Moses—Great Example Of Leadership

Intro: Leadership is an important subject. It is the act or state of leading. Lead has many connotations, I will summarize some of them for our discussion. To lead is to guide, to induce to follow a line of action by persuasion or example, to act as chief of, to direct, govern, command, to direct the operations of. Thus when we speak of leadership we are speaking of the act or state of direction, government, commanding, etc. This is vital within life and within the church.

I. THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP.
   A. This is seen in all that we do.
      1. Sports.
         a. All sport teams have a leader (coach, manager, etc.),
         b. Without a leader only confusion would reign.
      2. Within a business: CEOs, presidents, chairmen of the board.
      3. All areas of life.
   B. This need is seen in the church.
      1. Jesus is the chief shepherd.
         a. 1 Pet. 5:4 “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”
         b. Eph. 1:22-23 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
      2. Within local congregations we must have leaders, these men who are to lead us are the elders.
         a. These men must meet the qualifications given by God (1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1)
         b. We can learn great principles by observing examples God has given us of great leaders in the Bible.
         c. Moses was a great leader: He is mentioned more in the New Testament than any other Old Testament character.

II. SOME OF HIS ATTRIBUTES THAT MADE HIM A GOOD LEADER.
   A. Desire
      1. He was willing to take the responsibility.
         a. Israel was in Egyptian bondage.
         b. For the situation to change, and to take them to the promised land; they needed a leader.
         c. Moses was willing to take the responsibility.
      2. Exo. 2:13-14 “And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? 14 And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.”
         a. cf. Acts 7:25 “For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.”
         b. This attempt at leadership was premature, it was not by God’s direction and thus failed, yet the desire was there.
      3. There are a lot of people who do not want to take this type of responsibility.
         a. Cf. Jam. 3:1 “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation [heavier judgment - ASV].”
         b. When we murmur against those who are leading us then we quench the desire to be leaders.
c. How often do we complain against the elders.

B. He was trained for leadership.
1. Moses was trained for 80 years prior to taking the leadership role of the Israelites for God.
   a. Forty years in Egypt
      (1) Acts 7:22 “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.”
      (2) “The priestly caste in Egypt was noted for its knowledge of science, Astronomy, medicine, and mathematics; this reputation was proverbial. (1 Kings 4:30).” (H. Leo Boles, A Commentary on Acts of the Apostles (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1948), pp. 107-108.)
   b. Forty years in Midian.
      (1) His life in Midian helped him learn, by giving him time thinking and to meditate.
         (a) His own life and keeping his life in tune with God.
         (b) The value of fellowship with God.
      (2) Learned what it is like to be a stranger in a strange land; 1 Pet. 2:11 “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;”
      (3) He became a shepherd; “He was to be shepherd of Israel. A man’s being a shepherd of his own family helps prepare him to shepherd God’s people. I think this is one of the reasons for the qualifications stated in First Timothy 3. One who cannot shepherd his own family in their spiritual development is not suitable to be a shepherd over God’s people, where one’s prime work would be to help them to grow spiritually.” (Franklin Camp, Principles and Perils of Leadership (Birmingham, AL: Roberts & Son, Inc.), p. 120.)
2. We need to train men from early age to be leaders, elders of the church. Many grow up and because of actions in their past, they are not qualified.

C. Courage
1. Courage is the quality of mind which enables one to face dangers, difficulties, threats, or pain without fear; bravery, boldness.
2. Consider what courage it would take to go into Pharaoh and tell him to let his slaves go.
   a. Moses was a shepherd.
   b. Egypt was one of the most powerful nations in the world.
   c. Exo. 3:11 “And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”
   d. God promised His aid and companionship to strengthen Moses; Exo. 3:12 “And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.”
   e. Moses spoke God’s message without compromise.
3. He would have to face a rebellious people (Israel).
4. Joshua 1:6-7, 9 “Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.... 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”
5. Leaders today must possess this quality.
   a. They must make tough, difficult decisions.
   b. They must do what is right, regardless of the opposition.
   c. 2 Tim. 1:7 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

D. Willingly Accepted Suffering

1. Moses:
   a. Heb. 11:25 “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;”
   b. He chose to suffer affliction because he had courage.
2. All Christians, but especially leaders will suffer persecution.
   a. 2 Tim. 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
   b. When elders take a stand, they will suffer for it, even from their own brethren.

E. Meekness

1. Num. 12:3 “(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)”
   a. Aaron and Miriam rebelled against Moses’ authority.
   b. Instead of being resentful and personally offended; his concern was their rebellion against God (by rebelling against God’s delegated authority).
   c. He concerned himself with others.
      (1) Moses prayed for their salvation.
      (2) Miriam was stricken with leprosy; Moses cried unto God to heal her.
2. This is not weakness, but strength that has been brought under the controlling influence of God, and is thus submissive to God.
3. The meek person looks to others, not self.
   a. This involves humility.
   b. Exo. 3:7-8 “And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.”
      (1) Moses recognized that the people belong to God.
      (2) He realized that God is the one to deliver them; Moses was only the instrument God was using.

F. Delegated Responsibility

1. A leader is to lead—not do everything himself.
2. Moses tried to judge the people by himself
   a. Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law advised him to delegate his responsibility.
   b. Exo. 18:25-26 “And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.”
   c. Deu. 1:15 “So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.”
3. An effective leader must work, but they must know how to motivate and encourage others to work what they have planned.

G. Cooperative
   1. Moses was willing to work with others.
   2. In the battle against Amalek (Exo. 17):
      a. He delegated leadership to Joshua.
      b. Moses stood on the mountain with the rod of God in his hand.
         (1) When he held up his hands Israel prevailed; when he dropped his hands Amalek prevailed.
         (2) Moses allowed Aaron and Hur to help him hold his hands up.
   3. Elders must cooperate with others to accomplish God’s work.
      a. 1 Cor. 3:9 “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”
      b. 2 Cor. 6:1 “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

H. Just
   1. Moses was concerned with justice.
      a. Deu. 1:16-17 “And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. 17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God’s: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.”
      b. Deu. 16:18-19 “Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.”
   2. Elders must not be respecter of persons as they make decisions.
   3. Elders must always obtain the facts and render decisions based solely on them.

I. Approachable
   1. He would listen to others.
   2. Exo. 18:13-26 (esp. 24) “So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.”
   3. Knowledge and wisdom does not begin and end with elders.
      a. Cf. Job 12:2 “No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.”
      b. Elders must listen to the knowledge and wisdom of others prior to making decisions.
   4. They must be approachable so people will come to them.
      a. Elders are the ones who tend, shepherd, and watch.
      b. When people have problems, they should go to the elders for counseling or advice, not the preacher.
      c. Elders must provide an atmosphere where people will come to them.

J. He Cared for the People.
   1. Moses cared for those whom he lead.
      a. Exo. 2:11-14 “And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. 13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? 14 And he said, Who made thee a prince
and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.”

b. After making the golden calf; Exo. 32:9-14 “And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. 11 And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saist unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14 And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”

c. When the spies give the bad report and they refuse to go into the land.

(1) Num. 14:11-20 “And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? 12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. 13 And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) 14 And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou art among this people, that thou art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, 16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. 17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, 18 The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. 19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. 20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word:”

(2) Deu. 9:13-14, 19-20 “Furthermore the Lord spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 14 Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.... 19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy you. But the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also. 20 And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.”

d. Heb. 11:25 “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;”

2. Elders must care for the people they lead.

a. Heb. 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

b. An elder who does not care for his sheep is a hireling; John 10:11-13 “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.”
K. Humble

1. Need for humility.
   a. 1 Pet. 5:5-6 “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Ye all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:”
   b. Jam. 4:6-7 “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

2. Moses humbly submitted to God’s will.
   a. In delivering Israel.
      (1) Started with an attitude of I am here to lead you from bondage.
      (2) After proper preparation, now had the attitude expressed in Exo. 3:11 “And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”
      (3) Even though he offered excuses, he did what God told him to do.
   b. His desire was to enter the land of promise.
      (1) God told him he would not enter the land because of his sin of striking the rock (Num. 20).
      (2) God allowed him to see the land.
      (3) Still only submission to the Lord.

3. Leaders today.
   a. If they expect others to follow their lead, they must demonstrate that they can follow God’s lead.
   b. Cf. Diotrephes; 3 John 9 “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”
   c. The humble person cares about God, His will, and those under his care instead of self; cf. Tit. 1:7 “For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;”

L. Reverent

1. In particular to God and His Word.
2. Exo. 3:4-5 “And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

M. Had proper spiritual values.

1. Heb. 11:24-27 “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”
2. Redemption was more important to Moses than anything else.
3. Num. 12:7 “My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.”

N. A man who was busy

1. God called him while he was working tending sheep.
2. An idle lazy man will never make a good leader.

O. Did not care who got the credit

1. Moses was not concerned with personal glory and honor.
   a. When he went to Pharaoh he called the people God’s people, not his.
   b. In the plagues, he always gave God the credit.
c. When Pharaoh called Moses, Pharaoh asked him to “intreat the Lord” on his behalf.
d. Moses recognized that he was only an instrument God was using.

2. Leaders cannot be self-seeking.
a. Notice Paul; 1 Cor. 3:6-7 “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”
b. If out for ones own glory, he will not do those things necessary to be a good leader (working with others; delegating responsibility, etc.)

P. Continued:
1. in spite of failure (he tried to deliver them once and they rejected him, he returned and delivered them.)
2. Heb. 11:27 “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”

III. OBSTACLES TO HIS LEADERSHIP.
A. Some did not want to follow Moses.
1. He was opposed by enemies, friends, friends and his own household.
a. Exo. 14:11-12 “And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? 12 Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.”
b. This did not mean that Moses should give up his leadership.
c. God powerfully showed the people His choice of leadership when the people rebelled.

2. Elders today must not give up.
a. They must not resign in face of opposition.
b. The Holy Spirit makes elders today; Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
c. They must not ask if the people want them as leaders (cf. reconfirmation/reaffirmation process of some today).
d. We must learn to submit to elders authority.

3. If some decided they did not want Jesus as their Chief Shepherd, can they ask Him to resign or reconfirm Him?

B. There was constant murmuring and complaining.
1. The Israelites constantly complained.
a. After only three days journey; Exo. 15:24 “And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?”
(1) murmured because of the length of the way and tired of the Manna; Num. 11:
(2) murmuring of Aaron and Miriam; Num. 12
(3) murmuring of the people after the report of the spies; Num. 13-14.
(4) murmuring of Korah, Dathan and Abiram; Num. 16.
(5) murmuring of people at the death of those in the rebellion; Num. 16.
(6) Murmuring for water; Num. 20.
(7) murmuring in the land of Edom; Num. 21.
c. The murmuring did not stop Moses from leading the people; he stuck to the job.

2. Why did they complain.
   a. They had seen God’s mighty works.
      (1) The plagues in Egypt.
      (2) The opening of the Red Sea.
      (3) God’s care by feeding and clothing them.
   b. At least two reasons:
      (1) They were interested in ease and comfort.
      (2) A failure to grasp the true meaning of discipleship.
      (3) “The Israelites did not understand their mission and the value of the things that God had provided for them. The cure for their murmuring and complaining was trust in God.” (Franklin Camp, Principles and Perils of Leadership (Birmingham, AL: Roberts & Son, Inc.), p. 125.)
         (a) This is the same cure for so many troubles in the church today.
         (b) Leaders must teach Christians to place their trust in all that God has said.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERSHIP.

A. Moses had the responsibility of getting the children of Israel out of Egypt and to the promised land.

B. Elders are God’s leaders in the church today.
   1. They have certain responsibilities.
      a. To God.
      b. To those whom they lead.

   2. That responsibility concerns the spiritual welfare of those under their care.
      a. Elders must tend, watch, guide, and protect in order to lead us to heaven.
      b. Heb. 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

Conclusion: Moses was one of the greatest men in history: a great leader—the person God chose to lead His people. As Moses lead those under his charge, elders must lead those under their charge to faithfully work in the Lord’s kingdom. Let us learn these great principles of leadership from this one whom God chose.