

Gaining Respect as a Leader

By Bill Scheidler

I. Every ministry, indeed, every person, desires the respect of others.

In fact, it is virtually impossible for a leader to lead without having the respect of others.

A. Respect Defined

1. A just regard for
2. An appreciation of worth
3. The act of holding in high esteem or regard
4. Respect is a careful evaluation or estimation of the worth of a person or thing and of the measure of recognition which is due him.

B. Synonyms

1. Regard
2. Admiration
3. Reverence
4. Appreciation - high valuation coupled with genuine affection
5. Cherish
6. Veneration
7. Esteem - a high valuation, a consequent prizing

C. Antonyms

1. Contempt
2. Disregard
3. Scorn
4. Despite
5. Repugnance

II. God's people are commanded to show respect to others.

A. We are to have a respect for God (John 5:22-23).

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

B. We are to have a respect for parents (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3; Mal. 1:6).

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." Ephesians 6:1-3

C. We are to have a respect for spouses.

1. Wives are commanded to reverence or respect their husbands (Eph. 5:33).
2. Husbands are commanded to honor their wives as heirs together of the grace of life (I Pet. 3:7).

D. We are to have a respect for civil authorities.

1. We are commanded to be subject to the higher powers and give honor to whom honor is due (Rom. 13:1-7).
2. We are commanded to honor the king (I Pet. 2:17).

E. We are to have a respect for employers or masters (I Tim. 6:1-2; Mal. 1:6).

Christians who are slaves should give their masters full respect so that the name of God and his teaching will not be shamed. If your master is a Christian, that is no excuse for being disrespectful. You should work all the harder because you are helping another believer by your efforts. I Timothy 6:1-2, NLT

F. We are to have a respect for church leaders.

1. We are to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake (I Th. 5:13).
2. The elders who rule well are to be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine (I Tim. 5:17).

III. Leaders have the power to make themselves an easy or a difficult object of respect.

There is no sense making it any harder on people than it already is.

A. A Difficult Situation

1. David respected Saul (I Sam. 23:3-7; 26:7-12).

So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. 8 Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not have to strike him a second time!" 9 But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?" 10 David said furthermore, "As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall

come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish. 11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that are by his head, and let us go." 12 So David took the spear and the jug of water by Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw or knew it or awoke. For they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them. I Samuel 26:7-12

- a. Saul was a hard person to follow (I Sam. 14:24-46).
 - b. Saul did things that made honoring his leadership difficult.
 - He made rash statements.
 - He made unreasonable demands.
 - He was not able to admit wrong.
 - He was program orientated rather than people orientated.
2. Abraham respected Lot (Gen. 13:8-9). He let him choose, refused to strive with him.

B. An Easy Situation

1. Joshua respected Moses (Deut. 34:9-12).

Because of his respect for Moses he was rewarded with same spirit.
2. Elisha respected Elijah (II Kings 2:9-15).

Because of his respect for Elijah he was rewarded with his mantle.

IV. There are qualities that leaders can cultivate that make it easy for people to respect them.

As leaders you can demand respect or you can earn respect. If you are a parent you can demand respect from your young children, but you have to earn the respect of a teenager. As pastors we can impose the idea of respect upon them or we can live a life that makes us worthy of their respect.

If you constantly have to remind people of your authority, you do not have authority.

"He that thinks he is a leader and has no following is only taking a walk."

Eleven qualities to cultivate that will make it easy for people to give you respect as a leader.

A. Example (I Tim. 4:12; I Pet. 5:1-4)

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted

to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. I Peter 5:1-4

A shepherd is one who goes the way before the sheep. The greatest thing you can give people is your example. Our life must confirm what we preach or we will be seen as entertainers. We are to be the word made flesh. People respect you for the life that you live before them.

B. Submission (Mt. 8:9-10)

“For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!”

Our authority flows from our own submission to authority. We must first honor authority before we can be honored as authority. People will be more inclined to submit to the pastor they see submitting to God and other leaders. We must have real, tangible authority in our life that we listen and respond to. We must be careful not to get into an executive privilege mentality where the pastor doesn't have to follow his own laws of the land (ex. copyright, building codes, etc.)

1. Example: Father talking to pastor while son looks on
2. Example: Gentile's vision of a lamb leading the shepherds

C. Pure Motivation (John 10:11-14; I Th. 2:1-8)

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

John 10:11-14

The purity of our motivation legitimizes the exercise of our authority. Our authority should be used for the edification and benefit of our people rather than for our own benefit. When you feel that someone really loves you, cares for you and has your very best interest in mind, it is easy for you to follow them. In fact, it is hard not to respond to someone that you are sure loves you.

D. Wisdom (I Kgs. 3:28)

And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

Wisdom in our decision making increases the respect that people have for us. This is why it is so important that pastors seek counsel, think things through, and move slowly in making decisions. One bad decision can undermine many good decisions up to that

point. People who become known for good judgement are not questioned like people who have a reputation for careless decisions. Get outside counsel before you present questionable direction.

E. Gifting (Judg. 8:22-23; John 6:14)

Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." John 6:14

The ministry gifts or anointing attract others to our leadership and enable us to fulfill our ministry to them. Because Gideon could kill the enemy, they wanted him as king. This is why it is so important that we are functioning in our area of gifting. We must have a pastoral "charisma" if we are going to have respect as pastors and leaders.

F. Ability to Feed (II Tim. 2:15-16; Ezek. 34:14-15)

"I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD. Ezekiel 34:14-15

People will receive ministry from those who are feeding them. There are many hindrances within sheep themselves that make it difficult for them to feed. But the problem can be with the pastor. If we do not study, prepare and put good food on the table, rightly dividing the word of truth, people will not respect our ministry.

Feeding, however, also involves pastoral care. When people are cared for they are not restless.

G. Hearing from God (Josh. 3:7, 4:14; Mt. 7:29)

And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you." Joshua 3:7

People who see the fruit of a life of hearing from God have respect for the direction that comes. Having heard from God gives us the right to speak for God. Jesus spoke that which He heard the Father say, therefore His teaching had authority. However, do not feel you must constantly say, "the Lord told me." Often that is used to pressure people to respond when they don't otherwise respond to you out of respect.

H. Vision (Pro. 29:18; Luke 6:39)

And He spoke a parable to them: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?" Luke 6:39

People need to know where they are going. Our people need individual vision and they need a corporate vision. It is a pastor's responsibility to receive, define and impart vision that inspires people to want to follow his leadership. Our vision, of course, must be tempered by the scriptures, the measure of our ministry gift and the size and nature of the community (must be a realistic vision).

I. Experience (Jer. 1:6; I Tim. 4:12)

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. I Timothy 4:12

The longer you have lived and functioned in ministry successfully, the easier it is for people to follow you. There is something to be said for just hanging in there. Many young ministries desire the respect they see given to older, more mature ministries. In most cases, you must wait for it. It may take six or seven years in a church before the people really start trusting you, your vision, your motivation, your ability to hear from God, etc.

J. Keeping Your Word (Ps. 15:4; 138:2)

I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name. Psalm 138:2

Promises are easy to make, but sometimes hard to keep. We are at times quick to make promises because they are a quick, easy and painless way to motivate people to get them to do what we want done. Eventually, however, the time comes when we have to make good on those promises.

K. Humility (I Pet. 5:5-6; Pro. 15:33, 18:12, 29:23)

The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility. Proverbs 15:33

People respect those who function out of a spirit of humility. They respect leaders who do not separate themselves from others. Leaders are not lords over God's heritage. Moses was the meekest man on the face of the earth. John the Baptist was a man who was humble before the Lord. There are several things about a humble person that make them easy to follow.

1. The humble will hear from God (Ps. 10:17).
2. The humble will have their prayers answered (Ps. 9:12).
3. The meek will He guide in judgment (Ps. 25:9).
4. They shall have an abundance of peace (Ps. 37:11).
5. God has respect to the lowly (Ps. 138:6).
6. With the lowly is wisdom (Pro. 11:2).

In other words, humility is the key to the other ten qualities that make a leader easy to follow.