

Toward a Theology of Leadership: Leadership Essentials in the Experience of Moses

@Jiří Moskala, Th.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Old Testament Exegesis and Theology
Theological Seminary
Andrews University

God Builds a Personal Relationship with His People

Exod 19:4

“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt,
and how I carried you on eagles' wings and
brought you to myself.”

The Most Important Thing

- The most important thing for God is **not a thing** but a **person!**
- Our God is a **God of relationships!**
- God's primary goal: The first things for Him are not objectives, agendas or goals, but people – to build lasting meaningful **relationships** with His people.

First Lesson

- Leadership style must be **person-oriented, and not goal-oriented!**

Not dichotomy between them; it is a matter of priority!

Leadership behavior: emphasis on interpersonal relationships, taking a personal interest in needs of others by respecting their individuality and gifts.

How did God build this meaningful relationship with Moses?

- How did Moses grow in the Lord?
- How did God change Him?
- What was the result of his walk with God?

Spiritual Growth: Crucial Prerequisite for a Leader

Very instructive in this regard is the story of **Moses** as presented in **Exodus 19-34**.

Let's learn more about **the God of Moses:**
**What He can do when we allow HIM to work
in our lives.**

Tell me if I am correct

- God called Moses to the top of Mount Sinai, Moses spent some time with the Lord there, and when he returned back his face was shining.
 - » YES or NO??? Correct or False?

False! NO!

- Let me prove it to you and demonstrate how it was with the shining face of Moses.

The **FIRST** Moses' encounter with the Lord on Sinai:

Exod 19:3

“Then **Moses went up to God**, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, ‘This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel...’”

Moses' first climb of the Mount Sinai.

After this ascend and descend, was his face radiant?

NO!

Exod 19:7

“So **Moses went back** and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak.”

There is not one word in the text about his radiant face!

Covenant between God and Israel

--- God established His covenant with His people:

“Now **if you obey me fully** and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, **you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**” (Exod 19:5-6)

--- People responded: “**We will do everything the Lord has said.**” (Exod 19:8)

The second climbing to Sinai

Exod 19:8b

“So **Moses brought their answer back to the LORD.**”

- God spoke there again to Moses
(Exod 19:10-13)

Exod 19:14

“After **Moses had gone down the mountain to the people**, he consecrated them, and they washed their clothes.”

No one word about the radiant face of Moses.

The third climbing to Sinai

Exod 19:20

“The LORD descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So **Moses went up.**”

--- God spoke to Him (Exod 19:21-24)

Exod 19:25

“So **Moses went down** to the people and told them.”

Moses face was not radiant!

What was it in the life of Moses which brought the change?

- You know that one day Moses face will shine.
- What will be the cause for this new experience?
- **In the past I thought that Moses' face was radiant because he was in the presence of the Lord!**
- But this answer is not correct, because for now he was at least three times in the very presence of the Lord, and his face was not shining!!!
- What will bring the difference?

Exodus 20

- God spoke to all people (not only to Moses)
- He gave them the gift of the Law – the Decalogue
- Very solemn occasion
- People were afraid: “When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, **‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.’**”
- Moses responded: “Do not be afraid. **God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.**”

The fourth climbing of Moses

Exod 20:21

“The people remained at a distance, while **Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.**”

During this stay on Sinai, God gave Moses “The Covenant Code” – the interpretation of the Decalogue, how to put into social practice God’s will. See Exodus 20:22-23:33.

Moses’ descend:

Exod 24:3

“When **Moses went and told the people** all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, **‘Everything the LORD has said we will do.’**”

The solemn renewal of the covenant.

The fifth climbing of Moses

In the beginning Moses is not alone!
He has an excellent company.

Exod 24:9-11

“Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel **went up and saw the God of Israel**. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; **they saw God, and they ate and drank.**”

Highest Experience

- Banquet with the Lord
- God was the Host
- They saw God (theophany)

- Importance of eating in the Middle East
- The great honor and privilege
- Offer of forgiveness and bondage of friendship; becoming one, forming one family
- If something will happen to you I will come and help you
- To refuse an invitation to a table, the worst kind of insult

- Compare with Pharisees anger at Jesus when He ate with sinners
- Celebration at the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion)

Who was Nadab and Abihu?

- The sons of Aaron
- Priests
- What did happen to them?
- After several weeks, they were dead in the Tabernacle.
- They saw God, and still their faces were not radiant!
- On the contrary: their faces were pale, they were dead!
- They became arrogant, possessors of Truth, pride, manipulators with holy things, holy became common...
- **You can see the Lord, have a great experience with Him and still you can be spiritually dead!!!**

God's Invitation to Moses

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘**Come up to me** on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.’

When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and **the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai**. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud...

Then **Moses entered the cloud** as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.”

Exod 24:12,15-16,18

Moses' growth in the closeness of the Lord

Moses is invited by God to go closer and closer to Him.

He is spiritually growing.

First Moses climb the Mountain, **then** went to top of the Mountain, **after** he approach the cloud God resided in, but now...

Now Moses is even **entering the cloud where God was!**

He will stay with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights!

Two Gifts

- During these 40 days God gave Moses two precious gifts:
 1. **The gift of Decalogue** written on the two tables chiseled by God Himself (Exod 24:12).
 2. **The instruction how to build the Tabernacle** (see Exod 25-31).

Moses descend

- After spending forty days and forty nights with the Lord, Moses returns to the people.
- **Was his face shining?**

NO!

- On the contrary:

Exod 32:19

“When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, **his anger burned** and he threw the tablets out of his hands, **breaking** them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.”

The Golden Calf apostasy and immorality...

Moses sixth climbing of Sinai

Exod 32:30

“The next day Moses said to the people, ‘You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.’”

Exod 32:31-32

“So Moses went back to the LORD and said, ‘Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin-- but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.’”

Moses – type of Christ

- Intercessory prayer
- Willingness to offer his life for sinners
- Total dedication to the Lord
- Great love for people
- After such experience and dedication, **will his face be radiant?**

NO, NOT YET!

- What was still missing? In what Moses needed to grow even more?

The Tent of Meeting

Exod 33:7-8

“Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the ‘**tent of meeting.**’ Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent.”

A very humble man

Numbers 12:3

“Now Moses was **a very humble man, more humble than anyone else** on the face of the earth.”

Teach Me So I May Know You

Exod 33:13

“If you are pleased with me, **teach me your ways so I may know you** and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

Moses desires new insights. He feels that there is much more!
He wanted to learn. He was teachable. He knew he does not know everything.

You can be a great leader, and still be a humble person.

God's glory

A Special Request:

- **“Show me your glory!”** (Exod 33:18)
- God's answer: “I will cause all **my GOODNESS** to pass in front of you.” (Exod 33:19)

The goodness of God is His glory.

**What does bring people to
repentance?**

What does bring people to repentance?

Rom 2:4

“Do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that **God's kindness leads you toward repentance?**”

Moses' seventh climbing of Sinai

- **Exod 34:4-5**

“So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD.”

The self-revelation of God

Exod 34:6-7

“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming,
‘**The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.**’”

John 3:16 of the Old Testament

- The self-revelation of God.
- The best description who is God (provided by God Himself).
- Later biblical authors repeated after God, and interpreted and expanded of what the Lord said.
- The golden thread of the Old Testament.

For how long does Moses stay this time?

- Again 40 days and nights

Exod 34:28

“Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant-- the Ten Commandments.”

Shining Face of Moses - FINALLY

Exod 34:29

“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.”

- **It is not enough to come into the presence of God! It is important to come and live in the presence of God!**
- **BUT even more crucial is to know Him, open Him our hearts and minds that He can change us.**
- Like a flower which opens up to sun.
- Remember: amazing grace is always a transforming grace of God.
- If the grace of God does not transform us, it means it is not amazing grace!!!

- **To give glory to God means to reflect in our character the character of God.**
- His characteristics need to be our characteristics.
- His attitude, values, and virtues must be our attitudes, values, and virtues.
- **To be like Him!** It means as loving as He is loving, as gracious as He is gracious, as forgiving as He is forgiving, as serving as He is serving, as unselfish as He is unselfish, as encouraging as He is encouraging, as patient as He is patient, as faithful as He is faithful!!!

Mat 5:16

“**Let your light shine before men**, that they may see your good deeds and **praise your Father** in heaven.”

Paul's reflection on the experience of Moses

2 Corinthians 3:18

“And we, who with unveiled faces all **reflect the Lord's glory**, are **being transformed into his likeness** with ever-increasing **glory**, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

Important Lesson: Leader is led

- Great leader, someone who leads in right direction, is a person who is **led by God** (not his/her spouse, friends, members, group, advisors...).
- **He/she allows God to be his/her Leader!**

Transformational Leadership

- Leader allows **God** to **change** him/her, to **transform** his/her life in order **to make difference in lives of others.**
- Leader **grows** in the knowledge of God and daily **walks** with Him.

Transformed and Transforming Leader

“I cannot hear what you are saying because your deeds are loud enough.”

Mahatma Gandhi:

“My life is my message!”

Francis of Assisi:

“Preach Christ always and when it is necessary use your words!”

Additional Lessons/Characteristics of a God-fearing leader

Led by the Spirit of God

Num 11:16-17

The LORD said to Moses: "**Bring me seventy of Israel's elders** who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and **I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them.** They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.

God's Spirit

- This gives two insights into Moses' humility:
 - 1. Dependence on God's Spirit.
 - 2. Acceptance of God's Spirit in others (see especially Num 11:24-29).

Delegated Leadership

**Power of God with control
and without jealousy!!!**

Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? **I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"** (Num 11:28-29)

“The greatest evidence of the *presence* of the Holy Spirit in his [Moses’] life was precisely the *absence* of those things that are commonly linked with great and powerful people: **pride** in one’s own self-sufficiency, **jealous defense** of one’s own prerogatives, **driving ambition** for one’s own legacy. This is the power of the Holy Spirit in a human life.”

Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 61.

Leader delegates

- Exodus 18:21-23
 - Story about Jethro's advice.
 - Leaders recognizes different gifts of others and have ability to engage them in work.

Close coworkers

- Leader surrounds himself with supporting leaders (Exod 17:8-13)
- Do not surround yourself with people who always agree with you!
- Work with those whom God chose.
- A successful leader has a team behind him or her.

Leader is transparent

- See book of **Deuteronomy**

Leader does not complain

- Leader is a person of VISION.
- A leader is someone who has a vision, a goal, who is able to make things happen, and encourages others in embracing a vision!
- Moses was leading people to the Promised Land in spite of all difficulties!

Leader creates space for others

- A true leader makes space for others, rejoices over their success, respects their differences, and stands on their side, and if necessary, defends them.
- Leaders welcomes different opinions, views, feelings, ideas, constructive critique.
- True contributions are done by people who are different.
- To be different is good!

- Leader has **less honor among those he/she loves most** (Num 12:1-10).
- Aaron's and Miriam's Ambitions...

A True Spiritual Leader

Moses = man of God

A true leader is a **person of God!**