

# Leadership and Modeling

**ACTS 20:18-35** When they came to him, [Paul] said to them: 'You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, **19** serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. **20** I did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming the message to you and teaching you publicly and from house to house, **21** as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus. **22** And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, **23** except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me. **24** But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace.

**25** 'And now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again. **26** Therefore I declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you, **27** for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. **28** Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. **29** I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. **30** Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. **31** Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears. **32** And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified. **33** I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. **34** You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. **35** In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." '

**JOHN 13:12-17** After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? **13** You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. **14** So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. **15** For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. **16** Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. **17** If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.



How are Paul and Jesus a model in these passages? What seems important to communicate?

# How do Jesus and Paul train their followers in this passage?

\_\_\_\_\_ Jesus served his disciples, not just by washing their feet but in everything he did with them. From healing Simon's mother-in-law to his death on the cross, he modeled a life of service to others.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Servanthood was tangible, and the model was accessible. Jesus washed the disciples feet—something they could do for others. Paul was generous with his resources, and called others to the same. "You know how I lived among you."
- \_\_\_\_\_ Both Paul and Jesus' model was costly—they both live in these passages in the shadow of their impending suffering and death. And yet both speak of and live in the confidence of the blessing of this kind of a life.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yet he didn't simply serve in silence. At this key turning point in his ministry, when his time had come, he explained what it was that he was doing. If he hadn't explained it, they might have drawn very different conclusions.

- Modeling is not enough. Our actions are not \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ is not multiplication. Jesus served today so that his disciples would serve for a lifetime, not so that they'd "pay him back."

\_\_\_\_\_ It isn't enough that Jesus called his disciples to serve as he did: he explained why: "You are blessed if you do them." Jesus served his disciples by washing their feet, but it is true that their feet will get dirty again. Jesus served his disciples most by calling them into a life of servanthood, for this service will bless them for their entire lives.

- Because they aren't looking for admiration, but \_\_\_\_\_ We don't want people to be amazed at our nobility and goodness, but inspired by our model to live as we have lived. This is multiplicative.

## TALK ABOUT THE MODELING ISSUES PRESENT IN THE FOLLOWING CASE STUDIES.

### What could be done to help clarify the model and to be more multiplicative?

1. At the end of the school year, a member of your small group is clearly moved by your kindness and generosity over the course of the year. She takes you out to dessert and gives you a thank-you present, as a small token in gratitude for all that you have given over the year.
2. You would like to invite Sam, a member of your small group, to join leadership team next year. As you start the conversation, Sam gushes that he is very impressed by your knowledge of scripture and his admission that he could never do what you have done.
3. A summer missions team returns to your church or fellowship and gives a presentation about their experience. In their presentation, they report with surprise and perhaps a little chagrin, "We went there to serve, but we received more than we gave."

# Leadership and Modeling

“You yourselves know how I lived”: Paul’s model was accessible—they could see the choices he made.

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He is not responsible for the blood... (ref to Ezek 33, the role of the sentinel). He was responsible TO them, to deliver God’s words, not FOR them.



How are Paul and Jesus a model in these passages? What seems important to communicate?

- Paul and Jesus both remind their listeners of their servanthood of them, and they each explicitly point out their model to call others to the same kind of lifestyle.
- Paul says that he didn’t shrink back from proclaiming the whole purpose of God: everything he got from God he gave to them. He didn’t get insight and wonder if he should speak up—he delivered whatever clarity God gave him, to the appropriate people.
- Paul speaks about why he lived how he lived: for the sake of the blessing. Jesus as well stressed the blessing involved in service. Paul didn’t want to be thought of as unique—he wanted his followers to make the same choices he did, for the same reasons. He wanted people to think, “I could be like Paul in this way.” Paul isn’t looking for admiration, but emulation.
- Jesus asks, “Do you know what I have done to you?” Rhetorical question: they do not understand it. If he hadn’t explained it, they might have thought, “He washed our feet, we ought to ... wash HIS feet! Yeah!” So he spells it out. He isn’t looking for reciprocity, but multiplication.

V28: How does HS make us shepherds, overseers? 1) Puts into us the heart of a shepherd for the sheep, and 2) puts trust in us in the hearts of the sheep.

V13: Jesus is both: (Human) Teacher and (Divine) Lord

V35, v17: Both proclaim the blessing of living this way

# How do Jesus and Paul train their followers in this passage?

**Modeling:** Jesus served his disciples, not just by washing their feet but in everything he did with them. From healing Simon's mother-in-law to his death on the cross, he modeled a life of service to others.

- **Accessible:** Servanthood was tangible, and the model was accessible. Jesus washed the disciples feet—something they could do for others. Paul was generous with his resources, and called others to the same. “You know how I lived among you.”
- **Attractive:** Both Paul and Jesus' model was costly—they both live in these passages in the shadow of their impending suffering and death. And yet both speak of and live in the confidence of the blessing of this kind of a life.

**Articulation:** Yet he didn't simply serve in silence. At this key turning point in his ministry, when his time had come, he explained what it was that he was doing. If he hadn't explained it, they might have drawn very different conclusions.

- Modeling is not enough. Our actions are not **self-interpreting**.
- **Reciprocity** is not multiplication. Jesus served today so that his disciples would serve for a lifetime, not so that they'd “pay him back.”

**Rationale:** It isn't enough that Jesus called his disciples to serve as he did: he explained why: “You are blessed if you do them.” Jesus served his disciples by washing their feet, but it is true that their feet will get dirty again. Jesus served his disciples most by calling them into a life of servanthood, for this service will bless them for their entire lives.

- Because they aren't looking for admiration, but **emulation**. We don't want people to be amazed at our nobility and goodness, but inspired by our model to live as we have lived. This is multiplicative.

## TALK ABOUT THE MODELING ISSUES PRESENT IN THE FOLLOWING CASE STUDIES.

### What could be done to help clarify the model and to be more multiplicative?

1. At the end of the school year, a member of your small group is clearly moved by your kindness and generosity over the course of the year.

She takes you out to dessert and gives you a thank-you present, as a small token in gratitude for all that you have given over the year.

You receive the present and the thanks humbly, appreciative of her show of gratitude. But you want her to understand that just as you have received, so you freely gave. You tell her the story of when you were a small group member, and how much your small group leader did for you. You remind her that you have called her, likewise, to serve others and experience the joy and blessing that comes from such a life.

2. You would like to invite Sam, a member of your small group, to join leadership team next year. As you start the conversation, Sam gushes that he is very impressed by your knowledge of scripture and his admission that he could never do what you have done.

Though you are tempted to bask in Sam's adoration, you want to be clear that you have been able to be a small group leader because of the leadership and training you have received, and you have confidence that Sam could do it as well. You acknowledge that, as much fun as it is to be in a small group, the leader is the one who learns and benefits the most. You invite Sam to join you in this experience.

3. A summer missions team returns to your church or fellowship and gives a presentation about their experience. In their presentation, they report with surprise and perhaps a little chagrin, “We went there to serve, but we received more than we gave.”

The summer mission team's enthusiasm for their ministry experience is endearing, but the fact that they are surprised that they received more than they gave means that they didn't really hear or understand the words of Jesus in the passages above. Rather than mission teams “going out to serve” and being constantly surprised by the blessing found in serving, wouldn't it be better and more God honoring just to acknowledge that “We are going to receive from God what we can only get when our hands are absolutely empty and we need to depend on him”? In this way, God is seen as the ultimate servant, not only of the people to whom we minister but also to us as missionaries. This makes God big, us small, and acknowledges the words of Jesus, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”