

Central Study Hour – Sabbath School Lesson Notes

“Feed My Sheep” First and Second Peter: Lesson Seven, “Servant Leadership”

SABBATH AFTERNOON: Read title. This is a contradiction of terms for tyrannical leaders (give examples). “Servant leadership” suggests the idea of caring for people, being a leader that serves people, such as was Moses.

But what is leadership? (Young pastor funeral story). 1.) A leader knows where he wants to go. No one wants to follow someone that doesn’t know where he is going. 2.) It’s been said that people can be divided into three parts: “Those who make things happen, those who watch what’s happening, and those who don’t know what’s happening.” Leaders are those who make things happen. 3.) Making things happen doesn’t always equate with leadership (example: fixing a car, proof reading a document). The person who knows how may always have a job, but it’s the person who knows why that will be the boss. That’s because, “Leaders think. They think because they are leaders. They are leaders because they think.” (Paul Parker) Knowing why is part of leading. 4.) Leaders see the best way to go and others follow. John Maxwell says, “If you are trying to be a leader and nobody is following, you are just taking a walk.” **So, what is leadership?** In one single word, it could be defined as **influence**. Influence suggests the ability to deal with people. Leaders influence what people think and what they do. Field Marshal, Bernard Montgomery wrote that “Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and having the character which inspires confidence.” So first, a leader knows where he is going, and second, he is able to persuade other people to go with him. This is what Moses did in the Exodus. Of course, God was the real leader. Montgomery’s quotation above brings out the importance of good character in a leader. This brings us back to the “servant” part of leadership.

Read the opening paragraph. “But church leadership is highly challenging.” This is because members are volunteers. There are no paychecks. Volunteers can’t be told what to do like an employee in a paid job. There must be an appeal to spiritual commitment. Therefore a “Christian leader must be deeply spiritual.” Peter’s focus in 1 Peter 5:1-10 is on leadership on the local church level.

What were the leadership roles or positions in the early church, and how did they come to be established? At first, there were just the 12 apostles.

SUNDAY: ELDERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Read Acts 6:1-4. *Why was it not good for the 12 apostles to take responsibility for the fair distribution of food?* It would take away their time for the ministry of the word (teaching others and preaching) and time in prayer. Hit highlights from the first three short paragraphs. Basically sum up why deacons were added as a new part of the church structure.

Read Acts 14:23. *What additional role was added to the structures or organization of the church?* Local elders were set up to lead in every church.

Read 1 Tim. 5:17. According to this verse, some elders labored in word and doctrine. *Did all elders have the same job?* No.

Read 1 Peter 5:2. *What else might an elder do?* Oversight of the flock means visiting and

encouraging and/or leading and decision making. An elder could chair a board or committee, or advise or counsel as needed.

Note: There's a good summary of the three roles of leadership in the early church on p. 94 of the Teacher's Comments under "Just for Teachers."

Optional: Ask the question in the box at the bottom of the page. *How does **Proverbs 13:10** help with this question?*

MONDAY: THE ELDERS

Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. *What attitudes should leaders bring to their roles in the church?* 1.) "not by constraint, but willingly" means don't serve merely out of obligation. 2.) "not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" means serve eagerly without expectation of pay or reward. 3.) "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." This means that instead of being bossy, be an example of humility in leadership. *Do these principles apply to all Christians, even those who are not leaders?*

Share highlights from the two middle paragraphs. 1.) An elder should understand Christ's sufferings and the hope He offers humanity. 2.) An elder should be "a shepherd tending the flock of God."

Read Jer. 10:21 and **Ez. 34: 8-10.** *What warning do we find in these verses for those who are shepherds?* Jer. 10:21 described the shepherds or pastors as brutish. These pastors are evil. *What did the passage in Ez. 34 say that the shepherds were doing wrong?* 1.) Preying on the flock. 2.) They abandoned the flock or at least didn't even search for them. 3.) Fed themselves instead of the flock. *What did God say He would do about this?* 1.) Hold the shepherds accountable, and 2.) Remove them and deliver the flock from them. "An important role of Christian leadership is to work with the people in the church as patiently as shepherds must work with their sheep." Someone said, "There are two kinds of leaders in the world. Some are interested in the fleeces, others in the flock."

TUESDAY: SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Read 1 Peter 5:3. Have everyone look up **Matt. 20:20-21.** Sum it up. **Read Matt. 20:24-28.** *What crucial principles of Christian leadership are found in these verses?* "Lording it over" or "exercising dominion over them" is not God's way. His leaders are to minister and serve others like Jesus did. *What was Jesus' feelings regarding James and John's desire for high positions in His kingdom?* Obviously, Jesus couldn't approve. However, there is a surprising angle on this in *The Desire of Ages* quotation from p. 548 in the middle of the page (Read it). Actually, not long after this Jesus did give a profound rebuke, but one without words. He had to teach them what was right, but how? "How was Christ to bring these poor souls where Satan would not have a decided victory? How could he show that a mere profession of discipleship did not make them disciples, or insure them a place in His kingdom? How could He show that it is loving service, true humility, which constitutes real greatness? How was He to kindle in their hearts, and enable them to comprehend what He longed to tell them?" Picture the next scene in the upper room set for the Passover. No servant has come to wash the dust off their feet as was their custom. For a time, Jesus waited to see what they would do. "After that He poureth water into

a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." **John 13:5**. "This action opened the eyes of the disciples. Bitter shame and humiliation filled their hearts. They understood the unspoken rebuke, and saw themselves in altogether new light." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 644. (Share Basin theology story). Peter was "calling church leaders to the same ideal: the surrender and self-denial seen in Jesus must be revealed in them, as well."

Summarize or Read Phil. 2:4-8. What Paul said here coincides with what Peter wrote. *How can we really be like Jesus?* It's simply impossible without being renewed daily. We must die to self every day, every hour, every minute. We must die a deeper death.

WEDNESDAY: CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY

Share highlights from the opening paragraph.

Read 1 Peter 5:5-7. *Given the context and the time in which they lived, what is so remarkable about what Peter wrote here?* It was very different from the cultural expectations. *Was this humility expected of every Christian, even the wealthy or those of a higher class according to society?*

Emphasize points from verses 5-7 as desired, especially about "all of you being subject one to another."

Why was verse 7 chosen as this week's memory verse? Page 96 in the Teacher's Comments says this, "All are advised to humble themselves before God and wait for Him to exalt them at the proper time. Although humility was then, and is now, generally associated with poverty and low social standing, the believers don't need to worry over such things. They need only let God worry about their well-being, because He cares for them and can be trusted to meet their needs." The point is that the humble person trusts all their cares to God – even leaders!

Share highlights or read the last paragraph on Wednesday's page. Ask the question in the box at the bottom. The point is that no matter who we are, or what status we think that we have or don't have, we are all sinners with the same basic need of God's intervention at the cross and ever afterwards.

THURSDAY: LIKE A ROARING LION

Read or highlight the opening paragraph.

Read Revelation 12:7-9. *What does this text teach us about the origin of evil and the work of Satan in our world?* To answer, just briefly note some of the basic points.

Read 1 Peter 5:8-10. *How does Peter emphasize the danger that the devil represents?*

Read 1 Peter 5:10 again. *What is Peter saying to us in this verse?* Answer with the points from the last paragraph of this page.

Conclusion: Ask the question in the box at the bottom of the page. Share or discuss the importance of treasuring and remembering the specific and close experiences that we've had with God. His care for us *then* serves as a powerful reminder that He will care for us *now*.