

L.E.A.D – POWER OF EIGHT

For their inauguration in the wilderness, the Levitical priests were commanded to remain at the door of the tabernacle, gathered in the courtyard where they were to stay for seven days, “*keeping the charge* of YHWH” (Leviticus 8:35). In Hebrew, ‘keeping the charge’ is ‘*shamartem et-mishmeret*. The root of the first word, ‘*shamartem*,’ is ‘Shamar’ (Strong’s H8104), the word used for ‘keep’ or ‘observe,’ which is better translated as ‘guard’ and ‘protect,’ as if a watchman. The second word, ‘*mishmeret*’ (Strong’s H4931), here used as ‘charge,’ can also be defined as ‘service,’ ‘ordinance,’ ‘obligation,’ ‘observance,’ and ‘watch’ (as if to safeguard, similar in meaning to the word ‘Shamar’).

These seven days are about more than simply standing in the courtyard waiting for the inauguration period to end; this is about the Levites becoming the guards of Israel, whose God-ordained ritual practices are observed to safeguard the nation, watching over the people, leading, and serving them so that their state of spiritual and physical cleanliness is maintained, allowing the presence of El Shaddai to remain amongst them in the camp.

These passages teach us that fulfilling a leadership position takes patience, effort, and submission to others. To be able to serve the people of Israel, living as the examples of righteously and obediently serving YHWH and others, the priests must first make themselves right with God. Only after making restitution for the things that need fixing in their lives can they start leading and helping others to do the same. Much like in a rapidly decompressing airplane, it is crucially important that you put your oxygen mask on before trying to help others with theirs because, without that oxygen in your lungs, you will be in no fit state to help anyone. By trying to help others before making sure that you are in the correct position to offer that help, you not only don’t allow anyone but loses yourself too.



A leader cannot lead through hypocrisy. The “do as I say and not as I do” approach is one of the quickest ways to build resentment in the people being led, as people gradually start to question why they should do something that the leader isn’t doing or why they must stop doing something that the leader is still doing. The leader’s judgment can be called into question because they do not

have the foundation to resolve matters within themselves before judging or instructing others in those areas (Matthew 7:1-5). An effective leader must be humble enough to admit their sins, faults, failures, and mistakes before those they are leading. Contrary to the belief that it creates an image of weakness, this presents the leader as a strong and emotionally balanced person who is comfortable with accepting their faults so that the necessary self-improvements can be made. A leader is not exempt from the personal development expected of the people. This humility will help inspire respect in others that will instill the desire to *want* to follow and willingly give the authority to the leader.

Before you start thinking that leadership is not your responsibility, your responsibility; however, consider that we are all leading someone, whether we know it or not. Just because we don't think we are influencing anyone doesn't mean we aren't affecting or influencing others. Therefore, it is so important to live according to YHWH's instructions so that whether we have a conscious or unconscious influence over someone else, our example is one of righteousness.

There is a clear Biblical example of how things can go very wrong when a leader does not ascribe to the instructions for preparation given by God. In 1 Samuel 13, we read of the first sacrifice that was going to be made by Saul after his anointing as King of Israel, his participation in the priestly duty; a few chapters earlier, we see the instructions were given to him by Samuel, the prophet of YHWH (1 Samuel 10:8). Saul was instructed to go to Gilgal ahead of Samuel, then wait for seven days to receive the guidance for the sacrifice from the prophet, just as the priests were required to wait seven days before they could perform their duties. This instruction is simple, yet Saul still did not wait, making the sacrifice of his own accord. Through impatience and hubris, Saul ignored the specific instructions given to him by God's chosen messenger, Samuel, and thus was in disobedience to God. Attempting to justify this mistake using his flawed reason and logic only further demonstrated Saul's unworthiness for the leadership role.

Leadership comes with a profound responsibility, especially in representing God to the people being led. Saul's main priority as the human king of Israel should have been representing Israel's faithful, heavenly King. By committing the sacrifice in a way that was against the instructions given to him, Saul demonstrated that he was putting his faith in the sacrifice rather than God. Saul was treating YHWH as if He was one of the Canaanite gods, being bribed for favor through the gift rather than honored.

The pagan gods were sacrificed to be appeased, bribed, or kept at bay, but YHWH, the God of Israel, desires only to be pleased and to come closer to His people. YHWH's sacrifices were not for His appeasement but for the spiritual cleansing of the people so that He could dwell with them. His desire is for His people to live with the attributes of obedience rather than the complacency of having been cleansed with innocent blood (1 Samuel 15:22, Isaiah 1, Hosea 6:6, Psalms 40:6 and 51:16, Matthew 9:13 and 12:7). So, to treat the sacrifices of YHWH with the same intentions and motivations that the pagans had in sacrificing to their fallen gods is not only an insult to the relationship that God desires to have with His people but a gross misrepresentation of Him to Israel.

Saul had also been told to wait for Samuel, which he did not do. Although, as king, he was the highest civil authority, he was still subject to God's higher power, so Samuel, God's prophet to

Israel, was a source of instruction for him. Saul very clearly did not respect that authority. He had been provided with a specific timetable for things to be done. Still, since Samuel had not given him the explanations for why that period was necessary, Saul decided to go ahead and do things in his understanding rather than trust that there were good reasons for both the waiting time and Samuel withholding those details from him. Saul was supposed to wait for seven days, the eighth being his 'new beginning.' His lack of patience produced a lack of faith, and his hasty decision led to him arrogantly taking authority over the situation he didn't have. Ironically, this led to all his head and the blessings he desired being taken away.

We must look to our own lives and our attitudes and ask ourselves whether we would have the faith to trust instructions we didn't have all the explanations for. How many times have we questioned the logic of people to whom we were supposed to be submitted? How often did this lack of understanding lead to our disobedience and, ultimately, a bad situation? Finally, how does God view us acting through our logic and reason rather than trusting those He has put in charge of us?

To avoid the pitfalls of disobedience through misunderstanding and assumption, like Saul, we must trust in Adonai with all our hearts because His light, wisdom, and Spirit guide us towards something unfathomably extraordinary. Still, we must trust that where we are and what we know (or don't) is the will of God and is working for a greater good (Proverbs 3:5-7). Therefore, the Scriptures, as our primary source for the Word of God, are crucial to us and why we must take the time to study the Bible and share our faith with others. The Scriptures show us Adonai's heart and His desires for His people; they teach us how to follow our Father in heaven and live in the way that He has instructed us; they show us how we are supposed to relate to both God and our fellow man; they give us stories such as Saul's so that we can learn from the mistakes of the past and become more obedient to God's will. What we know from our studies of the Bible are universal and timeless principles that genuinely teach us what it means to live a good, fruitful, and godly life filled with love. Remember the 'greatest commandment' according to Yeshua Messiah in Mark 12:29-31:

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

If we indeed show love to God and our neighbor, then respect, patience, self-control, and trust should all be characteristics of that love, especially as leaders to others (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Galatian 5:22-23). Saul showed no evidence of having any of these fruits in this moment of disobedience. He lacked respect for God's authority and Samuel's position as God's voice to the people, he lacked patience and self-control, and ultimately, he lacked trust. In lacking these things, Saul demonstrated an absence of love and the fruits of the spirit, which are crucial to moral leadership.

As families and communities, we must discuss these things to ensure that we do things in a way that honors God and His Word. What does it mean to have respect for authority and the chain of

command? Why are patience and self-control crucial in following God and leading others? Why do we need both trustworthiness as leaders and trust in those whom God has placed over us?

Trust is essential in children and adults as a critical element of faith. When children can trust the people who care for them and lead them through their young lives, then they are trusting in God Himself because that authority had come from God in the first place (Romans 13:1). However, if leadership cannot be trusted, then how can the decisions of that leadership be considered beneficial to those being led? Further to that, what would that mean for the perception of God in those being shown if this person is supposed to be a representative of Him and yet does not demonstrate godly attributes? Children look to adults as examples and their way to God, but if they cannot trust the adults, they may end up feeling like they cannot trust God either, maybe even turning away when given sufficient freedom. We should seriously consider turning young people away from God and towards sin through bad leadership (Matthew 18:6).

As adults, we are more conscious of our responsibilities, but a lack of trust in those over us areas of our lives can still lead to a lack of faith. If we have confidence that we are where God needs us to be, that we have what God needs us to have and that we are submitted to those whom God needs us to submit to, whether we understand why then we are trusting in the promises of God's Word and that all things are working for our good (Romans 8:28). Trust in the authority that YHWH has placed over us is instrumental in us fulfilling our part in His community and a sign of faith that will also encourage others to surrender themselves to the Will of God.

Leaders must be the ones who act in a way that encourages others to follow the example and create an environment that shows that each member of the group is respected and loved, that the leadership, although in authority, is very much in service to the people being led by them. By guiding our families to a place of discipleship and unshakeable faith and teaching others about God's truth, light, and love, we will genuinely contribute to the building of the eternal Kingdom. Still, we must be ready to make ourselves low and humble ourselves as servants. Only by following the example of Yeshua in humility and faith (John 13:1-17) can we truly fulfill our roles as leaders within YHWH's community.

Shalom,

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