Leader Slip 1 - Focus

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Welcome

**What is Leadership?**

Leadership can be hard to define. There are many leadership intangibles. It can seem like a mysterious gift.

So right here let us give Leadership a simple definition.

**Influence**

Former pastor & leadership author John Maxwell says “Leadership is influence. Nothing more nothing less.”

Positive & negative influence lead our life.

We have had positive influence… I remember a piano teacher I had in College who completely changed my life with a single sentence. He was a leader to my life through positive influence.

We have had negative influence… I remember some people I choose not to describe… Part of who I am today is the negative influence I was witness to, and decided I WILL NOT BE LIKE THAT! I WON’T DO IT THAT WAY. There negative influence led me the other direction.

Now you may think that only certain people are leaders. You may think that people are just born leaders. You may also be certain that you are not one of those born to be a leader people. YOU ARE WRONG!

**Leadership Calling**

Everyone is called to be a leader. Everyone is called to be an influencer of people.

Because Leadership is INFLUENCE… You actually have to work at not being a leader, because people naturally INFLUENCE one another.

You are called to be an influence…

* + in your home
  + in your circle of friends
  + in your school or on the job
  + in your city.. in your neighborhood
  + in your church

This call is for EVERYONE! It is for you!

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.(NIV)

If you don’t think you are called to be a leader than you are selling yourself short and don’t understand the Creator. Everyone is called..

..But not everyone fulfills the call.

**Leader Slip**

Instead of walking into the Leadership God has purposed them for, many have a Leader Slip.

For the next weeks this will be our premise…

* + All our called
  + Anything that keeps us from fulfilling that call is a “slip.”

Your giftings & talents do not make you a leader. We can all think of talented people who are going nowhere in life for whatever reason. We may know people that have impressive skill but we would not put our trust in… they lake a positive influence. There is a slip from being everything they could be.

Over this Leader Slip series we are going to talk about people in your Bible who should have been much better leaders. They slipped short of their leadership calling. This week we will talk about..

**Jonah**

What do we know about Jonah. He was a Prophet of God. He had access to the power of God. He had a connection with the God of the Universe. God was opening doors for Jonah. There is not one reason that Jonah should not have been a great leader. Yet as we will see, Jonah had a Leader Slip.

Most of us would look at Jonah’s situation and feel that his situation had many advantages over our situations.

Jonah had the gifting, the opportunity, the position, the calling, the blessing of God… yet he had a Leader Slip.

Let’s quickly tell the Jonah Story.

Jonah is a Prophet of God in Israel.

God speaks to Jonah and says for Jonah to go to the wicked city of Nineveh and tell them because of their wickedness the entire city will be destroyed.

(God is asking Jonah to be His Leader! How does Jonah respond?)

Jonah tells God no. Not only does He do God’s will… Jonah goes the opposite direction. He buys a ticket for a boat ride going in the opposite direction.

Then a storm hits the ship. It gets so bad that the men start to suspect that God is mad at them… Jonah admits that the storm is the fault of his disobedience. Jonah is thrown off of the boat.

A big fish swallows Jonah. He is in the belly of the fish for 3 days and nights. It is then that he decides HE SHOULD PRAY… (really!? 3 days?!)

God hears Jonah’s prayer. The Fish vomits Jonah up on dry ground. Jonah goes to Ninevah.

Jonah tells them that their wickedness will bring destruction. The entire city repents and prays to the God of Jonah.

Jonah becomes angry with God and leaves the city. He sits in the hot sun a far off just watching the city of Nineveh. Sitting in the Hot sun, God in love, supernaturally causes a plant (gord vine) to grow and shade him. Jonah is happy because of the plant.

Then the plant dies and withers. Jonah basically asks God to kill him.

The end

What a strange story! Looking at this story can’t we all say that Jonah should have been a much happier guy? Shouldn’t he have been a better leader? We can see several Leader Slips in the story of Jonah.

The Slip that perhaps most effected Jonah was His…

**Focus**

Your Bible says a lot about focus. Here are just a few

Colossians 3:2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.(NIV)

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.(NIV)

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.(NIV)

Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so [is] he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart [is] not with thee.(KJV)

Your focus, the way you think, your direction, your hopes & dreams… This decides whether we are headed toward Ninevah and the calling of purpose or away from it.

It is obvious that Jonah’s focus was completely wrong. Before we launch into that…

**What should be my focus?**

You should ask this question regularly.

* What are you passionate about? Many times this should be our natural focus.

John Maxwell says “Find something you like doing so much that you would gladly do it for nothing; then learn to do it so well that people are happy to pay you for it.

* What was the last instruction you received from God. Until he tells you otherwise… keep focusing on what He said.

Jonah was passionate about himself. His focus was himself, and that was a problem.

* God said go to Ninevah.
  + Jonah said I will go my own way.
* God gives a message and a purpose to Jonah.
  + Jonah refuses to give it and to walk in the purpose.
* God sends a fish to eat Jonah.
  + Only as he is about to die on the 3rd day does He talk to God.
* Jonah gives the message that gives way to the greatest revival on record ever! He fulfills his purpose.
  + Jonah pouts. Jonah is not pumped or passionate. He is not happy.

Jonah what the heck are you doing. Your life is meant to go this direction… to carry this meaning… to have this purpose and influence… but you are going a different direction. WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY BE FOCUSING ON!?

The same could be said for us.

* We are called to be a leader in our home… yet we are only focused on what is outside our home.
* We statistically as Americans make more money than the majority of people on this earth and are positioned to help change the world by simply writing a check… yet we instead have more debt than the rest of the world.
* We are called to live healthy lives… yet our lifestyle focus is killing us with bad habits, uncontrolled eating, and inactivity.
* God has called us to be so much more… WHAT THE HECK ARE WE FOCUSED ON?

If we are ever going to be what God has called us to be then we must FOCUS on what God has called us to be!

If we are ever going to be what God has called us to do then we must FOCUS on what God has called us to do!

Every Christian’s focus should be influencing other’s toward Jesus. Be a soul winner! Every Christian should be passionate about the next person coming to know Jesus. You should be excited for someone… repent, baptism, come to faith.

But let’s get real… has it been our focus? Or are we focused on other things? Are we passionate about seeing our City come to know Jesus? Or are we passionate about other things?

Jonah was passionate about a plant… This is so crazy. Look at it.

Jonah 4:6 Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine.(NIV)

He is happy! Has he been happy anywhere else in the story? NO! Not when God spoke to him. Not when he survived the fish. Not when Ninevah received the message…. BUT THIS PLANT… look how awesome this plant is.

The plant dies and look what God says to Jonah.

Jonah 4:9 Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?" "Yes," Jonah retorted, "even angry enough to die!"(NLT)

Jonah 4:10 But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight.(NIV)

Jonah 4:11 But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"(NIV)

Jonah was more focused on a plant perishing than he was 120,000 souls perishing.

274,409 souls in Plano, Tx

6,700,991 souls in DFW Metroplex

You are called to reach them. It is the Leadership God has called you to fulfill.

I have here some carnations. In a few moments I want you to come into this altar and receive a carnation. This carnation is going to wither. No matter how much you focus on it… no matter how much water you give it… no matter how passionate you are about it… the carnation is going to die.

It might be kinda dumb to focus on this carnation… Maybe you should find something more important to be your focus…

**MUSICIAN**

I want you to take this carnation home and put it in a place where you will be forced to see it every day. AND I CHALLENGE YOU… Before this carnation withers into nothing… I challenge you to fulfill a God purpose for your life.

I challenge you to win one of your friends to Jesus…