

[516: Pharaoh Was a Servant-Leader, Part 2](#)

I would guess that you never considered a Pharaoh to be a servant-leader from whom you could learn leadership lessons? That is exactly what I am proposing as we study the leadership style of Joseph's Pharaoh as described in Genesis 37-50. If you missed Part One last week, you can catch up [here](#). After that, let's take a look at the next five lessons to learn from the life of this amazing leader. Then, there will be five more lessons next week, so pay close attention (I know I originally said there were ten, but I was wrong - there are fifteen lessons.) There may be a quiz after that.

FIVE MORE LESSONS

6. Pharaoh recognized talent, gifting and “special ability.” In Genesis 47, Joseph brought five of his brothers to meet Pharaoh. When Pharaoh asked them what they did, they responded that they were shepherds. Pharaoh then made a revealing statement: “If any of them have special ability, put them over my own flocks” (Genesis 47:6). He didn't give Joseph's brothers a job because they needed one or because they were Joseph's brothers. He only wanted those with “special ability” to serve on his leadership team.

Pharaoh knew that world-class results come from employing world-class leaders and managers. Pharaoh had the good sense to hire Joseph but he also restored the right man in his cupbearer, for he was the one who eventually led Pharaoh to Joseph. Hopefully someone on your team can recognize talent. It doesn't have to be the lead person. When you find someone with that ability, listen to that person. They will save you much aggravation and the pain of a bad hire. And don't ever hire anyone only because they need a job or are related to you or someone already on staff.

7. Pharaoh promoted youth. Joseph was only 30 years old when he entered Pharaoh's court. Don't be prejudiced against youth. If you find someone who is talented, hire that person, regardless of their age. Youth can lack experience, but they do have energy and they don't know enough to prevent them from doing saying what everyone has said is impossible.

8. Pharaoh hired someone with a shady past and no previous experience. Up to this point, Joseph only had leadership experience in Potiphar's house and the prison. He also had an accusation of sexual harassment hanging over him from Potiphar. Pharaoh looked past that, however, to the needs that only Joseph could address. Almost anyone with talent will have some negatives; you can't find perfect hires. So stop trying and instead find and work with the best talent you can discover.

9. Pharaoh gave authority and established boundaries. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of everything except “the throne.” He put Joseph in charge of operations to store food for the famine and then to distribute food in the famine. Joseph's job description and expectations were clear; there was no ambiguity. While Joseph's hiring was a quick one, his job description was clear and well thought out.

10. Pharaoh was secure in his leadership and had Joseph with him “in the chariot.” Pharaoh had Joseph ride in the chariot as “second-in-command.” I have a picture in my mind that Pharaoh was in the same chariot or at least close by. When people honored Joseph, Pharaoh was secure enough that he wasn’t threatened by Joseph’s wisdom, power or position. Pharaoh was secure in his own leadership. He was taking a chance by putting this newcomer in charge, but Pharaoh still shared his power and prestige with this man recently released from prison.

There you have it - the middle five lessons from Pharaoh's leadership style. Tune in next week for the last five lessons. More importantly, work to apply what you have read last week and this, for the need for servant-leaders who can lead and manage like this Pharaoh has never been greater. Have a great week!

Make comments to this entry on the [site](#) where it is posted.

Read the last nine entries on servant-leadership [here](#).

[517: Pharaoh Was a Servant-Leader, Part 3](#)

It's time to wrap up our look at Joseph's Pharaoh, who was himself a great leader. I maintain that he was a servant-leader extraordinaire, for he served Joseph, his nation and the vision God gave him for the future. Under Pharaoh's leadership, Joseph was promoted, the impact of the famine lessened, and God's plan for Israel furthered in the process. All in all, I say that qualifies Pharaoh for special status in any study of leadership.

Let's wrap up by looking at the final five lessons we can learn from Pharaoh's leadership style. (If you missed the first ten lessons, you can catch up with them [here](#).)

THE LAST FIVE LESSONS

11. Pharaoh used his power to empower the right people. All leaders have power. What distinguishes a good from a great or bad leader is how that power is used. Pharaoh used his power to empower Joseph to do the job that God had gifted him to do. Peter Drucker, father of modern management studies, stated that the job of management is to find out what management is doing that prevents others from doing their job - and then to stop doing it. Pharaoh used his power correctly; he used it to help his team get the job done.

12. Pharaoh approved the plan and let Joseph carry it out. Pharaoh listened to Joseph’s strategy and then approved it. With his stamp of approval, he then let Joseph do it with a minimum of input or interference. Pharaoh did not micromanage or set up a bureaucracy that slowed things down. He did not interrupt Joseph in his work. I worked for a pastor once who interfered regularly in the work he hired me to do. One day I told him, "You have great patience for people I have to oversee and work with." In other

words, I was telling him nicely to let me do my job and choose my team. Do you need to be told the same thing? Do you need to tell that to someone over you?

13. Pharaoh gave Joseph an unlimited travel budget. The Bible states that Joseph traveled throughout Egypt; he had freedom of movement to get his job done (see Genesis 41:46). If you want to empower your team, let them travel. Give them freedom of movement to go see and learn what they need to get the job done. I am not referring to first class travel to exotic places, but instead trips with purpose to benchmark and observe best practices wherever they may be found. This may be onsite visits or conferences that feature world-class teaching and instruction. If you want the best, let them go and learn from the best.

14. Pharaoh was concerned for Joseph's personal life. Pharaoh found a wife for Joseph and then helped him take care of Jacob and his brothers when they came to Egypt. Pharaoh made sure that Joseph shared in the wealth and blessing that was within Pharaoh's power to bestow. Pharaoh also made sure that Joseph had a life outside his work position and gave him land and money to go with it.

15. Pharaoh stayed in touch with reality but let Joseph do his job. When the famine arrived, the people cried out to Pharaoh – but Pharaoh sent them to Joseph and told them to do whatever Joseph directed them to do. Wouldn't everyone like to have a boss or supervisor like that? Pharaoh was not enamored with the sound of his own name called out by his people. He stayed focused and let his team do the job, and his judgment was vindicated, over and over again.

CONCLUSIONS

Pharaoh was rewarded well for his exceptional leadership skills. His country was saved from oblivion and suffering. He actually increased his power and position during the famine, because Joseph successfully leveraged their supply of food and seed for land and a future return on their investment. Pharaoh secured a place in history as a good leader, in contrast to his counterpart who wielded heavy-handed, authoritarian control during the time of Moses. Moses' Pharaoh was such a bad leader that he allowed his personal pride and blindness to ruin his country for many centuries to come.

What kind of leader do you want to be? I hope you want to be one like Joseph's Pharaoh. Take some time to reflect on your style as it relates to Pharaoh's and see where you need to improve. Then set about building a more effective team than you have now so that you and your organization can be the fullest, best expression of who it is that God intended for you and them to be. Have a great week!

[518: What Are You Doing Here?](#)

It's good to be back after taking a week off. I had someone ask me this morning where the Monday Memo was! I am honored to be part of your life each and every week and I hope to continue by God's grace.

This week let's look at a servant of God who was depressed and discouraged, or in the term of the day, he was "bummed out." His name was Elijah and he took refuge in a cave after a difficult time in his life to sulk and complain. His way out of his funk was to hear the voice of the Lord. If you are "bummed out," that is your way out as well.

THE VOICE OF GOD

When Elijah was sulking in his cave, this is what the Lord said to him:

And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9b-13).

When God asked Elijah what he was doing there, God wasn't looking for information. He already knew, but Elijah didn't know and that was the problem. Elijah was depressed because he was looking at the circumstances and not listening to the Lord.

Notice how God's voice came. It was not in the power of nature or the fire. Instead the Lord spoke in a gentle whisper. You can't hear a gentle whisper if there is lots of other noise around you. Elijah had to block everything else out and listen to the voice that had led him up to that point in his life. It had never failed him and was not about to fail now.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

Is the Lord asking you what he asked Elijah? Is he asking you why you are "here," wherever the here may be? If so, he knows why you are discouraged, and why you are delaying and hiding. He is not asking for His benefit but for yours! And you must do what Elijah did. You must learn to hear the voice of God, perhaps learning all over again. Perhaps Psalm 46:10-11 will help you: "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."

God is a great and effective communicator. If you aren't hearing, then the problem does not rest with Him. This week I urge you to do what Elijah did: Get honest with yourself and God, and then be still and listen! His heart is to speak. Is your heart set to listen and hear? I know God will reveal Himself to you and that His presence is the key to getting out of the cave you may be in. Have a great week!

519: Fear Not!

Last week we saw in 1 Kings 19 that Elijah was depressed and discouraged in his prophetic work, so he took refuge in a cave where he was hiding from the threats of Queen Jezebel. If you did not read last week's entry, then you can catch up [here](#). Once you have done that, it's time to move on and relate what happened to Elijah to a similar situation in the life of the Apostle Paul.

FEAR

I did not point out last week that Elijah's problems started when he gave in to fear. He had just confronted and killed all the prophets of Baal as described in 1 Kings 18. When Jezebel threatened to kill him after that, however, he took off running: "Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." Elijah was afraid and ran for his life" (1 Kings 19:1-3).

Imagine that! Elijah was afraid after such a great victory over the false prophets, and he ran and ran. After he stopped running, God sent him right back to where he had come from to do the work that God had called him to do. It is interesting that the same thing happened to the Apostle Paul as we read in Acts 18:

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God (1-11).

FEAR NOT!

Paul had just come to Corinth from Athens where he had little ministry success. The Jews became abusive and opposed Paul, who then turned to work exclusively with the Gentiles. Do you see what the Lord told Paul? He told him not to be afraid. You don't tell someone not to be afraid unless they are already afraid. Perhaps Paul was considering moving on from Corinth, just as Elijah had moved on to avoid an encounter with Jezebel. Yet the Lord told Paul to hold steady, for he had much work for him to do in Corinth.

Perhaps you are afraid and thinking of moving on? Perhaps someone is opposing your work or your message. Maybe they are even being abusive and harsh. The word to you is the same as it was to Paul: Fear not! God is with you and He will not allow you to be run off from the work He has called you to do. He can't stop you from running, however, if you give in to fear and anxiety. It should give you great comfort that even Elijah and Paul were fearful; it should also encourage you that they may have wavered but they never gave in to that fear.

Are you facing opponents? Are you questioning your ability to fulfill your purpose? If you answer yes to either question, then I urge you to take consolation from the example of these two great men and don't surrender your life's work to the effects of fear. Don't be afraid, is the word of the Lord to you this day, and may you be strengthened for the work that is yet ahead of you to accomplish. Have a great week!

[520: How High Can You Jump?](#)

I have a trivia question for you: In what two summer Olympic sports is the winner not awarded the gold medal until he or she has failed three times? Then I have another question, but this one isn't trivia. It's about you. The question is: Do you know how high you can jump? Let's see if we can answer both questions below.

THE OLYMPICS OF FAILURE

Do you know the answer to the trivia question? The two sports in which you get a gold medal after you fail three times are the pole vault and the high jump. The last man or woman left in either competition gets to set the bar at any height, usually just over the world record, and then he or she tries to clear that height in three attempts. Once that person fails to clear three times, the competition is over and the winner is declared. This is why the world record has been broken so often in both sports because people are not afraid to fail in seeing how high they can vault or jump.

I wish more believers had that same attitude and played by the same rules.

You never know what you can do until you attempt to do it, but failing to attempt can be simply playing it safe because you don't want to knock down the bar, so to speak. I accepted some opportunities to teach this past week that kept me quite busy. My first thought was, "I am too busy to do all that." Yet I accepted and actually taught thirteen hours from Friday afternoon to Saturday evening. When I was done, I went home to bed, but I did it. No, what's more correct is that God empowered me to do it.

What is God empowering you to do these days? In other words, how high can you jump? It's really not about jumping, but rather about service, work, or some other practical expression of your faith. Do you really know how much you can do out of the potential you have?

MOST PEOPLE WHO SAY THEY CAN DON'T

I often hear people quote the popular passage, "[I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me](#)" (Philippians 4:13 NKJV). When you stop to think of it, however, that statement is only a declaration of potential. Just because you *can* do something doesn't mean you will or even should. If I say, "I *can* be a nice person," that doesn't mean I am exercising my potential. It just means I have the potential.

When someone quotes this verse to me, I am tempted to ask, "So what are you doing?" That usually makes people angry, for that verse is sacred to many and to challenge it in any way is tantamount to heresy. Let me ask you, however, since you cannot get mad at me face-to-face: If you can do all things through Christ, what are you doing? Where and when has that supernatural strength and power enabled you to jump higher than you thought?

I am writing this Memo after a long weekend that began that first class on Friday and didn't end until our church's annual business meeting tonight. I am tired, but I still have energy to write and do laundry (since my wife is out of town). I cleared the bar of teaching that was set for me this week and I am the better for it. What's more, the students I am able to teach are also the better for it (I hope).

Why not set the bar a little higher this week and see if you can clear it. Why not bless others, pray, write, study or read beyond what you thought possible and see whether or not it is possible. Why not choose to live in the truth of Philippians 4:13 and not just talk about it. Have a blessed week!