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LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW

Hello. My name is Linsay Darnall, Jr. Today, I would like to discuss the topic of leadership. What is leadership, and what does it mean? Someone who is a leader sets a goal and encourages others to achieve that goal together. That's a simple explanation of leadership. But what is the purpose of leadership? Leadership is something that is very important whether it is for an individual need or a group need. Let's look at an example as simple as supplying basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. Individual leadership means each person knows they need to go to work to earn money in order to be able to buy the food, clothing and shelter that is needed to live. A group leader will demonstrate how people are to cooperate and work together as a team and will encourage everyone in the group to become involved. Some people are unaware that leadership is needed for everything in life.

Maybe you think that you are not a leader. You don't know that. A university study discovered 188 different types of leadership. Many people think that leadership means one person takes charge while other people follow him. But that is not true. There are many different styles of leadership. Some leaders do lead first, while others follow them. Other leaders use a teamwork approach. Another style of leadership delegates responsibility. There are different styles of leadership.

Maybe it would be good today for you to contemplate the issue of leadership and analyze yourself in order to figure out what kind of a leader you are. Are you a take-charge leader? Are you more of a team builder? Do you delegate responsibility to others while you provide support and encouragement? Consider which type is more your style.

Many people in America today are very negative when it comes to leadership. They think they are not a leader, but that is a poor attitude. Often, when a person is asked to be a leader, he or she refuses, saying, "Let someone else do it." Other people respond in the same way: "I'm not a leader, let someone else do it." This is called apathy. This lack of concern is negative. It is even worse when you who are deaf or hard-of-hearing say, "Not me. I'm not going to get involved. Let someone else do it."

When everyone else refuses requests for help, only a few leaders are left to do all the work, while the majority are apathetic and do nothing. If this continues into the future, your rights will be lost. One day you will wake up and find that your VRS services have been cut off. Captioning services no longer exist. Interpreting services have dwindled to nothing.

If that happens, life for deaf people will go back to the way it was 200 years ago when deaf people had no civil rights. And all of you will wonder what happened. It is critically important to have leadership.

Maybe you are not the kind of person to get involved in areas such as captioning or politics. That is fine. But take a look at other leadership skills that are needed and see which ones match your style of leadership. Maybe that means getting involved in church activities or being involved at Deaf church. Decide where you fit in and where your talents can be used.

God has chosen and prepared each one of you with different leadership talents and skills. What a wonderful God we serve! He knew your talents from the very beginning and prepared you to fit into His plans. Who among you, knowing that God has chosen you and given you specific talents and duties, will turn away and resist God? God chose you. Accept that responsibility and share the talents He has given you.

Leadership involves **responsibility**. One example is found in Genesis 1:26. God created all the different kinds of animals and birds and fish and placed them on the earth. When God was finished, He gave humans control over all the living things He had made. What a huge responsibility God gave to us to take care of all the animals and birds and fish! He trusted people to take care of His creation because He knew we could handle the responsibility.

The first duty of leadership was given to Adam. In Genesis 2:19-20, we read that God gave Adam the responsibility of naming all of the animals. So Adam accepted that responsibility and set about naming all the living creatures. God delegated the responsibility to Adam, and Adam accepted it. That was the first duty of leadership.

The Bible is full of examples of the duties of leadership that you can read about. Another example is Noah. The people of the world were sinful, and God was not happy with any of them except for Noah, who had a relationship with God. God chose Noah and commanded him to build an ark together with his family. God told Noah that when the ark was finished, he was to gather together pairs of animals to fill the ark. Noah accepted that responsibility, and he built the ark according to the measurements God gave him. It was an enormous structure and took a lot of teamwork to build. Once the ark was finished, Noah gathered his family and the animals into the ark. Then God caused the waters to flood the earth. Once the waters receded, Noah, his family and the animals went forth from the ark onto the land and multiplied.

Abraham provides another example of leadership. God chose Abraham and said, "You will become the father of all nations, the leader of my people." Abraham obeyed God's command and did what God asked him to do. God gave Abraham a son who also obeyed God's command. This was the beginning of God's chosen people, the nation of Israel.

Moses is another example of leadership. During the time of Moses, the Jewish people were living in Egypt. God chose Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. Moses was dumbfounded, and he argued with God. Moses did not think he was the right person. But God chose Moses. Then Moses accepted the responsibility of leadership.

Moses went before Pharaoh and commanded him to let God's people go and allow them to leave Egypt. Moses did not go before Pharaoh alone, however. God was with Moses as he followed God's command.

As you look at these different examples of leadership, they were all successful because God was involved in their circumstances. God chose each leader. Even though they doubted their abilities, they had faith in God and had a relationship with Him. The result of the story of Moses is that Moses led God's chosen people out of Egypt. That is why we celebrate Passover today.

You can read about many different historical examples of leadership in the Bible, but the **best** model of leadership we can ever follow is Jesus Himself. From the very beginning, Jesus was part of God's plan. God specifically chose Mary. God's power came upon Mary, who became pregnant and who bore God's Son, Jesus. God became a man and walked upon the earth. Jesus' purpose and goal was to save mankind from evil, to save us from death. Our sins were wiped clean. If we believe in Jesus and His plan, we will enter into the kingdom of heaven. That's the ultimate goal. Pretty amazing! Jesus had the enormous responsibility of making the spiritual lives of people strong, as He walked on the earth and lived among them.

So how do you find your own leadership style? As you study the Bible and talk to others and observe them, you will discover your own style of leadership. Jesus is an expert example of internal leadership qualities.

After Jesus was baptized, He went off by Himself into the desert for 40 days, where He was tempted by the devil. While Jesus was in the desert for 40 days, He thought about the plan set before Him. Knowing the difficult days ahead and how much He had to do, Jesus spent time in contemplation to prepare Himself. He confronted the devil, who tried to distract Him. But Jesus was strong and prepared. This was the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

As you think about Jesus and how He dealt with people, you can see that one requirement for leadership is attitude. Attitude is extremely important. If you want to become a leader, you must have a good attitude, a positive attitude. That is primary. Then people will look up to you and find it easy to follow your leadership. You cannot have a bad or negative attitude or be egotistical, or people will walk away. Your goals and plans will fail. You will fail. Those working with you will fail, which is not fair to them. You must have a positive attitude, so when you work together with others, they will have the same goals, and you will all succeed. That is essential.

Jesus was a skillful manager. He meticulously chose His 12 disciples and knew how to delegate responsibilities. He knew how to teach other people. That is a management skill Jesus had. Management is not the same as control. Control means to give orders to others. Management means the leader works cooperatively within a team, seeks input from everyone, provides support and encouragement, and helps each person progress towards the goal they have set. That's what management means.

Management is important in our daily life. Time management means you are not overwhelmed and out of control, but rather you manage how you spend your time. Money management means you do not feel overwhelmed and out of control with money.

Management is involved in all areas of your life—your family, your friendships, the people you work with, churches and clubs. You don't want to permit people to make decisions for you or pull you along. You need to think for yourself and plan your time—time with your family, with your friends, and with your community—and be able to manage all of those things in your daily life. Jesus was a wonderful example of management. Read and study and absorb all you can about Him.

So when you start thinking about your goals, think about Jesus and His goals. His goal was to save us. He preached the Good News of the kingdom of heaven. He came down from heaven, so we would stop sinning, turn back to God and be saved through Him. That was Jesus' one goal, and He was not distracted from it.

One example that maybe you, too, have experienced is when people set a goal first thing in the morning about everything they plan to do that day. But during the day, they get distracted. When they get in bed at night, they think about all the things they didn't get done that day. I'm sure you have had the same experience. But Jesus didn't do that. Jesus had a goal, which He kept in the front of His mind. That is what He pursued. So, as you study the Bible, consider how that applies to you.

What are your goals? Why are you here on earth? Why were you born? What did God choose you for? Do some self-analysis and think about your purpose. Talk it over with God. As you consider different paths, start by setting one short-term goal and pursue it. Maybe you have a project that is due at the end of the month. Focus on that one goal until it is accomplished. You will feel good that the team worked together and succeeded. Then try another project, whether it is at church or at work or the club or wherever. What's most important is that you set a goal with an end in sight. Jesus was an expert at setting goals.

One important area in which we must emulate Jesus is His talent for teaching others. What would happen if you were the only leader and one day you were gone or you moved away? Your followers wouldn't know how to proceed or what to do, because they relied on you alone. That is wrong.

Jesus provided an example by showing how He taught his 12 disciples. In Matthew 4:19, Jesus told His disciples to come follow Him and learn to be fishers of men. That's where Jesus said, "I will teach you." Jesus knew that His time on earth was short, and He needed to make the most of His time here. He needed to teach His followers how to follow His preparations and how to proceed. He knew He wouldn't be on earth to be their leader for very long, and that He would be going back to heaven to join His Father. So who here on earth could complete the work He had started? He had to shift that responsibility to His disciples, as He taught them how to be leaders.

As you learn how to become a leader, you can then bring other people on board, explain to them, teach them, help them and encourage them to become leaders. Or maybe as a co-president or president of an organization you can teach your vice president. The same is true with members of any group, even with your family. You can teach your sons and daughters everything they need to know about how a family operates. A mom can teach a daughter how to cook or do other things. A father can teach a son how to mow the grass or paint or vice versa. It is really important to pass on your knowledge, so if you are gone, others know how to proceed.

The same is true in church and business and families. It is very important for you as a leader to pass that mantle of leadership on to others by teaching them. Jesus was an expert at that.

Often people think leadership means they have to be experts in politics or the law or in parliamentary procedures so they can run a meeting, yet they find those things boring. There are people who enjoy those things. But that's not the only kind of leadership.

Maybe you want to organize a bake sale, and you delegate who is to make brownies or cookies or cake. You decide the sale is to be on Saturday at 2:00 at the church or at the club. You delegate different people to bring different things and make sure everyone and everything is ready. You follow up and make sure everyone has everything they need. Everyone works together to price and sell the baked goods. The income is then donated.

Maybe you think doing something like that is unimportant, but handling that kind of situation takes leadership qualities. Leadership is involved in so many aspects of life. So maybe today you are asking yourself, "Am I a leader?" You can believe it. I believe it. God has given us the intrinsic skills to be leaders.

First, question yourself and think of yourself as a leader. Next, consider what your leadership style is and what kind of a leader you are. Do that self-analysis and figure it out. Then, think about where you need to be a leader. It can be with a group of friends or family or church or within the community. It doesn't matter. It can be with hearing or deaf or hard-of-hearing people. It doesn't matter. You need to contemplate and figure out your style and find your niche in leadership, so you know where you belong.

And, finally, you need to set a goal and think how you can progress toward that goal. You need to teach others what you know. And you must have the right attitude. That is so vital. When you look at the Bible and study Jesus' actions, they are so impressive and all for the glory of God. He was the perfect leader. He conversed with God and prayed continually. You, as a leader, must have a relationship with God and ask God for guidance, no matter whether your duties are large or small. Pray about your involvement. It is so imperative that you have that relationship with God and with Jesus.

God will teach you. It's true. He will teach you, even if you are unsure or awkward. You will become a good leader. People will look at you and will emulate you. They will know that you have a closeness with God and Jesus and then be able to carry on.

I believe that one day we will be able to follow in Jesus' footsteps and see God because of that relationship. We will be united, and deaf people will succeed in many wonderful ways. Thank you.



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