

Managing Like Heaven

Being a Boss Like Jesus: Ministry in the Workplace Mini-Series – Part A

CTC Series: part 25

Ephesians 6:5-9

November 7-8, 2020

Introduction

- **How an Authority & Leadership Message Connects to All of Our Lives –** remember I told you the last couple weeks that leadership is influence, so if you have influence over another human being, then you are a leader in that area? That applies to this message too. Many of us may not be blatant and obvious bosses at work, but we all have influence.
 - **Are you a parent?** – you are an authority to your children.
 - **Are you helping to run a ministry at church?** – if you help in Kidsway, or are a MC leader, or a shift leader...
 - **Are you the most influential friend in your group?** – do people tend to listen to what you say and do what you do?
 - **Your Context God's Speaking To** - Look how your life is designed and search for the areas that God may be speaking to you today. When I say work life and leaders, I need you to change those words into your context.
- **Work Life Matters...A Lot**
 - **40 Years of Normal Church Attendance = 2500 hours in church** - *"If you are a faithful church attendee during the 40 years of your life between age 25 and 65, meaning you attend most weeks, you will spend roughly 2500 hours in church, depending on how long the sermons are.*
 - **40 Years with Extra Church Involvement = 7500** - *If you participate in a Missional Community or small group or if you serve somewhat regularly, you could double or even triple that number, to get to between 5000 and 7500 hours of your adult life spent participating in church programs.*
 - **Standard Work = 50,000-100,000 hours (more than sleep, more than almost any activity we do)** - *During that same time, you will spend between 50,000 and 100,000 hours at work depending on your job. And that doesn't include household work or volunteer work. You and I will almost certainly spend more time working than we will spend engaging in any other singular activity during our adult lives. Most of us will spend more time working than we will sleeping.*

- **Average Christian's Pulpit is Work (this series)** - *So that means if you are a Christ-follower, the primary place where you will live out your faith will not be your church. The primary place you will live out your faith will be your workplace. So, for that reason, we're going to take this week and next week to talk about how our faith impacts our work."*
- **2008 Proverbs Series** – I explained that according to that book of wisdom, **Our Work Life Illustrates Our Theology**. It demonstrates character.
 - **Laziness tends to speak to entitlement.**
 - **Christianity has always demanded a strong work ethic.**
- **The Oddity of Being a Boss of Another Human Being** – Ascribed honor (where you come from) vs. Achieved honor (meritocracy of what you've done). Sometimes people are just considered more important than others and given more authority. It could be earned; it could simply be given.

AUTHORITY is an **HONOR**

Lesson

- **Context Passage**
 - Ephesians 6:5-9 – *“Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.⁹ Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.”*
 - **Actual Context** - This is contextually about slavery and being forced to do something – *living under more extreme conditions (violating what we call our civil rights)*.
 - **Possible Application** - But it can have an application about work: *Employer and employee relationships.*
 - **Next Week** – Pastor Brian will share about the servant and employee portion of this text, but I am going to focus on the authority portion, which is second in the passage. So, let's read it again, beginning in verse 7 where instructions are being given to the servant/employee...
 - *⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back*

from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. ⁹ Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him."

- **3 Truths in the Passage about Being a Godly Authority Figure**
 1. **Serve as to the Lord** – it says, ‘serve with a good will as to the Lord, not to man...’ Masters are told to do the same. **You are working for God.**
 2. **There is no Room for Domination (Stop Threatening)** – Motivating of employees. **Great leaders don’t lead with fear, they lead with inspiration.** That way the leadership goes on when the leader is absent.
 3. **God’s Not Impressed with Your Title** – there is no partiality with God. You work for God and your employees work for God, so He’s the ultimate boss, we are just playing our roles.

How Do We Become Better Leaders? How do we exude Christ in the Workplace from a place of Authority?

- **3 Insights I picked Up from Leaders in Scripture:**
 1. **Great Bosses are Wise but Generous (Boaz)** – the best boss in the Bible, besides Jesus, in my opinion, is Boaz. In fact, he also wins best boyfriend, son-in-law and probably husband as well. He’s awesome. In the book of Ruth, starting in chapter 2 we watch how this guy operates. Look at how he handles his workplace. He’s a wealthy landowner and businessman. Here’s what Scripture says:
 - **Their First Meeting** – Boaz greets his men “The LORD be with you!” and they answered, ‘The LORD bless you’”. He checks on the new girl. Invites her to stay and glean with them and commands no men to harm her. He offers his own water source. He even tells her that he’s part of her reward from the Lord for all that she’s done for her mother in law Naomi.
 - Ru 2:3–13 – “So [Ruth] set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. ⁴ And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, “The LORD be with you!” And they answered, “The LORD bless you.” ⁵ Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” ⁶ And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, “She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab...” ⁸ Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women...Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.” ¹⁰ Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?” ¹¹ But Boaz answered her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband

has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. ¹² The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" ¹³ Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

- **At Lunchtime** – He invites her to eat with him and have some left over.
- **Back to work** – Boaz tells his men to let her gather anywhere she wants, not to embarrass her and to even pull out some good wheat stalks and leave them lying there for her.
- **Whole Season** - He even invited her to work the whole season with them, for her own benefit.
- **Wise: Great Leaders Know Their Margins** – what they can and can't give to their employees and people they serve. They know what's possible. They know what will hurt the company and they know what they can sacrifice for the sake of their people. The point is not to bankrupt the company, or to harm it, but to bless people who work for you as much as you can wisely.
- **Generous: Great Leaders sacrifice their bottom line for Honoring Their People** – It cost Boaz and his bottom line to help Ruth out. But he did it willingly. He was going to have less and she was going to have more. I can tell you by the way that his people greeted him, that was kind of how he was with all of them.

2. **Great Leaders Bring the Blessing of God to Their Companies (Joseph)** – Joseph was already a great leader in the house of Potiphar, but even after he had a terrible situation happen (Jailed for a rape he didn't commit), he came back stronger than ever and Pharaoh himself put him in charge of the nation of Egypt (2nd in command). But why?

- **Joseph is Put in Power at 30** - Ge 41:37–49 – *"This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. ³⁸ And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. ⁴⁰ You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." ⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. ⁴³ And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, "Bow the knee!" Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴ Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt..." ⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, ⁴⁸ and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food*

in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it. ⁴⁹ And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.”

- **Part of Your Blessing is Your Brain** – **God wired you to do some things really well, do it.** Put that to use. Bless the company you work for. Make them ecstatic that you are in leadership. Make them want to hand it all over to you, because you are wise and trustworthy and have the companies best interest in mind. Work smart and work hard. Joseph wasn't just prophetic, he was brilliant on how to carry out the prophecy. Sure, God gave him generalities of the future, but he could have wasted that knowledge or done something unwise. He didn't. He did what he was good at. He did what was good for the company.
- **Part of Your Blessing is Your Anointing** – Let's be honest, Joseph was able to do some crazy cool things with the Lord's help. He was able to predict the future and that got him the job. Most of us don't get a shocking, radical miracle to kick off our careers, but I would suggest we get a lot more than we think we do. It says about Joseph, over and over, that whatever he put his hand to do, God blessed it ("the LORD was with Joseph...and gave him favor...and whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed").
 - **Anointing Comes with the Presence of the Holy Spirit** – the more of the Holy Spirit that is flowing through you (He has to indwell you first), the more of His power and miraculous nature shows up in what you do. You will think that it's normal to you and you won't give Him credit for most of it. You just think that you are gifted and smart. Trust me, you aren't that gifted and smart. There is a blessing of having a believe, with the Holy Spirit around. He knows how to do business and knows how to lead. **Bring the Holy Spirit to work with you.**

3. **Great Leaders Take Their People Personally (Centurion: loved Jews, strong faith)** – The gospels tell us of a centurion (high ranking Roman military leader) who came up to Jesus and sought healing for his servant who was home dying. Although many people in that time may have grown close to their servants/slaves who served them, we find out that this guy was on another level of respect. The Bible tells us that the elders of the JEWS liked this guy, a lot. They went to Jesus on the centurion's behalf until he could get there. He was a man who 'built us our synagogue' and 'loves our nation.' He was also a man of great faith. He said that Jesus didn't even

need to come to his house, but that just as he had earthly authority, so did Jesus have Godly authority and could heal with a word, or a thought and didn't even need to show up. Jesus was blown away by his faith and the servant was healed immediately.

- Mt 8:5–10 – *“When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ⁶“Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” ⁷And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” ⁸But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” ¹⁰When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.”*
- **Lover of the Jewish People (‘loves our nation’, ‘built our synagogue’) –** He is mentioned as a centurion over and over, which means that he was not just a Roman but he was highly involved in the Roman military, the same military that defeated and dominated the Jewish people. And yet, **he refused to allow his national view affect his personal view of people.** He got close to his people and learned to love them.
- **Took It Upon Himself –** Although Luke mentions the centurion sending delegates, Matthew records that he actually came himself as well. He humbled himself before Jesus and begged for healing for his servant. He even knew personal details, “my servant is lying paralyzed at home and suffering terribly.” Those are personal details. It wasn't about the bottom line for the business, it was about a moved heart.
- **Not Everyone Works for You Because They Have To –** there are other jobs out there. People should WANT to work for you. They should be blessed that you are their boss. Encourage them. Inspire them. **They work for you and you should work for them.** Mutual submission is not only the way of a great marriage (see prior lessons in this series on this) and a great home, but also of a great business.

Conclusion

- **It's Not About Being a Preacher –** you weren't hired to evangelize, you were hired to do a job. You weren't hired to slack off work and preach the gospel. Honor what you were hired to do, and yes, along the way demonstrate the gospel through your lifestyle, your choices, your actions and your words (your love). **A loud Christian with a lousy work ethic, is like nails on a chalkboard.**
- **It's About Being a Godly Leader in Your Context –** Do your job well, love your people well, demonstrate the Lord well and you will be a tremendous leader!