**Leadership Lessons from the Life of Moses**

**Lesson #14, Those to be Led May Not Always See “the Big Picture”**

**Text: Ex.5:20-21**

A quick review of pertinent points leading up to this lesson: Moses is sent to Egypt (with his brother Aaron to help) to deliver Israel from bondage, 4:12-17; they relayed *“all the words of the Lord”* to all the elders (leaders) and people of Israel, 4:29-30; the people *“believed,”* 4:31; Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh to request that Israel be allowed to *go into the wilderness three days’ journey* to *“sacrifice to the Lord our God,”* 5:1-3; Pharaoh flatly refuses, and imposes even great hardships upon the people, 5:4-14; then the foremen of the sons of Israel *“cried out to Pharaoh”* in protest, 5:15-16; but Pharaoh again refuses and reiterates the “new” and further oppressive requirements, 5:17-18; finally, the foremen knew they were *“in trouble,”* and returned to Moses and Aaron with a totally different attitude and perspective, cp. 4:31 and 5:20-21. What should we learn about *leadership* and *those to be led* from these things?

* **Moses and Aaron were *waiting for them,* v.20**.

Why is this important? Consider a couple of related pieces of data: 1) Moses and Aaron knew the initial request to *let the people* go was not going to work, cf. 3:19; 4:28; so, 2) they also knew *crying out to Pharaoh* wouldn’t work since he *did not believe in* or *recognize the authority of God*, cf. 5:2a, and therefore that he was not going to *“let”* (remember 3:19b) Israel go. Additionally, it was he who originated the ordered great hardships in the first place, 5:2b,4-9. So, when the foremen went in to *plead their case* before Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron simply *waited* for them to return with the inevitable result. Oftentimes, good leaders know that efforts to avoid the consequences of “doing the right thing” will fail, cf. Luke 15:11-16 (the *father* surely knew what his son would do with the *inheritance,* but gave it to him anyway). So, Moses and Aaron simply *waited* for them to return in order to help them “pick up the pieces” and move forward- just as *the prodigal’s father* did, Luke 15:17-24. Good leaders know that sometimes you have to just let people fail. So, you wait for them to return and try to help them move forward.

* **The foremen *cursed* Moses and Aaron, v.21a.**

This is *first* time Israel would rebel against and reject those sent to help them, but it would not be the *last* time. Think about it. Jesus came to earth to *enlighten* and *save* mankind, but *“those who were His own did not receive Him,”* cf. John 1:9-11; 3:16-19. He was *“despised and forsaken”* (Isa.53:3),and yet He, lovingly and patiently, *waits* to pick up the pieces of our despair and make us whole and free. Are good leaders *above their teacher* or *master,* cf. Matt.10:24-25? Moses and Aaron- knowing that the foremen going to Pharaoh to plead their case wasn’t going to work, and now having been *cursed* by those they’re trying to help/lead, could have “washed their hands” or “shaken the (Egyptian) dust off their feet” and gone back to Midian. But the job of *deliverance* from bondage and to the blessings of the *Promised Land* wasn’t finished. Good leaders know that job isn’t easy, and may indeed make you the object of scorn, ridicule, and cursing- even from those you’re attempting to assist, but they don’t “cut and run” so easily, cf. Luke 6:27-28.

* **They saw only “the immediate” rather than “the big picture,” v.22b.**

Moses saw “the big picture,” but Israel did not, Acts 7:25. They didn’t realize that freedom isn’t “free”- that physical hardships are often the price to be paid, cf. Luke 14:25-35. Spiritual *myopia* (short-sightedness) is a very real problem. When we don’t *grow* as we should (2Pet.1:5-7), we become *useless* and *unfruitful* (2Pet.1:8), our *memory* and *vision* fail (2Pet.1:9), and we are unable to *escape corruption* and bondage(2Pet.1:4). But good leaders have good *vision,* and they remember what God has already done and promised to do. Thus, they are able to help those they lead to *see* beyond the present- and its required hardship, to the future blessings/benefits of *the Promised Land* of heaven, 2Cor.4:16-18.

There is a tremendous need for spiritual *leaders-* those with *patience;* those who understand they may be *cursed* for their efforts; and those with *vision* who can not only see “the big(ger) picture,” but help others see and attain it also.

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**Discussion Questions**

1. What is the significance, if any, of Moses and Aaron *“waiting”* for the foremen after they went in to plead their case before Pharaoh?
2. What produced the dramatically different attitudes and actions displayed in 4:31 and 5:21? What should we learn from this?
3. Why should we not become *discouraged* if our efforts to help and lead others are met with *rebellion, rejection,* and even *cursing?*
4. What “big(ger) picture” did Moses *see* that Israel- at least in context of this lesson, did not?
5. What prevented Israel from seeing this “big(ger) picture”?
6. This lesson highlights a few necessary characteristics for good leaders. What are they, and why are they important?