

Leadership Lessons from the Life of Moses
Lesson #14, Those to be Led May Not Always See “the Big Picture”

Text: Ex.5:20-21

A quick review of pertinent points leading up to this lesson: Moses is sent to Egypt (with his brother Aaron to help) to deliver Israel from bondage, 4:12-17; they relayed “*all the words of the Lord*” to all the elders (leaders) and people of Israel, 4:29-30; the people “*believed,*” 4:31; Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh to request that Israel be allowed to *go into the wilderness three days’ journey* to “*sacrifice to the Lord our God,*” 5:1-3; Pharaoh flatly refuses, and imposes even great hardships upon the people, 5:4-14; then the foremen of the sons of Israel “*cried out to Pharaoh*” in protest, 5:15-16; but Pharaoh again refuses and reiterates the “*new*” and further oppressive requirements, 5:17-18; finally, the foremen knew they were “*in trouble,*” and returned to Moses and Aaron with a totally different attitude and perspective, cp. 4:31 and 5:20-21. What should we learn about *leadership* and *those to be led* from these things?

- **Moses and Aaron were *waiting for them,* v.20.**

Why is this important? Consider a couple of related pieces of data: 1) Moses and Aaron knew the initial request to *let the people* go was not going to work, cf. 3:19; 4:28; so, 2) they also knew *crying out to Pharaoh* wouldn’t work since he *did not believe in* or *recognize the authority of God*, cf. 5:2a, and therefore that he was not going to “*let*” (remember 3:19b) Israel go. Additionally, it was he who originated the ordered great hardships in the first place, 5:2b,4-9. So, when the foremen went in to *plead their case* before Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron simply *waited* for them to return with the inevitable result. Oftentimes, good leaders know that efforts to avoid the consequences of “*doing the right thing*” will fail, cf. Luke 15:11-16 (the *father* surely knew what his son would do with the *inheritance*, but gave it to him anyway). So, Moses and Aaron simply *waited* for them to return in order to help them “*pick up the pieces*” and move forward- just as *the prodigal’s father* did, Luke 15:17-24. Good leaders know that sometimes you have to just let people fail. So, you wait for them to return and try to help them move forward.

- **The foremen *cursed* Moses and Aaron, v.21a.**

This is *first* time Israel would rebel against and reject those sent to help them, but it would not be the *last* time. Think about it. Jesus came to earth to *enlighten* and *save* mankind, but “*those who were His own did not receive Him,*” cf. John 1:9-11; 3:16-19. He was “*despised and forsaken*” (Isa.53:3), and yet He, lovingly and patiently, *waits* to pick up the pieces of our despair and make us whole and free. Are good leaders *above their teacher* or *master*, cf. Matt.10:24-25? Moses and Aaron- knowing that the foremen going to Pharaoh to plead their case wasn’t going to work, and now having been *cursed* by those they’re trying to help/lead, could have “*washed their hands*” or “*shaken the (Egyptian) dust off their feet*” and gone back to Midian. But the job of *deliverance* from bondage and to the blessings of the *Promised Land* wasn’t finished. Good leaders know that job isn’t easy, and may indeed make you the object of scorn, ridicule, and cursing- even from those you’re attempting to assist, but they don’t “*cut and run*” so easily, cf. Luke 6:27-28.

- **They saw only “*the immediate*” rather than “*the big picture,*” v.22b.**

Moses saw “*the big picture,*” but Israel did not, Acts 7:25. They didn’t realize that freedom isn’t “*free*”- that physical hardships are often the price to be paid, cf. Luke 14:25-35. Spiritual *myopia* (short-sightedness) is a very real problem. When we don’t *grow* as we should (2Pet.1:5-7), we become *useless* and *unfruitful* (2Pet.1:8), our *memory* and *vision* fail (2Pet.1:9), and we are unable to *escape corruption* and bondage (2Pet.1:4). But good leaders have good *vision*, and they remember what God has already done and promised to do. Thus, they are able to help those they lead to see beyond the present- and its required hardship, to the future blessings/benefits of *the Promised Land* of heaven, 2Cor.4:16-18.

There is a tremendous need for spiritual *leaders*- those with *patience*; those who understand they may be *cursed* for their efforts; and those with *vision* who can not only see “*the big(ger) picture,*” but help others see and attain it also.

