

LEADING THROUGH LEADING

THREE ESSENTIALS FOR
NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY

Leading Through

Part Two: Moral Authority

In a world that is throwing as much uncertainty at its inhabitants as this one is right now, it's important for anybody in charge to make a simple, liberating admission: we don't have all the answers for what to do next. So whether you find yourself leading your family, spouse, coworkers, or an even broader group of people during this season, it's worth taking a look at what the scriptures have to say about leadership, because successfully navigating uncertainty requires moral authority. Alignment between our claims and what we do. Moral authority positions us to influence people at the deepest level: their hearts, mind, and conscience.

Start Talking

1. What leader do you consider to have had the greatest influence with the least amount of official power?
2. Who does this statement bring to mind: People are usually defined by their final chapter, not their finest chapter?

Looking Back

1. As you consider your personal sphere of influence over the past week, which of these three descriptors did you find most challenging to remember: the fact that your leadership is a role of stewardship, the fact that it is temporary, or that you'll be accountable for your choices?
2. What steps did you take this week to start each day knowing that your position is a result of stewardship, that it is temporary, and that you will be accountable for your decisions and how they affect other people? How did it work?
3. Last week, we talked about Jesus's qualifications for anyone who wants to become "great." Where did you find opportunity to put his words into action over the last few days? What opportunities did you miss?



What About You?

1. Have you ever encountered a person who didn't have much positional authority, but still managed to have enormous influence? Where did their authority come from?
2. Did your parents maintain their moral authority while you were living at home? How has that affected you as an adult?
3. Let's get uncomfortable (although you don't need to necessarily relive the worst moments of your life if you don't want to!): When have you damaged your moral authority with the people you should be leading or influencing? What thoughts and decisions lead to those events?
4. Have you ever seen a person become intoxicated with a sense of their own importance? How did it look? When have *you* felt this way?
5. We all know that entitlement is off-putting, but in your opinion, what is actually wrong with this outlook on the world and a person's place in it?
6. When do you tend to catch yourself using excuses to justify your behavior?

Look It Up

Read the following passage before answering the questions below: Nehemiah 5: 6–18.

1. How did the wealthy citizens of Israel respond to the economic and legal crisis the nation was facing, here? Why did it irk Nehemiah?
2. If you had to put yourself in the landowners' position, what excuses do you think they were coming up with to justify their oppression of Israel's poorer classes? How do these compare to the conversations we rehearse in our own minds in contemporary culture?
3. Why did Nehemiah's commands that the landowning class knock off the exploitation of the poor get such stark, immediate results? What separated him from the other leaders the people had lived under?
4. Which aspects of Nehemiah's leadership impress you the most? Why?
5. How do you think a person goes about living out the ethos of sacrificial leadership we see on display in this narrative?

Putting It All Together

1. Where can you forgo the temptation to claim what you "deserve" this week, in order to better serve and lead the people around you? What would it look like?
2. Every person inevitably loses face sometimes. What can you do this week to repair moral authority when you do let anger or entitlement rear its head in your interactions with others?
3. Who can you ask to confront you when they see you exercising a sense of entitlement, or making excuses to justify problematic behavior? How can you preemptively prepare to receive this information with a generous spirit?



4. What can you do to monitor the imaginary conversations that play out in your head this week? Why is it important to do so, in your opinion?
5. Which of the three gauges do you need to pay closest attention to: authority, entitlement, or imaginary conversations? Why?
6. What might be some benefits of praying the following prayer each morning this week?

Heavenly father, give me the wisdom to know what's right, and the courage to do what's right, even when it costs me.

