

## Workplace Leadership

*When leaders lead in Israel,  
When the people willingly offer themselves,  
Bless the Lord. Judges 5:2*

This verse tells us that it is a blessing of God when leaders lead and the people willingly follow. When God's designated leaders lead, the people will follow. Consider the armies and tribes of Israel, the family, the church, the state, – God has designated leadership roles in each of these institutions with the authority, and also the accountability, to lead according to His Word.

If you have been raised up by God to lead a company, or a division, or a department, or a project, than you are God's leader by role and responsibility. The question isn't whether you should be a leader, the question is what kind of a leader are you being.

We're not talking about management, which is focused on doing things the right way. We are talking about leadership, which must be focused on doing the right things. There is an important difference between the two. Efficient organizations need managers, effective organizations need leaders. God wants His organizations to be both effective and efficient.

We all have images in our mind of what a leader is supposed to be like. Some of us have studied leadership in school, others have attended seminars, and there is no end to the number of books written about leadership. We can learn techniques and practice styles, and we should, but always diligently filtering all of man's wisdom through God's Word.

Now put all of that aside mentally, and open your mind and heart to God's definition of leadership as revealed in His Word.

**Colossians 3:22 – 4:1**

3:22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;

3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

3:25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

4:1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

**Ephesians 6:5-9**

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;  
6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.  
7 With good will render service, as

**OBSERVE**

As we learned last lesson, the context is the key to understanding what the Bible says. Thus, when studying a particular topic, such as *Workplace Leadership*, the first place to look are passages that speak to the topic, in context. These two NT passages give instruction to masters and slaves, and are applicable to employers and employees in our present economy.

*Leader, read CONTEXT and INSIGHT box and then read Colossians 3:22-4:1 and Ephesians 6:5-9 and have the group say aloud and mark "master" and any personal pronouns.*

**CONTEXT**

The context of both of these passages is practical instruction regarding how to walk the Christian life in our various relationships. Each passage covers husbands and wives, parents and children, and bosses and workers – the fundamental relationships of life.

**INSIGHT**

These are instructions to Christian slaves and Christian masters. The Greek word "doulos" translated "slave" in the NAS translation, is translated 'bondservant' in the NKJV and "servant" in the KJV. The key to this word is that one person's will is subject to another person's will, either involuntarily as a slave or voluntarily as a servant. There were no corporations in biblical times, people were either small business owners or workers in a small business.

In Colossians 4:1, the word translated "justice" means that which is expected as duty and can be claimed as a right. The word translated "fairness" means equitable judgment in circumstances not covered by justice.

to the Lord, and not to men,  
8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

#### 1 Peter 5:1-4

1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

## DISCUSS

- Compare and contrast the instructions given to servants and masters, record your observations, and list the specific commands given to masters. Take a couple of minutes to do this.
- What is the alternative to “threatening” in Ephesians 6:9, that is noted in Colossians 4:1?
- Summarize in your own words the primary biblical responsibility of the person in the role of master, or boss.

## OBSERVE

We’ve looked at one “role” of the workplace leader and that is master, or boss. Next we’re going to look at a second role and that is shepherd.

*Leader: Read the CONTEXT and INSIGHT box and then read aloud 1 Peter 5:1-4 and have the group say aloud and mark “shepherd,” and also “but.”*

### CONTEXT

These exhortations are given to men raised up to be leaders in the church. Throughout Scripture we see shepherding, from which we get our word pastor, as a model for leading. In our stewardship ministry

### Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.

3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

5 Thou dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; Thou has anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

### Luke 22:24-27

24 And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be the greatest.

25 And He said to them, "The kings of the gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.'

model of business, the people entrusted to our care are the flock, and the owners and managers are the shepherds.

### INSIGHT

"Lording it over" someone meant a high-handed autocratic rule; a haughty, controlling misuse of legitimate authority.

### DISCUSS

- Take a couple of minutes and look closely at the three contrasts indicated by "but." What do you learn about shepherding from these contrasts?

### OBSERVE

Lets look at another passage to learn more about the "shepherding" model of leadership.

*Leader" Read aloud Psalm 23.*





## WRAP IT UP

This is a list of the truths that we discovered inductively from God's Word:

- We looked at three biblical views, or roles, of leadership that should be applied in the workplace. These roles are not mutually exclusive from one another, in other words they should operate side-by-side.
- Here the key principles that we discovered, phrased in the form of questions, to ask yourself in any given workplace situation that requires leadership.
  - Master, Owner, Overseer, Boss
    - Am I granting justice, and also fairness, to my subordinates, to those under my authority, in this situation?
    - Is my attitude and treatment of my people governed only by their legal rights, or governed by the attitude and treatment of my Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, towards me?
    - Am I in the habit of threatening my employees instead of calmly, yet firmly, granting justice and fairness?
  - Shepherd
    - Do I know my people well enough to know what their needs are, to discern their concerns, to care for them properly? Is my primary concern what is best for them, or what is best for me?
    - Do my people willingly follow me, or must I drive them to meet the business objectives?
    - Am I providing a realistic opportunity for my people to meet their needs and also share in the success of the business?
    - Am I protective of my people, not only their physical well-being, but their emotional and spiritual well-being as well?
    - Do my business practices, words and demeanor lead my people towards "paths of righteousness?" Am I leading them closer to Christ?
    - Do I "spare the rod" when a person needs to be disciplined? Do I "misuse the rod" when a person needs to be cared for?
  - Servant
    - Am I truly serving the best interests of the person in this situation, the best interests of the organization, or am I serving my interests?
    - Have I provided all that my subordinates need to be successful?
    - Are the "perks" of my position necessary to fulfill my role as leader? Do they hinder my ability to serve my people?
    - Would my people say I "lord my authority" over them?

**B**e  
**O**verseer  
**S**hepherd &  
**S**ervant