Leadership as Servanthood

SESSION GOALS

The point of every session is a main idea with the goal of informing our knowing, feeling, and doing.

MAIN IDEA: Leadership isn't about technique or position; it's about sacrificial love.

Head Change: To know that pride kills leadership because God opposes the proud.

Heart Change: To celebrate that we can look to Jesus—holy, servant leader—as our example.

Life Change: To lead with humility, obedience, loyalty, and yieldedness.

OPEN

What's the best leadership book you've ever read? Why? If you've never read a leadership book, why haven't you?

Tens of thousands of books on leadership are published every year. Interestingly, the Bible—bestselling book of all time—doesn't have much to say about leadership the way our culture interprets it, but it does have a lot to say about humility and obedience, love and loyalty, surrender and servanthood. In this session, Jorge Salazar explores what the book of Acts reveals about leadership that honors God and facilitates the global spread of the gospel.

VIEW

As you watch, write down how Jorge answers these questions.

What did James and John believe about leadership and "being connected"?

Paul's leadership was characterized by H_____, O_____, L_____, and Y_____.

Why is it important that leaders shepherd the flock that is *among* them?

What kinds of hardship did Paul suffer, owing to his obedience?

How did Paul show his loyalty in his service to the Ephesians?

How does Jorge define "yieldedness"?

Show SESSION #3: *Leadership as Servanthood* (17 minutes)

REVIEW

Jorge opens the session reflecting on the different types of leaders the world has known throughout history. **What kind of leader do you find easy to follow? Why? Do you think others find it easy to follow you?**

Two of Jesus' disciples, James and John, believed leadership was all about being connected. They wanted Kingdom positions right next to Jesus. Jesus, however, explains that God's Kingdom is upside down from the kingdoms of the world: if you want to be greatest, you need to serve people, not subdue them with authority (Mark 10:35–45). **Did you grow up believing that leadership positions are about "who you know"? Have your connections given you a leg up in life? Would Jesus' words in Mark 10 fit into your organization's promotion policy? If not, what would it take to reorientate the culture of your workplace?**

Jorge points out that leadership is understood and expressed differently in different cultures around the world, but that biblical leadership is about relationship, mutuality, self-sacrifice, prayer, and personal investment. Leadership, then, is not so much about technique or position; rather, it's about sacrificial love. **How would you describe leaders in your community or nation? Which local or global leaders stand out to you as sacrificial and servant-hearted? What could you do, this week, to emulate their leadership style in your circle of influence?**

Paul embodied Jesus' leadership philosophy, and he beautifully expressed it in his farewell address to the leaders of the Ephesian church (Acts 20:18–21). His leadership style was marked, first of all, by humility. He lived and worked *among* the people of God, interacting with them regularly and being his real, unedited self in their presence. **Do you agree with Jorge that there's no place for elevated leaders—no green rooms or red carpets—in the Kingdom? Why, or why not? Which leaders do you respect most for their humility, integrity, and authenticity? As you make an impact in your circle of influence, have you ever held yourself superior to someone you're leading? If so, did the person concerned respect you more or less for your superiority?**

Jorge asserts, "There's nothing that kills leadership faster than pride, because the Lord opposes the proud." **Have you seen this happen to any leaders you know? Has it happened to**

you? What encouragement could you offer to a leader whose pride has been their downfall?

Jorge goes on to say, "Serving with humility means that you understand where you would be if it wasn't for Christ. You understand what your life would be like without Jesus, and you recognize that you had nothing to do with it but that it was all God's grace that rescued you and made you who you are today: a servant in the hands of the Master." **What do you think your life would look like, in this season, if you didn't know Jesus?**

Paul gave his all to the people he was leading, and he made it all about God and never about himself (Acts 20:20). Jorge points out, "I've never heard a hammer or a saw brag about what a magnificent piece of furniture they made, because they're just tools. All the credit is for the carpenter." **How has God used you over the past month as "a hammer or a saw" for what He's making in the world?**

Secondly, Paul's leadership was marked by obedience. He went wherever the Spirit of God told him to go, despite encountering arrest, imprisonment, death threats, shipwreck, and even a snakebite. **What has your obedience to God cost you? If you tend to shy away from talking to someone about Jesus because of the risks involved, what might be your next step?**

Jorge explains that obeying God isn't complicated. In John 9, when people ask the (previously) blind man about Jesus, he keeps saying something along the lines of, "All I know is that I was blind, but now I can see!" (John 9:10–17) **Do you think we over-complicate obedience, to the extent that we feel underprepared or ill-equipped to obey God's commission to tell people about His saving grace? If so, what could we do to *uncomplicate* obedience and encourage others to do the same?**

From Paul we learn that there's an urgency to obedience. He knows there's no time to waste, and he's used his time fully to tell the Ephesian leaders everything he knows about Jesus (Acts 20:25–27). **How does this earnest resolve and sense of responsibility to the lost play out in your life? Who stands out to you as a leader who seems to obey God quickly and decisively, regardless of the cost? What could you do to emulate that rhythm of obedience in your current context?**

Thirdly, Paul's leadership was marked by loyalty. He refocuses the Ephesian leaders, reminding them that it's God who made them leaders, and He's the point of it all (Acts 20:28–32). **What does "honesty in love" look like for you? Which of your friends or family members have the freedom and courage to call you out when you're straying from God's ways? Who has dependably, empathetically persevered on your behalf? Have you thanked them? Whose life is God prompting you to invest in?**

Finally, Paul's leadership was marked by yieldedness. Yieldedness means denying ourselves: taking up our cross and valuing Christ above all else while recognizing our full dependance on Him. **Do verbs like *yield*, *submit*, and *surrender* make you feel as if you're vulnerable and on the backfoot, or do they make you feel safe and at peace? Either way, where do you think those perceptions come from?**

Paul wasn't greedy for money; he worked diligently and wasn't a burden to others; he exemplified helping others by working hard himself; he modeled a life of prayer and strong relationships with God and others (Acts 20:32–38). This is what a yielded life looks like. **Does Paul remind you of anyone you know? What is your next step of surrender?**

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Read John 13:3–7. Jesus knew that His Father had given Him authority over everything. He fully understood His cosmic supremacy. And so, He did the job of a servant, washing His disciples' dirty feet. **In which areas of your life do you hold all the authority? What might it look like to "wash feet" in that context?**

Paul writes to the believers in Rome, "Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us." (Romans 12:3) **How does this instruction exemplify Paul's humility, obedience, loyalty, and yieldedness as a leader? What is God saying to you about the integrity of your self-assessment?**

Read Proverbs 3:34, 1 Peter 5:5, and James 4:6. **What do you need to do (and in which particular area of your life do you need to start doing it) to get more of God's grace in your life?**

LAST WORD

Whether you're leading tens of thousands or simply leading your own life, servanthood is the leadership style that will unleash the power of God into your circumstances and spread the gospel across our globe. May you be happily unaware of how brightly you shine, because this mission is not about you. May God fortify you for fearless obedience. May you be a humble, sincere ambassador of Jesus, boldly representing His interests in the best way possible. And as leaders across the world, may we be united in submission to the Lord and one another, praying for one another as we recognize that without God we can do nothing.

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete before watching the next session.

Read: Meditate on Philippians 2:1–18. Read each verse aloud and imagine you're reading it to the people you lead, as a declaration of servant leadership.

Write: Spend some time journaling about all the ways Jesus' unwavering compassion towards you has irrevocably changed your life. Or jot down ideas for serving those in your circle of influence.

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of sin. Repent of your pride, disobedience, selfishness, and unwillingness to surrender completely to God. Then pray for the strength to recommit yourself to servant leadership characterized by humility, obedience, loyalty, and yieldedness.