

# Leadership Lessons from Paul

## The Life and Ministry of Paul—part 8

August 14, 2016

### DAY 1: Character and Mission

1. The task of leadership is a great challenge! It becomes even greater when you are starting something from the ground floor, like a church.
2. Throughout each of Paul's three missionary journeys, Paul is planting churches, appointing leaders, and strengthening those churches. To some of them he wrote letters (epistles).
3. This week we'll zero in on two passages of scripture that give us an inside look as to how Paul thought about the mission, thought about the people, and the different "tasks" of leadership. Our first comes from 1 Thessalonians, a church he had planted on his second missionary journey. When Paul came to Thessalonica, he had just been savagely beaten and flogged in Philippi.

*1 Thessalonians 2:1 You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. <sup>2</sup> We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition.*

4. **The "What"**: A leader is mission-focused and mission-committed. How is this seen in Paul?

*1 Thessalonians 2:3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.*

*<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.*

5. **The "Why"**: A leader must be other-centered, and above board. How is this seen in Paul?

*1 Thessalonians 2:5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed--God is our witness.*

*<sup>6</sup> We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you,*

6. **The "How"**: How we accomplish the mission must be done in a way that is credible and can stand the keen eye of scrutiny. How is this seen in Paul?

7. Which "What/Why/How" is your strongest suit? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which is your weakest?

## DAY 2: Character and People

1. A leader who is mission-focused, but not people-focused will find the work very frustrating. Leadership is also about relationships, and especially about how we treat people.

2. In today's verses Paul shares:

a. How he thinks and feels about them, AND

b. Images of how he related to them.

*1 Thessalonians 2:7 ...but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.*

3. What **image** does Paul use to describe his relationship with them?

*1 Thessalonians 2:8 We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.*

4. How does Paul **think** and **feel** about the people?

5. How did that affect how he related to them?

*1 Thessalonians 2:9 Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.*

6. People follow leaders who are willing to sacrifice for them. How is that seen in Paul?

*1 Thess. 2:10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.*

7. His character is what enabled him to relate to the people so well. What stands out the most from v. 10?

*1 Thessalonians 2:11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,<sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*

8. What **image** does Paul utilize to finish off this section?

9. How does that image affect how he related to the people?

10. How can you be more mission-focused? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How can you be more people-focused? \_\_\_\_\_

### **DAY 3: The cost of leadership**

1. When Paul was returning from Europe, he stopped off in the port city of Ephesus. On his third missionary journey Paul stayed in Ephesus for two years.

2. The next time Paul returned, he spent a short time with the Ephesian elders.

*Acts 20:17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.*

*Acts 20:18 When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.*

*<sup>19</sup> I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.*

3. What does Paul imply by v. 18? What does that say for church leadership?

4. Paul is brutally honest about the cost of ministry. What three things does he name?

5. Have you experienced great humility, tears, or been severely tested? How has God used these painful experiences in your life to shape you or use you in the lives of others?

*Acts 20:20 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. <sup>21</sup> I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.*

5. He summarizes the core of the gospel message. Is this how you'd sum up the gospel message?

6. As you think about Christian leadership and ministry, what strikes you most from Paul?

#### **DAY 4: Staying mission-focused in trying times**

1. Paul continues with his last words to the Ephesian elders.

*Acts 20:22 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. <sup>23</sup> I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.*

2. God has made it clear to Paul that great hardships lie ahead. If you had spoken those words, what would anchor you as you faced imprisonment and hardship?

*Acts 20:24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.*

3. In light of the difficulties to come, what keeps Paul anchored, and moving forward?

*Acts 20:25 "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. <sup>26</sup> Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. <sup>27</sup> For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.*

4. Paul deals with several issues in his leadership.

a. How does he see the responsibility of ministry? Has he taken it seriously? Has he fulfilled the mission with the church in Ephesus?

b. What did it mean to fulfill his ministry to the Ephesians? (v. 27)

5. As you think about your own life, it's likely that you've had your "share" of hardships. Staying mission-focused is not easy. What do you take away from Paul's example and his admonitions to the Ephesian elders that would keep you more mission-focused?

## DAY 5: Staying tied and committed

1. Paul is now entrusting the ministry into their hands!

*Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

2. What three responsibilities does he give the elders? Why are each of these important?

*Acts 20:29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.*

3. Here is a dose of reality!!

4. Note how Paul dealt with this threat...

*Acts 20:31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.*

*Acts 20:32 "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

5. When Paul commits the Ephesians elders, to whom and to what does he commit them?

*Acts 20:33 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. <sup>34</sup> You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.*

*<sup>35</sup> In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

6. Paul finishes his “last words” reminding the leaders of his example as a leader.

7. This week we’ve looked at Paul’s teaching about Christian leadership. What struck you the most as a leader?

\_\_\_ Mission-centered

\_\_\_ People-centered

\_\_\_ Setting the pace by his example

\_\_\_ Staying anchored through any hardship

8. What is the most important thing you took away this week regarding leadership?