

## **Why Jesus Was a Great Leader**

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Air Dates: April 1 - 5, 2024

### **Day One**

Jesus was the greatest leader this world has ever seen. This God-man came to earth and in three short years of ministry, he took twelve unqualified men and developed them into a team that has changed the course of history. I want to point out some specific characteristics that made Jesus a great leader, and hopefully this can help us see the kind of leaders we should be, whether in business or our homes or our churches.

First, Jesus was a great leader because he knew who he reported to, and he made sure he fulfilled his boss's expectations. Jesus kept in close contact with his Father. He said again and again he always did what pleased his Father and spoke what the Father had taught him.

In John 7:18 Jesus said,

*'Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth ...'*

When was the last time you checked with your boss to see if you're working to his or her satisfaction? Do you spend enough time with your boss to understand his or her priorities, so that you are doing the things that please your boss? It really is your job to make sure you've got the marching orders right. And besides, it is simply smart to take the initiative of letting your boss know you need and appreciate his or her feedback.

Maybe you're thinking: You don't know my boss. It's impossible to communicate with my boss. That may or may not be true, but you should do everything you can to improve that communication. Many times, we excuse our own lack of effort by saying, "He never listens to me" or "I can't get any feedback from her," or "This company doesn't care what I think!" Pray about it and ask God to give you some creative ways to improve communication with your boss. That's the mark of a good worker and a good leader; certainly, Jesus was careful to stay in very close contact with the one who had sent him.

In any business or organization, the ultimate boss is the customer. Your customer is the person who creates the need for your job. If they didn't exist or didn't have certain needs, your job would be unnecessary. Think about that, and clearly identify your own personal customers. Those are the people you need to please.

### **Day Two**

What made Jesus the world's greatest leader? In 2 Corinthians 3:18 we read we who have been born from above are being transformed into the likeness of Jesus with ever-increasing glory. Therefore, it makes sense for us to study his characteristics and pray those characteristics into our own lives.

One outstanding quality I notice in Jesus is he knew what his mission was, he stayed focused, and he didn't try to jump through the expectation hoops of others. Do you remember when the disciples told

him the whole town was waiting to hear him speak and Jesus said he had other plans for the day—his mission was to go to other towns. He didn't let anyone take him off his mission. One man asked him to settle an argument between him and his brother, and Jesus answered, '*Who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?*' (Luke 12:14) That wasn't what he had come to do, and he didn't get sidetracked.

We can apply this in so many ways in our everyday lives. How often do we allow ourselves to get sidetracked as we do our jobs, and we never seem to get things accomplished. One great time-management technique is to refuse to be sidetracked and stay with the job until it's done. Do you find that you're often sidetracked? That might be something you need to pray about and change.

Then, Jesus knew what his mission was. Are you clear about your own mission—in your job, in your home, in your church, in your own life? Ask yourself, "What is it I need to do in my job above all else?" and then make certain that what you're doing on a day-to-day basis contributes to that mission. You may be very busy doing things that really don't matter!

Do you find yourself frequently trying to please everyone? When you need to have everyone's approval, you will be easily distracted and easily manipulated. Jesus knew sometimes you have to disappoint people in order to stay on track and do what you should do.

In Proverbs 16:7 we read,

*When the Lord takes pleasure in anyone's way, he causes their enemies to make peace with them.*

When we please the Lord, we'll have our best shot at pleasing other people. However, we'll never be able to please everyone, and to try to do that is to invite disaster.

### Day Three

Is your life full of celebration? Did you ever realize Jesus was always ready to celebrate? I think that is one reason he was a great leader and people loved to be with him. His first miracle was to turn water into wine at a wedding celebration, thereby putting his stamp of approval on what some might call a frivolous waste of time and money—a big wedding celebration. We see he often went to people's homes for dinner. He wasn't too busy to take time for these personal times of celebration.

He didn't want the crowds who came to hear him speak to leave with an empty stomach, so he turned a boy's lunch into food for thousands—a regular party. Two of his most famous parables are about a king who arranged a banquet and got angry when nobody came, and a father throwing a lavish party when his wayward son returned home.

How much and how often do you celebrate in your own life—on your job, in your home? We should look for reasons to celebrate. We can get so serious and so focused we forget to say, "Hey, you've done a great job; let's bring in pizza this afternoon and celebrate." Or "You've been working so hard, you deserve a treat; the ice cream is on me; let's go celebrate."

From small to big events, we can add so much vitality and joy to our lives and to others by taking time to celebrate. Look for excuses to celebrate for yourself and for your coworkers or staff, as well as your family and friends.

Now you may think this doesn't sound terribly important or spiritual, but celebrating should be a part of our daily routines. It encourages and motivates people. It lightens their loads. It focuses on positive rather than negative things. There are lots of good, spiritual reasons to be a celebrating type of person. Jesus was.

So, today, as you're going through your day, look for a reason to celebrate. Maybe your child gets a good grade at school; celebrate it. Perhaps your coworker gets a promotion; celebrate it. Did a staff member complete a difficult assignment with excellence? Celebrate it. If today is a friend's birthday, celebrate it.

Celebrations don't have to cost a great deal of money—or any money at all. A celebration can be something as simple as complimentary words spoken, to a card or a note in the mail, to cake and cookies, to a full-blown party. There are so many creative ways to celebrate, and Jesus was always ready to do so because he knew the value of celebrations.

## Day Four

Jesus was a great leader because. . . There are many characteristics that made Jesus the most outstanding leader who has ever lived. We've been looking at just a few of those this week. For example, Jesus was a great leader because he always had time for little people.

His disciples wanted him to speak to a great crowd that had gathered on one occasion, but he said he had planned to preach in the nearby villages. He took time from a hectic schedule to walk a long way and heal Jairus's little daughter; he stopped in a crowd to find one woman who had touched him and heal her blood disease; he saw a short little man in a tree and asked to have dinner with him. Jesus focused on individuals, and it didn't matter who they were. They were all important to him.

Don't you think sometimes we are caught up in the "star" mentality? Or do we only want to be involved in something with lots of people and big numbers? I have often said of all the wonderful opportunities God has given me to minister, my favorite was Sunday mornings with my small class of women, Sisters in Christ, who are still such a wonderful support group for me. It can become an ego trip to focus only on the numbers in the crowd; often the greatest blessing comes in the small groups.

The same principle holds true on our jobs. A successful sales person is one who spends time with the small clients as well as the large ones. Those small sales can grow into big ones later on, and they'll stay with you if you pay attention to them when they're small. But many sales people only want to deal with the large ticket customers.

I think of one of our board members who was a very successful lawyer. One of Steve's most outstanding attributes—and I'm sure one of the reasons for his success—is his attention to the little people. They aren't little to him and he always has time to talk and care about their needs.

It is a mistake to put people into "big" and "small" categories. Jesus never did, and that's one reason we are all so attracted to him. I'm still amazed and grateful to think in the midst of this huge universe, he knows my name, he talks to me, and he always has time to spend with me. Shouldn't we have the same attitude toward others?

## Day Five

Why was Jesus such a great leader? He had the best people skills ever. Let me briefly point out just a few examples.

He was able to communicate a vision of what people could become. "Follow me," he said to some poor fishermen, "and I will make you fishers of men." He told his disciples they would do even greater things than he had done. He beautifully communicated the vision and importance of what he was asking people to do.

Another reason Jesus was such a terrific people person is he made the benefits and rewards very clear. "I came to give you abundant life," he promised. "Great will be your reward in heaven," he told

them. "I'm going to prepare a place for you," he said. He understood the importance of work-related benefits and rewards.

Jesus was wonderful with people because he was willing to forgive them and give them many second chances. He didn't give up on someone just because they had failed. Think of Peter; he denied Jesus three times, but Jesus restored him to fellowship, and Peter became the rock of the early church.

And Jesus was able to relate so beautifully with people because he had a servant attitude. He came to serve, not to be served, he said, and he demonstrated it over and over again. Just imagine: the God-man coming to earth to serve mankind. Incredible but true. He was a servant.

But mostly, Jesus was successful as a leader because he truly loved and cared for each individual and put their interest above his own. He loved so much that he died—for me and you. No wonder he changed the course of all history. Was there ever anyone like him? No never! But the incredible news is as believers, we have his Spirit in us, and are being transformed into his image.

Ask yourself, how are your people skills? Do you communicate a vision to people? Are you willing to reward those who earn it? Do you give people a second chance? Are you a servant-leader? And do you truly care for others? Those are some of the attributes that made Jesus so special.