

Relationship Series – Part 3

Relating to Those Under Our Influence

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Sabbatical Comments:

Message:

Today I wrap up a three-part series on relationships and the habits we need to foster to have good relationships. Pastor Brian Coles helped us look at our relationships with those over us in some type of authority role and our horizontal relationships with our peers.

This morning I want to talk about healthy relationships with those we oversee or those who look up to us for guidance. This could be for those of us who are an employer, boss, supervisor, parent, teacher, pastor, team leader, and so on.

At some point in your life you will be given responsibility and influence over people in some way.

We have all heard stories about terrible bosses and people in authority that misuse their influence and power. We don't want to be like that.

Sometimes people want certain positions for the wrong reasons. Jesus was preparing his disciples for leadership someday and he had to help them develop a kingdom understanding of leadership.

Earthly leadership is often centered around power and control. It is often self-serving. You make people serve you because of your position of power.

There is an amusing story in Matthew 20 where the mother of two of the disciples tries to convince Jesus her sons deserve a place over the other disciples, which made the others mad. Jesus had his hands full with his team.

- There was a lot of competition between the guys in the early days.

Read Matt 20:25-28

Take away - If you need your momma to go to the boss to speak up for you – you are not a leader. 😊

Jesus has to call a staff meeting to calm everyone down. Nothing messes up a team as these little power plays. He needs his disciples to grasp a new paradigm of leadership.

There is an earthly way to lead and exercise power and there is a kingdom way to lead and exercise power. And they are completely opposite in nature.

Jesus turns leadership upside down. He says with leadership you are given power and influence not to be served but to serve the good of others.

He introduces the model of servant leadership. God puts you in places of leadership to make life better for others. To make decisions that will be a blessing to others.

A servant leader is always asking; *“what is best for the people I am leading?”*

Jesus set the example with his leadership. The way Jesus used his position, his influence, and power, was to serve others.

When he took a basin and towel and washed the disciples’ feet it broke all their preconceived ideas of what it meant to be a leader. It was a defining moment for them.

Jesus combined leadership and power with the heart of a servant. With the towel, he married these together into a new model of leadership.

Jn 13:13 “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

This was a revolutionary model of leadership. They were looking for position and title to rule over each other. Jesus said they should instead be looking for opportunities to serve each other. They wanted power. Jesus gave them a towel.

Kingdom leaders carry a towel. They carry a servant attitude, not a superior attitude.

The towel and basin – exemplify Christian leadership in the church, home, or business world.

A leader must lead and make tough calls at times that not everyone likes. We are not to be people pleaser, just to have people like us. We are to make decisions that we believe are the best for everyone.

Husbands – How do you lead your wife and family?

Parents – How do you lead your children?

Boss or Supervisors – How do you lead your team? Are you leading with a towel and attitude of one who serves?

A pastor that I admire is Craig Groeschel. His teaching and example have blessed and challenged me.

He recently talked about – *“how to become a leader people love to follow”*. This advice is great for any kind of leader, parent or husband, supervisor or boss.

He says. the goal is not to be popular but to be respected because of the way in which you lead and treat people.

Craig says there are three things you will feel under a good leader.

- You feel valued
- You feel inspired
- You feel empowered

1. Great leaders really value and care about the people they lead.

What are the goals and dreams of each team member? What are their needs? What are their ideas? What do they like?

A great leader takes time to notice people. He or she lets them know they matter.

- It’s important that we respect the people who work for us.

Some leaders make you think they are really important – But the best leaders will convince you that you are important.

You can never give enough appreciation to people. It is the greatest of motivations. We all want to feel appreciated and valued.

We want to nurture a culture of honor and respect here at Petra. That includes how we male leaders treat women. In a respectful God honoring way.

I love what we are doing each Sunday in taking time to honor people who are serving in our church and community. What each person is doing is important and valued, not just those in leadership.

2. Great leaders inspire and invest in people.

Jesus saw the disciples not as they were, but as they could be.

He inspired them and invested his life in them. He helped them grow. His team had a lot of issues and he had hard honest conversations with them.

We all have things in us that get in the way of our destiny. Sometimes we need people to point them out and help us overcome them. A leader that has your best interest in mind will help you do better.

A great leader will not make everyone happy all the time. A great leader doesn't always let you get your own way and it's for your own good. Jesus said hard things that got people mad at times. Peter even tried rebuking Jesus.

- My parents made me mad at times – They were looking out for me.

Listen, each one of us has lots of untapped potential. If we will deal with our stuff God will be able to do amazing things in and through us.

As leaders we need to be willing to do the mundane things and things we really don't enjoy at times. It's part of being a great leader. But I love to find the passion in my leaders. The things that motivate them.

As a leader if you can discover what inspires a person you will not need to motivate them. And they will be twice as productive.

Leaders look for ways to develop the skills and potential in people. Such as coaching and training opportunities.

My father – invested in me – I didn't turn out to be a farmer like him, but I was able to take a lot of the skills and lessons I learned such as being innovative, resilient, strong under pressure, administrative in planning, hard-working, and dependable.

I also worked at a number of jobs where I didn't feel inspired and felt like a cog in the wheel with little value but even then, God was investing in my life.

- My first job off the farm was at a shoe factory and I didn't like it. Low morale among the workers. My job was to fill work orders by searching through stacks of boxes for the right sole for the shoe.
- I think God has a sense of humor. He started me off searching for soles and I have been searching for souls ever since. – My pathetic job turned out to be a prophetic one.

3. Great leaders empower others.

Some simple ways you can empower others is – (children, spouse, workers, team)

- Ask their opinion – What do you think we should do?
- Let their thoughts help shape things
- Delegate things – authority not just tasks
- Use phrases such as – You decide on this one – I trust your judgement
- Give people freedom to fail at times – Let them try new things
- Help open doors of opportunity for them when you can

Summary:

Let me share the greatest leadership verse in the Bible. In fact, it is the greatest verse in the bible for all relationships, whether relating to authority, to peers or being in authority. It is Luke 6:31

Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6:31

A simple yet most profound life principle for everyone.

How would I like to be treated if I was in the other person's shoes right now? My wife, husband, teenager, my parents, my co-worker, my friend, my staff, my boss?

If you operate out of this kingdom value – you will be great in whatever you do.

As we said throughout this series, your habits and relationships greatly affect the direction and quality of your life. So, invest in your relationships. Learn to be a great friend, a great follower and a great leader.

Ministry Invite/Closing Prayer