

What's Wrong With Leadership Today?

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Annoying politicians are a fact of life in the United States and, I think it is safe to say, all around the globe. The gulf between major political parties has never been wider here in the U.S. The politicians provoke their opponents with both their words and actions, they drive voters crazy making bad laws. They make pompous speeches, and generally annoy and frustrate the American public.

Politics can really bring out the worst in people, especially elected officials. Even the greatest politicians in history have had behaviors that were horrible, or questionable at the very least. Some of these traits are criminal, sending politicians to prison for taking bribes, committing perjury, or exerting undue privilege. Other actions maybe legal but clearly inappropriate and in poor judgement.

In the U.S., we are witnessing the intentional destruction of our protective constitutional laws on which this nation was established. The leaders have lost all credibility because of their flagrant lies and deceit. They don't even try to hide them anymore because they have the news media to do that for them. The juvenile resistance of refusing even to negotiate over big national interests, such as uncontrolled immigration and out of control Big Pharma drug cartels pushing opioids.

Then, just when it seemed they couldn't sink any lower than that unscrupulous impeachment coup, which they deceptively manufactured based only on suspicion and supposition, with no evidence, they hit a new low in hatred and disrespect for this country and its President during the State of the Union address. Their disrespectful mumbling and sneering smiles throughout the President's positive address were bad enough, then to stage a scene shredding a copy of his speech was shameful, to say the very least—disrespectful of the leader of this nation. Coming immediately after he finished, and while he was still on the podium, they had to know the television cameras would catch it. No doubt that was their goal: To display their disgust to the nation and the world. They disgraced everyone in the U.S. Congress and the nation's citizens.

What an appalling show of bad leadership. We have witnessed all political parties sharing in the immaturity of juvenile behavior: name calling, blaming others, bad judgment, outbursts of wrath, and generally poor communication skills.

One of the fastest ways to become a good leader is to identify and avoid the traits that bad leaders exhibit. Some of the revealing leadership traits that poor leaders often demonstrate are pride and arrogance, dishonesty and unethical behavior. There are revealing leadership traits that poor leaders often lack such as: goodness, empathy, respect for others, integrity, responsibility, and vision for the future.

Everyone makes mistakes, but when bad leaders err, they rarely take the opportunity to change their mindset and learn from their mistakes. They continue to insanely dominate and influence society, and they do have a tremendous impact on society. Just think back to one of the presidents who had sex in the Oval Office, and what it did in causing elementary school children to do the same thing. By observing bad leaders in action and identifying the bad traits that are indicative of poor leadership, we can avoid making the same types of mistakes ourselves in our families and in the church.

Leadership represents a heavy responsibility for the affairs of others, for the affairs of those who follow. Leaders have a great deal to do with the thought and actions of those under their leadership. Obviously, worldly leaders exercise considerable sway over society. And, in a personal way (and in a sense) a spiritual way, church leaders have substantial influence over the church. So, it is not surprising that God has much to say about the integrity of both.

Throughout the Bible, we find an implied or candid judgment of their character. God carefully examines the integrity of a leader. Sometimes the judgment is implied, but at times it is explicit, as when David implores God to judge him according to his integrity [Psalm 7:8], or when the psalmist remarks that David shepherded Israel with integrity of heart [Psalm 78:72].

God exhorts King Solomon to maintain his integrity, and promises him that if he would walk before him in integrity of heart, his throne over Israel will be established and preserved [I Kings 9:4-5]. Biblically, a direct correlation exists between the integrity of a leader and the safety of his tenure.

Proverbs 13:6 assures us that the leader with integrity is guarded by righteousness, but his wickedness will result in his overthrow. God is the one who set up leaders or takes them down, or allows them to go into office or keeps them from doing so. We must remember that—that He will reward the righteous and He will overthrow the wicked. God also holds leaders responsible for being faithful to justice and giving wise instruction on issues such as assuring protection for the innocent, while executing justice against those who oppress the poor and helpless.

Breaking moral law, even if those who err are only followers, can bring judgment upon a leader. A leader is inextricably bound to his followers, those whom he leads. Throughout the Bible we find leaders who honorably and tenaciously maintain their convictions in the face of opposition from peers, followers and enemies.

The prophet Ezekiel is an example of a leader maintaining his convictions in the face of public condemnation. Ezekiel's life becomes a living parable for the people of Israel as he shaves his head, cooks his food over excrement, and lies down for hundreds of days, according to God's command. Good leadership often requires great sacrifice.

This courage of conviction is seen clearly in Jeremiah, who delivers a message to the nation that a judgment is coming that cannot be stayed even by the intercession of the righteous. Jeremiah drives home his point that not even righteous men who the Lord respects could effectively intercede on behalf of the evil leaders and people of the immoral nation.

Jeremiah 15:1-3 (*English Standard Version*) Then the Lord said to me [speaking to Jeremiah], "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go! And when they ask you, 'Where shall we go?' you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord: "Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence, and those who are for the sword, to the sword; those who are for famine, to famine, and those who are for captivity, to captivity." I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers, declares the Lord: the sword to kill, the dogs to tear, and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.

Later, to Jeremiah as the faithful prophet, the Lord replies to his pleading:

Jeremiah 15:19-21 Therefore thus says the Lord: "If you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall be as my mouth. They shall turn to you, but you shall not turn to them. And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, declares the Lord. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless."

Although God will not allow the evil people who broke His covenant to come into His sight any longer, He does not forget His faithful servant, Jeremiah, and neither will He forget us as we continue to promote His way of life through our witness—through living it. Jeremiah is promised deliverance—redemption; salvation—if he continues to proclaim the precious Word of God regardless of how the people try to resist him. God will take care of it and protect him

A good leader does not "lord it over" others but is a humble servant.

Matthew 20:25-26 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.

Matthew 23:11-12 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Also, a good leader is one who is faithful in small matters.

Luke 12:42-44 And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

A leader is not merely a "hired hand," but a true servant, one who recognizes that it is ultimately God who is at work, and so seeks to be proven faithful.