniques to lead. That brings us back to the original question, why them? What made them so special that they grabbed God's attention?

A cursory look at the Bible did not give me the answer, but when delving deeper I noticed

something, one peculiarity that they did all have in common, one thing that drove them above all else, one thing that made them stand out above all the others, and that was a yearning for something more, a sense that life was more than eating and drinking, that there was something higher or greater than they, something of more value than themselves:

**And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he(John the Baptist) saith, Behold the Lamb of  
God!**

**And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.**

**Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They  
said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest  
thou?**

**He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with  
him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.**

**One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's  
brother.**

**He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias,  
which is, being interpreted, the Christ.**

**And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the  
son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas(Peter), which is by interpretation, A stone.**

**(John 1:36-42)**

Even these illiterate fishermen, were on the lookout, were searching for more than the present, more than the usual, more than the mundane, more than a boat full of fish. This desire for

something greater was the seed that God used to lift them above the ordinariness that was their lives.

The remarkable thing is that each chosen leader, whether it was Moses in the wilderness of Midian, David tending sheep outside Bethlehem, Daniel a slave in Babylon or Simon Peter a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, each became a godly leader from where he was in life. At the time of their appointment they had achieved very little but God took them from their position in the world of men, be it prince or pauper, be it servant or prisoner, businessman or farmer, scholar or soldier, and used their longing for something more to accomplish His mission and in the process making them leaders of renown. Not one had to fight his way to the top or trample on someone to attain recognition. All they did was to seek, not accepting that they had reached the pinnacle of what life has to offer, and I want to emphasize their **seeking** as a continual exercise, and because they sought the Truth, God promoted them.

**And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead,  
and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from  
our sins in his own blood,  
And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and  
dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Rev.1:5-6)**

I have underlined the words “unto God and his father” as being the reason for appointment to leadership. All God’s leaders sought Him and were promoted. Once our focus shifts to “unto men and women” we lose the purpose of our calling. It is God who promotes and decides on

leadership. There is no exception.

**For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.**

**But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. (PS.75:6-7)**

**Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (Rom.13:1)**

There are those who aspire to leadership, who ignore the order of things, do not seek God's will and guidance and try and take control by force, people who do not seek that which is greater than them. These are people who seek only the glamour and glory that they perceive to be part and parcel of leadership, people such as Absalom and Adonijah whose sole concern was their own glory and power. Self-adulation was the order of the day, but for them success always seemed to be just out of reach, the acclaim they desired eluded them. They were never satisfied and never seemed to fulfil their ambitions. People such as them never seem to have enough power and they never achieve their ambitious goals.

Then there are those who, upon being promoted by God and achieving success, forget Him and what He has done for them, they forget that their leadership and success came from Him, those, like the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who think themselves above the order of God. He was a successful king, his powers virtually unlimited, but when he usurped all God's glory and chose to forget who had placed him in charge and given him his successes he suffered the consequences:

**And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.**

**The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.**

**(Dan. 4:32-33)**

It took seven years for Nebuchadnezzar to come to his senses and acknowledge that ultimately there is only One in charge. He rules over all. He promotes and brings down.

Successful leadership is all about knowing that there is someone or some ideal greater than oneself, a higher calling no matter how high up the ladder you might have climbed.

The people of Babel discovered while building their tower that no matter how high they built it, they could never reach the heights of God, He was always higher than they could ever have reached.

Leadership comes from God and with it the responsibility of acknowledging and accepting His authority. We are always subject to Him and 'filling' the position is only part of our calling.

**even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.**

**But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; (1Pet.2:8(b)-9)**

Giving credit to God is something akin to all the great leaders of the Bible. God placed them where they were, it is He who exalted them, and their task and responsibility as leaders was to acknowledge that before all others.

**Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (Mark 8:38)**

It goes without saying, those leaders who live close to the Word, who follow God's guidance, will give Him the glory due to One so great, they will succeed, and will go on to become great in their fields, greater than anything they could envisage or hope. True leadership comes from knowing that there is One who is greater than us, from acknowledging Him and the calling He has placed on our lives. Our talents, our physical and emotional abilities, our wealth, intelligence, knowledge and all our other attributes are to be used for that calling.

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