

The Qualities of Those Who Judge What the Lord Demands From Those That Lead His People

- Much had happened to the new nation – the Hebrew people
- They had been delivered from the grip of Pharaoh's bondage by the power of the Lord of all the earth
- The Lord God had sent ten plagues through the hands of His servants – Moses and Aaron
- At the event of the tenth plague the death angel had taken the life of every first-born son of the Egyptian people – including the first-born son of Pharaoh himself
 - Yet the covenant God had instructed Moses to direct Israel follow His directions that their households might be spared a visit from the angel of death
 - In obedience the Hebrew people did as the Lord directed them through the mouth of Moses
 - Because of the application of the blood on the tops and sides of the door frames of their houses – the death angel passed them by
- After having been set free they were pursued by Pharaoh and his army
- Yet they witnessed the deliverance of God as he drowned Pharaoh's army in the sea while the Hebrew people escaped unharmed
- The Lord had provided manna and quail in the wilderness to feed them
- He overshadowed them with the cloud of His presence by day
- And He lit their camp with the pillar of fire by night

Then in the wilderness they were attacked by the warriors of Amalek

Ex 17:8-13

8 While the people of Israel were still at Rephidim, the warriors of Amalek attacked them. 9 Moses commanded Joshua, "Choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army of Amalek. Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill. 11 As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage. 12 Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset. 13 As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

NLT

- Yet again their God had delivered His people – Joshua had battled while Moses held his hands high in supplication to the Lord – having been supported by Aaron and Hur
- After this Jethro, Moses' father-in-law came with the man of God's sons and his wife and met him where he was camped in the wilderness at the foot of the mountain of God (Ex 18:5)
 - Moses bowed down before his father-in-law and kissed him and they enquired of each other's welfare before they entered the tent (Ex 18:7)
 - It was in Moses' tent that he related to his father-in-law all that the Lord had done: The plagues of Egypt

- The defeat Pharaoh for Israel's sake and God's deliverance from the hardships of the wilderness – this caused Jethro to rejoice for the Lord's goodness

Listen to Jethro's response...

Ex 18:9-12

9 Jethro was delighted when he heard about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel as he rescued them from the hand of the Egyptians.

10 "Praise the Lord," Jethro said, "for he has rescued you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh. Yes, he has rescued Israel from the powerful hand of Egypt! 11 I know now that the Lord is greater than all other gods, because he rescued his people from the oppression of the proud Egyptians."

12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. Aaron and all the elders of Israel came out and joined him in a sacrificial meal in God's presence.

NLT

- The next day when they got up Moses went about doing what he normally did – he sat to judge the people – and the people gathered around Moses from morning until evening
- As Jethro beheld this he couldn't believe what he was seeing and questioned Moses about it...

Ex 18:14

14 When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?"

NLT

Moses responded...

Ex 18:15-16

15 Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. 16 When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions."

NLT

1) How could this have happened?

- a) Moses had been God's spokesman before Pharaoh
 - i) He had been sent with the mandate of the Holy One to the enslaved Hebrew people
 - ii) A mandate which had been given him on the mount of God in the wilderness – before the bush that burned with the Covenant Lord's presence – yet was not consumed
 - iii) Moses felt a personal responsibility to God and the people that He had been sent to govern
 - iv) This is how it should be for all those that are called to serve the Lord by serving His people
- b) Yet Jethro, being an objective observer, and a man filled with wisdom – could see the end result of this pattern
 - i) It would become destructive to Moses and to those he had been sent to lead
 - ii) How would the people learn to govern themselves when they entered the land?
 - iii) How would the man of God himself survive if this behavior continued much longer?

Because of this foresight Jethro responded to Moses

Ex 18:17-18

17 "This is not good!" Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. 18 "You're going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself.

NLT

- c) Imagine the scene when Moses sits to judge – if it continued as it was
 - i) It is estimated that up to a million Hebrew people left Egypt for the promised land
 - ii) Picture the thousands gathered each day – waiting to receive a judgment from the man of God on some unimportant matter
 - iii) They must have been straining to hear – and longing to see what was going on so far in front of them where Moses sat to Judge
- d) To understand put yourself in the line waiting to receive a decision
 - i) I'm sure the patience of many people would grow short – tempers would start to rise and people would become angry
 - ii) There had to be arguments – and people starting fights as they grew tired of waiting
 - iii) There might have been babies birthed – and the elderly passing to glory as they stood in line
- e) There is much to be gained from the council of the wise
 - i) Sometimes – we can become so focused on our *service* to God and therefore we aren't able to see as clearly as we should – what His will actually is
 - ii) The Father has designed the body so that we need what each other has to contribute

Eph 4:16

16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love

NLT

- iii) As the body of Christ functions according to the will of God – by the special talents and gifts that are supplied through the Holy Spirit – the body grows
- f) The man of God's father-in-law continued by counseling Moses as to how he should change his actions before – Moses was no longer able to govern
- g) Before Moses would become too tired to decide – even between the smallest of disputes If this were to go on
 - i) It was important that this new Hebrew nation learned civil order
 - ii) They needed to become a generation prepared
 - iii) They were to be an example to all the nations around when they settled in the land that God might be glorified.
 - iv) Several previous generations of the Hebrew people had lived in slavery and now it was necessary that they learned how to govern themselves under the guidance of God.
- h) Jethro told Moses that he was to continue to be the people's spokesman before their God

Ex 18:19-20

19 Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him. 20 Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives.

NLT

- i) Moses was to take the people's cases before God – to learn God's will
 - ii) Moses was to teach God's rulings to the people
 - iii) Moses was to give the people God's instructions
 - iv) Moses was to teach them how to carry out their lives – and their walk before God
- It was then Jethro outlined the basics – the qualities by which the choice of judges should be made.
 - We will look at the advice given by the father-in-law of Moses as containing four basic elements – or points, which when adhered to would bring forth the will of God.
 - These are four of the qualities that make a good leader

Now let's look at the first of the four qualities – They were to be “able” men

1) Quality number one: They were to be “able” men

Then Jethro continues his instruction in Exodus chapter eighteen verse twenty-one by telling his son-in-law...

Ex 18:21

21 "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

NASB

- a) They were to have within them the inborn ability to fulfill the job description
 - i) They had to have been recognized as already displaying the gifts it took
 - ii) They were to be already functioning as leaders naturally – although not presently in the position
 - (1) In the margin of the NASB for verse 21 where it states that Moses was to “select out of all the people able men” – The margin note tells us that literally the phrase “select out” was simply to “see” these appointees
 - (2) They were already doing what they were called to do
 - (3) When recounting this selection (the seeing) process in the book of Deuteronomy Moses told it like this...

Dt 1:12-14

12 'How can I alone bear the load and burden of you and your strife? 13 'Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads.' 14 'You answered me and said, 'The thing which you have said to do is good.'

NASU

- b) These men were to be able (gifted) – they were to be “wise” – “discerning” – and “experienced” if they were to lead God's people – if they were to sit as judges
 - (1) They needed wisdom to know what to do
 - (2) They needed discernment – which is the ability to distinguish or tell the difference between the truth or a lie
 - (a) The ability to recognize the fault in disputes
 - (b) The ability to detect errors in people's perceptions and judgments
 - (c) They needed to be able to “tell the difference” between God's will and people's desires

- (i) Being able to tell the difference between God's will and the peoples desire – is one of the fundamental requirements that one must possess if they are to serve in a leadership capacity in the body of Christ.
- (ii) This discernment must only come through the distinguishing ability of the Holy Spirit of God Himself.
- (3) Finally, the quality of being “able” needed to entail experience
 - (a) They had to have gone through a process in their lives to bring them to a point where they could function in this position
 - (b) Any person that has either gone through – or is presently going through this process can attest to the fact that it is sometimes painful
 - (i) It is sometimes filled with rejection and frustration
 - (ii) It sometimes brings you to the point of giving up
 - (iii) It is then that, the path causes someone take stock of their reason for wanting to serve God
 - (iv) The motive of the person has to be pure and selfless
 - (v) The motive must be simply that God is worthy to be served.

Now let's look at the second of the four qualities – They were to be men that “feared God”

2) Quality number two: They were to be men that “Feared God”

- a) They were not to make decisions based upon their own wisdom – or their own experience – but based upon God's will
 - i) How many churches have placed people in leadership positions that do not reverence God in their lives – simply because there was a vacancy
 - (1) When there are slots to fill – classes to teach
 - (2) Many churches just plug people into a position
 - (3) All sorts of damage have been done to the Body of Christ, the citizens of the Kingdom – by electing to do things this way
 - ii) Someone that does not “fear” (or reverence God) will not seek His will in their decision making process
 - (1) The person put in a place of authority must reverence God in every aspect of their lives – they must *fear* the Holy One.
 - (2) The person in leadership must be willing to wait on God – even in the smallest decisions
 - (a) It must not only be that trustworthy people are appointed
 - (b) but that the ones that are placed are placed according to their particular giftings and temperament
 - iii) One of the sub-qualities that we have already talked about is wisdom
 - iv) It is in this deep reverence for God that we find the initiation of wisdom

Pr 1:7

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

NASU

Listen to Proverbs chapter one verse seven in the Amplified version of the Bible

Pr 1:7

7 The reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning and the principal and choice part of knowledge [its starting point and its essence]; but fools despise skillful and godly Wisdom, instruction, and discipline.

AMP

The most important trait having to do with godly fear

- b) Moses above all the people displayed this trait
 - i) The Word states that Moses was an immensely humble man
 - (1) As a matter of fact the Word says that Moses was more humble than anyone else

Nu 12:3

3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)

NASU

- (2) He understood that it was God that had delivered the people from Egyptian bondage
- (3) It was his reverence of God that caused him to be a great leader
- ii) The second part of Pr 1:7 says that “fools despise (ignore) wisdom and instruction
- iii) When his father-in law came to him and said; “What is this thing you are doing for the people?” – “Why do you alone sit as judge?” Moses could have allowed himself to become offended
- iv) He could have responded to Jethro; “God chose me, not you, I am the leader, you have no right to tell me what to do” – “look at all God has done through me” – “I know what I’m doing, so keep your mouth shut”

Rather than responding in arrogance and becoming defensive in says in verse 24...

Ex 18:24

24 So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

NASU

- v) It was this humility that caused Moses to bow at the feet of his father-in-law and kiss him – it was this humility that caused him to respond to the will of God from the mouth of Jethro
- vi) This was because he feared God and did not reject wise counsel

3) Quality number 3: They were to be men of truth

- a) The Hebrew word translated “truth” in verse 21 means “certainty” or “trustworthiness”
 - i) It comes from a root word that means “to build up or support” “to be firm or faithful” “to trust or believe” “morally to be true or certain”
 - ii) The word from which the Hebrew word comes from that is translated truth, simply means “stability”
 - iii) It is translated in the KJV as: establishment, faithful, right, sure, or true
- b) These leaders that were to be “seen” or selected – were to be functioning in this quality of stability during times of hardship
 - i) This would show that they served – not for their own interests – but God’s
 - ii) They need to be sincere in all their actions

- iii) They need to love God's people as He loves them
- c) Since the quality of "fearing God" came before the quality of truth – it must be seen that the truth that they held had to flow out of a nature of someone who feared the Lord – and recognized His absolute truth above all else.
 - i) Stability in truth can come from no other source – and it is born through hardship and learning dependence on God and seeking His will
 - ii) This dependence gives a permanence to our actions and causes us to remain quiet and faithful when other's lives are falling apart
 - iii) Truth must always entail steadfastness – determination – and loyalty

4) Quality number 4: They were to be men that "hated dishonest gain"

- a) To hate dishonest gain simply meant "no bribes"
 - i) Those in places of authority have often used their positions to take advantage of those with less power
 - ii) Those in places of authority have often used their positions to prosper by the riches and will of those they judge that have riches
 - iii) In other words – those that are rich can influence the opinion – of judges that have this flaw

When giving instruction before the event of entering the Promised Land in Deuteronomy, Moses told the people...

Dt 16:18-20

18 "You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 "You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. 20 "Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

NASU

- b) Judging with righteous judgment meant three specific things
 - i) First: They were not to distort justice

The Holman Christian Standard translation has, *Do not deny justice*, where the New Living Translation has, *You must never twist justice*.

The point seems clear; justice perverted by personal agenda is no justice at all

- ii) Not only were the judges that were appointed not to twist justice – Secondly they also were not to be partial
 - (1) Not being partial – or biased – not allowing yourself to be influenced in your decisions based upon what you might gain
 - (2) In partiality we find the personal priorities that pervert justice into something that falls far short of God's intentions

The third phrase is a natural consequent of the first two

- iii) They were not to take a bribe
 - (1) Bribes blind the eyes of the wise
 - (2) Bribes pervert the words of the righteous
 - (3) If someone in a position of power is driven by personal agenda and willing to subvert justice for personal gain...
 - (4) They can be influenced to make decisions that are not based on the righteous will of God
- c) It was by justice that they would live in the land and it was by justice that they would possess what the Lord had promised to give them
- d) These men that were to be chosen were to hate with their very lives actions that would compromise their integrity when making decisions concerning God's people
 - i) It is ultimately only righteousness and justice that brings peace among people
 - ii) Unrighteousness and unfairness – lead to chaos
 - iii) This order is dictated and established by God alone through those that serve Him with a pure heart
 - iv) The Leaders that are truly chosen of God – are placed in position by Him not man
 - (1) This means they are responsible to do as He would do

Let's talk about God's throne

(2) The throne of God – represents the authority of God

In Psalm eighty-nine verse fourteen it states to God that

Ps 89:14

14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.

NLT

- (3) From this we can understand that – the foundation of the authority of God
- (4) That which supports and upholds His authority is righteousness and justice
- (5) No leader – therefore – can ever claim God's authority – if they ever act in unrighteous or unjust ways
- (6) If they do this they are simply seeking personal power

Let's review the qualities of those that God calls to lead...

- 1) God's leaders are to be able (equipped with): Wisdom – Discernment – and Experience
- 2) God's leaders are to be fearers of God alone – and not man: Therefore, they will not make decisions based upon their own wisdom and experience – but based upon God's will
- 3) God's leaders are to be people of truth: Stable – supportive – showing faithful permanence – exhibiting moral integrity
- 4) God's leaders are to be people that hate dishonest gain:
 - a) They are not to take advantage of their positions and let this advantage compromise their ability to make decisions pleasing to God
 - b) Decisions that are based upon His will and that benefit and promote peace among the People of God

It is the Father's will that he prepares his Church to inherit the kingdom. This preparation entails leaning to live in the land (the kingdom) that He has promised as an inheritance to His chosen ones.

- Godly leadership is part of the process of preparation
- Godly leadership must have the highest accountability before God
- To be a leader means that the Lord is intrusting you with the lives of those that He died for

- What higher call exists – He paid the price with His blood – for those that He has called you to serve
- Yet to serve the Lord in leadership is the highest honor that one can attain to
- Honor Him – Serve Him – Seek Him
- As you build up the body of Christ

Note: This document is used in RSMI Ordination of new pastors in developing nations