



Are We Prepared for Relationships?

Lesson 1: Relationship Principles 1

The Big Idea:

“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck in your eye;’ and look, a plank is in your own eye?”

Matthew 7:3-4

As faith-based leaders who desire to lead in a way that pleases God, we cannot separate healthy leadership from healthy relationships. Relationships are the currency of God’s Kingdom. In these lessons, we will study several “people principles” that have helped leaders connect with people over the centuries. We believe they are timeless and universal. In these lessons we will also study Biblical examples of each principle.

Let’s begin with the “Readiness Question,” Are we prepared for relationships? Many Christian leaders catch a vision and jump immediately into fulfilling that vision, without considering how to profile it for others. They fail to spend time and energy on how to enlist other people in the vision. Consequently, many leaders diminish their results, failing to include others by failing to use good people skills. In this series of lessons we will examine these principles.

◆ *Leader’s Notes* ◆
PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!

A Question to Consider:

Are you a negative or positive person?

What is your perception of others?



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◆ Leader's Notes ◆

Lens

The _____ Principle:

Who we are determines how we see others.

This is where the relationship journey begins. Leaders must understand that their perspective on people is determined by who they are themselves. More than any other factor, predisposition toward others impacts how they turn out as people and how our relationship will be with them.

A traveler nearing a city asked a old man seated by the road, "What are the people like in this city?" The old man replied, "What were they like where you came from?" "Horrible," the traveler reported. "They were mean, untrustworthy, and detestable in all respects." The old man just smiled and said, "Ah, you will find them the same in the city ahead."

Soon after, another traveler stopped to inquire about the people in the city. Again the old man asked him about the people where he was from. "They are honest, industrious, and friendly," came the reply. The old man responded, "That's exactly how you'll find the people here."

The old man was very wise. He knew that the way people see others is a reflection of themselves.

If I am a _____ person, I will see them as _____.

Trusting, Trustworthy

If I am a _____ person, I will see them as _____.

Critical, Critical

If I am a _____ person, I will see them as _____.

Caring,
Compassionate



Biblical Case Study: Nabal and Abigail (1 Samuel 25:1-42)

As David and his men prepared to pass through Nabal's property, David sent a few men ahead to ask Nabal if he could spare anything, such as food, wool or drinks. This was a fair question. David was known as the protector of the land, the one who had defeated Goliath and the Philistines, and was anointed by Samuel as the future king. Despite all this, Nabal refused. Although he was a wealthy man, he refused to give them anything and insulted them as he sent them away. Why did he treat a man like David this way?

Nabal's failure:

Nabal may have had no idea what he was really doing. His self-awareness was low. He was so caught up in his own little world; his leadership skills were almost non-existent. Look at his symptoms:

1. He grew wealthy and satisfied; he didn't think he needed to build _____ (v. 2).
2. He became _____ and _____ of others (v. 3).
3. He neither gave nor received _____; he was numb to good _____ (v. 6).
4. He forgot how others had blessed him in the past; he only counted _____ (v. 7-8).
5. He belittled people and forgot their names; his _____ prevented generosity (v.10).
6. He saw no reason to help others; he suffered from _____ motives (v. 11).
7. He was only interested in building his own _____ - not God's _____ (v. 11).

Abigail's Success:

Nabal's wife, Abigail, heard about his mistreatment, and she knew David would retaliate. She approached relationships completely opposite of her husband. She ran toward David and won him over, so that he didn't react to Nabal's foolishness. David left in peace. Abigail displayed these characteristics:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Risky _____ | 6. Generous _____ |
| 2. Emotional _____ | 7. Forthright _____ |
| 3. Genuine _____ | 8. Quick _____ |
| 4. Personal _____ | 9. Eternal _____ |
| 5. Selfless _____ | 10. Kind _____ |

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

1. Relationships

2. Selfish,
Distrustful

3. Encouragement,
Attitudes

4. Losses

5. Insecurity

6. Self-centered

7. kingdom,
Kingdom

1. Initiative

2. Security

3. Humility

4. Responsibility

5. Attitude

6. Spirit

7. Approach

8. Wit

9. Perspective

10. Affirmation



The _____ Principle:

The first person we must examine is ourselves.

Coping with difficult people is always a problem, especially if the difficult person happens to be you. When leaders fail to practice the "Mirror Principle," they sabotage their own work and don't even know it. Before healthy leaders decide to act, they take a hard look at their own life. They take care of their blind spots and character flaws, knowing that people will reflect their leadership. This is simply "self leadership."

Biblical Case Study: David (2 Samuel 11-12)

Many consider King David as the greatest king in the history of Israel. Jesus was even called "the Son of David." however, David failed to practice the "Mirror Principle" (2 Samuel 11). Neglect became sin, which multiplied to more sin, affecting Bathsheba and Uriah. Adultery led to deception, which led to the murder of Uriah. Sadly, David still was blind to his need for repentance. David required someone from his inner-circle, the prophet Nathan, to confront him and lead him out of his mess (2 Samuel 12). By watching David's failure we notice five common abuses of power that leaders face today:

1. Drifting away from those _____ we still demand in others (11:1)
2. Believing that others _____ us, we shamelessly _____ them (11:2-3).
3. Attempting to _____ rather than _____ (11:6).
4. Refusing to _____ the fact we could be blindly out of God's will (11:11).
5. Believing that people in our way are _____ (11:14).

The Mirror Test

People who are unaware of who they are and what they do, often damage relationships. Consider the following truths that every leader must understand:

1. The first people I must _____ is myself (self-awareness).
2. The first person I must get _____ with is myself (self-image).
3. The first person to _____ my problems is myself (self-honesty).
4. The first person I must _____ is myself (self-improvement).
5. The first person that can make a _____ is myself (self-responsibility).
6. The first person I must _____ is myself (self-leadership).

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

Mirror

1. Disciplines
2. Owe, Use
3. Fix Things Up, Make Things Right
4. Accept
5. Expendable

1. Know

2. Along

3. Cause

4. Change

5. Difference

6. Lead



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A Thought to Ponder:

The Apostle Paul wrote,

*“You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else,
for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself,
because you who pass judgment do the same things.”*

Romans 2:1

What Difference Would It Make:

Have you examined yourself and taken responsibility for who you are?

What difference would it make if you did?

What are two action steps you can take out of what you discover?

◆ *Leader's Notes* ◆



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Lesson 2: Relationship Principles 2

The Big Idea:

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A Question to Consider:

Would others say you overreact to small issues?



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The _____ Principle:

Never use a hammer to swat a fly off of someone's head.

One of the easiest traps for a leader to fall into is to exaggerate a situation. Because we are human, we can get caught up emotionally in our problems and overreact to them. You might call this swatting a fly with a hammer! Leaders must work hard to respond to situations and people with the appropriate emotion and resolve. Leaders who are steady, wise and objective win the trust of others. In fact, leaders who practice this steady behavior have a calming effect on followers. When leaders fail to practice this, they forfeit some of their influence. This is exactly what happened to King Rehoboam in the Old Testament.

Biblical Case Study:

4 Examples of People in the Bible Unnecessarily Using "Hammers" - Overreacting

1. Joseph's Brothers - in leaving him in a pit to die (Genesis 38:20-27)
2. King David - in sending Uriah to the battlefield to die (2 Samuel 11:14-27)
3. Herod the King - in executing infant males (Matthew 2: 1-18)
4. Pilate - in executing an innocent defendant, Jesus (Matthew 27:11-26)

In order to respond with wisdom, try practicing the following principles:

_____ - Don't jump to conclusions, but listen to gain a big picture perspective.

_____ - When you act may be as important as taking the right action.

_____ - People often respond to our attitudes more than our words.

_____ - Make sure the problem and the reaction match.

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

Hammer

Total Picture

Timing

Tone

Temperature



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The _____ Principle:

We can lift people up or take them down in relationships.

In every relationship we have, we are either adding value or consuming value. We are preoccupied with giving to others or receiving from others. For the leader, it is imperative that we add value to others. We must be consumed with giving and lifting others up. A noted psychologist said, *"The world is starving for appreciation. It is hungry for compliments. But somebody must start the ball rolling by speaking first."* This is the job of the leader. Lift others up. Believe the best about them. Encourage and empower them

Biblical Case Study: Jonah and the People of Nineveh (Jonah 4:1-11)

Jonah is a classic failure in this principle. While he did preach repentance to the people of Nineveh, he didn't do it from his heart. When God forgave their sin and didn't punish them, Jonah got angry. He wanted justice not mercy. He had no intention of making his ministry to Nineveh redemptive. When God told Jonah to minister to the people in that city, he turned and ran the other direction. Jonah teaches us the consequences of refusing to encourage, serve others and being consumed with one's own personal agenda (Jonah 1).

We miss the _____ of partnership with God (1:1-3).

Our _____ damages more people than we know (1:4).

We become _____ and _____ to the tragedies we cause (1:5-8).

We lose both _____ and _____ (1:9-10).

Taking Others to a Higher Level

Leaders who take others to a higher level have some common characteristics:

- Leaders who lift others commit themselves to daily _____.
- Leaders who lift others know the small difference that separates hurting from _____.
- Leaders who lift others understand that life is not a _____. It all matters.

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

Elevator

Privilege

Choice

Hardened, Desensitized

Integrity, Trust

Encouragement

Helping

Rehearsal



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A Thought to Ponder:

Would others say that you lift them up or take them down?

What Difference Would It Make:

*What difference would it make if
you were intentional in lifting others up?*

◆ *Leader's Notes* ◆



Are We Prepared for Relationships?

Lesson 3: Relationship Principles 3

The Big Idea:

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A Question to Consider:

Have you been hurt by someone?

Do you understand the hurt behind their actions?



The _____ Principle:

Hurting people hurt people and are easily hurt by them.

This is one of the most important principles leaders must understand. It doesn't take a psychiatrist to see that many people are hurting today. So many people are lonely. They are damaged emotionally or physically, they are needy, and they are crying out to fill the vacuums they feel inside them. Leaders understand that often when people attack or criticize them, they are really displaying their own hurt. Like a wild animal backed into a corner, they lash out in fear and anger over their own pain. Unfortunately, leaders are the ones who often get blamed for this pain since they are the ones responsible for the organization. Consider these four truths:

1. There are many _____ people.
2. Those hurting people often _____ people.
3. Those hurting people are often _____ by people.
4. Those hurting people often _____ themselves.

Biblical Case Study: King Saul (1 Samuel 18:6-9)

King Saul recognized David as a mighty warrior, a valuable team member, an obedient servant, a favored man and effective leader. He also saw David as a potential successor and threat. Things didn't get better when Saul heard the Israelite women comparing the two and David was seen as superior. Saul's insecurity and fear drove him to turn against David. He lost sight of what was best for the country

Notice Saul's symptoms:

- _____ (v.9)
- _____ (v.11)
- _____ (v.12)
- _____ (v.15-16)
- _____ (v.13, 17)

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

Pain

1. Hurting

2. Hurt

3. Hurt

4. Hurt

Suspicion

Attempted Murder

Fear

Insecurity

Conspiracy



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Dealing With Hurting People

1. Don't take it personally: Be _____.
2. Look beyond the person for the problem: Be _____.
3. Look behind the situation: Be _____.
4. Do not add to their hurt: Be _____.
5. Help them find help: Be _____.

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

1. Gracious
2. Insightful
3. Thoughtful
4. Proactive
5. Helpful

A Thought to Ponder:

Evaluate yourself:

Are you weak in any of the five relationship principle areas?

Which ones are your strongest and weakest areas?

1. *The Lens Principle: Who we are determines how we see others.*
2. *The Mirror Principle: The first person we must examine is ourselves.*
3. *The Hammer Principle: Never use a hammer to swat a fly.*
4. *The Elevator Principle: We can lift people up or take them down.*
5. *The Pain Principle: Hurting people hurt people and are easily hurt.*

What Difference Would It Make:

*What difference would it make if
you were intentional about taking one action step
that would help you improve in the area where you most need to grow?*

List that action step here.