

Tools for Wise Leadership

A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

Series 10: The Leadership Style of Jesus

Talk 1: Jesus as a Man of Authority

Welcome to the programme **Tools for Wise Leadership**. We have so far discussed various important aspects of leadership including communication, team building and God-centred transformational leadership. Following those different series I began to ask myself how Jesus exemplified wise leadership. A book by one of my favourite authors, Michael Youssef has inspired me to entitle this new series “the leadership style of Jesus”.

I wonder what strikes you when you look at Jesus as a leader? For me the first striking thing is his authority. Authority is the power that makes others want to believe and follow the leader. Jesus had plenty of that. Here are some examples:

- At the beginning of his ministry he called several people from their different professions and they left whatever they were doing and followed him. That was authority.
- In Matthew 7 we read how the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.
- In Mark 1 after Jesus had driven out a demon from a man we are told they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.
- In Matthew 9:6 Jesus said, “But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”
- But here is the climax. In Matthew 28:18-20 we read, “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’.”

We could go on and on with textual evidence of Jesus’ authority. What is important for us is to categorize and understand the different kinds of authority Jesus had so that we as leaders can learn from him:

Firstly, Jesus had the authority of Position.

After all he was the Son of God, and in very nature God. This gave Jesus the right to enforce obedience. And yet the Bible says that Jesus did not count equality with God something to be grasped or clung on to. He chose to empty himself of this authority of position and to become a servant leader. How different Jesus was from a leader like Idi Amin who relied on titles. Amin granted himself a number of titles like "His Excellency, President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Doctor Idi Amin Dada, VC (meaning Victoria Cross - the highest military decoration awarded for valour "in the face of the enemy"); DSO (meaning Distinguished Service Order), MC (that is "Military Cross", a British and Commonwealth military decoration for "acts of exemplary gallantry"), CBE (which he took to mean "Conqueror of the British Empire") and he even called himself "King Of Scotland."

A leader like Amin would rely on the ability to reward or punish (carrot and stick). Under this source of authority people follow you because they have to, not because they want to. They follow only to get the reward or to avoid the punishment. People may fear you without respecting you. Position gives you the lowest level of influence over others though it is the most sought after. Although position can get things done, it only provides for what is called extrinsic motivation. It

Tools for Wise Leadership, Series 10: The Leadership Style of Jesus

only works while the carrot and the stick are there. This leadership style has no lasting transformational effect. That is why Jesus shunned the authority of position, even though he was entitled to it.

Secondly, Jesus had the authority of Competence.

A leader who is competent can inspire others to follow his or her example. Now Jesus was competent; whatever he did was with excellence. We are told in Mark 7 that Jesus healed a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. He did not do it to gain cheap popularity. In fact He commanded them that they should tell no one. We are told there that the people were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.” No wonder Jesus had the authority of competence. Now the authority of competence works well when the competence is linked to benefits to the people. Competence which is beneficial to the people rather than just for self-advancement inspires people. That was Jesus’ kind of competence.

Thirdly: Jesus demonstrated the authority of character. This is **Integrity** which breeds trust, and trust increases the leader’s credibility.

But what is integrity? The underlying idea is that of wholeness of character. In Maths we learn that an integer is a whole number. That is the idea behind integrity. It is a complex of virtues working together to form a coherent, well integrated character. Integrity talks of the value systems professed by the person being adhered to in all areas of life, public and private.

Jesus demonstrated that kind of integrity. That is why he could challenge his stubborn listeners, “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?” Nobody could rightly convict him of any sin. The Devil tried hard to tempt him to sin. That was in vain. He not only taught that we must be salt and light of the world; he was himself the supreme demonstration of being salt and light.

What does Jesus’ authority of character teach us as leaders? One lesson is that competence is no substitute for character. Competence and charisma may give someone an initial advantage, resulting in one being offered a position of leadership. But that leadership position would have to be sustained by one’s character or else it will not last. How many promising ministries have come crushing down because of a leader’s lack of character? Abuse of funds, an inappropriate relationship with the opposite sex and pride are among the greatest destroyers of promising ministries. If you want to succeed in your calling, then like Jesus you need to demonstrate the authority of character.

Jesus’ fourth kind of authority was the authority of personality. He had that magnetic personal attraction that draws others to the leader, making them feel better about themselves. He was others-centred. Leaders who think about others and their concerns before thinking about themselves quickly develop what Maxwell calls charisma or what I am calling the authority of personality.

In John 10 Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd always had his sheep at heart. In that passage the Good Shepherd is compared with the hireling. A hireling receives pay for his job, but has no heart for it. He only watches out for the sheep until he no longer benefits. Consider the contrasts between the hireling and the Good Shepherd.

The Hireling

Labours only for money
Has no heart for the sheep
Leaves when trouble comes
Feeds himself
Neglects the sheep
Drives sheep hard and lacks mercy

The Shepherd

Labours out of love
Has a heart for the sheep
Gives his life for sheep
Feeds the sheep
Tenderly cares for the sheep
Leads the sheep wisely

Tools for Wise Leadership, Series 10: The Leadership Style of Jesus

When we see these differences in personality between the hireling and the shepherd it is not surprising that the shepherd has a personality that builds and maintains relationship in a way that a hireling cannot.

Because Jesus had the authority of personality, people followed him out of devotion rather than duty. Remember, people buy into the leader before they buy into the leader's vision. That is an important lesson we learn from the leadership style of Jesus.

Today we have concentrated on Jesus as a leader with authority. His authority of competence, character and personality was central in accomplishing his mission. In future programmes we will be exploring other factors that made Jesus a successful leader. Until then, practice tools of wise leadership and may the Lord bless you in your sphere of leadership.

Discussion Questions

For further study for of the leadership development themes in the episodes of *Tools for Wise Leadership*, we offer you a number of study questions:

Study Question 1: for Personal reflection

What does this episode mean to you personally as a leader?

Study Question 2: for Group Discussion

What does this topic mean you as a group of leaders?

Study Question 3: for applying the topic

What can you apply from this topic in your role as a leader?

You could use some of these questions to reflect yourself, or gather other leaders around you to discuss the questions with them. Here are the questions for the **Talk 1 on Jesus as a Man of Authority**:

Study Question 1: Personal reflection

Are you best described as a leader of position, competence, character, or personality?

Study Question 2: Group Discussion

In Africa, which of these kinds of authority, position, competence, character, and personality, do leaders need to develop more?

Study Question 3: Applying the topic

What aspect of Jesus' leadership can you follow today?

Tools for Wise Leadership, Series 10: The Leadership Style of Jesus

Please provide us feedback about what you discover to leadership@twr.org

Young leaders will appreciate to read your feedback to the interaction on
www.facebook.com/ToolsforWiseLeadership

You are welcome to write your personal questions to us via SMS or Whatsapp to +27 60 362 4163.

Resources are available on www.twr360.org/programs/116/tools-for-wise-leadership on the web
and on the mobile app of **TWR360** for Android or iOS devices.
