

Moses: when leadership becomes too painful

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



Leadership, throughout history, has called for men and women with characters of iron. Commonly, leaders become the targets of preconceived ideas, prejudice, evil surmising, projection, fears and envy. The Word is filled with stories of leaders who were misjudged, slandered, unjustly mistreated, envied and viciously attacked. Moses is a great example of a leader who lived his life under constant attack. His own people frequently misjudged him. Even his own blood-related siblings turned on him and challenged the legitimacy and authority of the leadership role he tried to dodge.

Why are leaders so often the focus of unremitting criticism? Well, imbedded into the position of leadership are influence, position and prestige. Add to the list vision-casting power, decision-making power, and character and lifestyle expectations. Have you noticed our tendency to demonstrate tolerance, leniency, patience and grace with non-leaders? Sadly, when one is assigned a leadership position, the degree of grace, patience and tolerance drastically declines. You are called to a higher standard, to moral choices that rise above the masses. Christian leaders are not only expected to be exemplary role models; they are too often expected to be perfect.

The perpetual expectation of perfection is emotionally-spiritually debilitating and can drain the leader's morale. When people complained to Moses about the lack of variety in their desert menu, they were unashamed in boldly expressing how uninteresting and insipid the heavenly manna seemed to them after having dined on Egypt's "fish, the cucumbers, the melons, leeks, the onions and garlic". They went as far as to express that they felt "dried up". The Message version gives an interesting rendering of this passage: "The riffraff among the people had a craving and soon they had the People of <https://assignbuster.com/moses-when-leadership-becomes-too-painful/>

Israel whining, ' Why can't we have meat? We ate fish in Egypt — and got it free! — to say nothing of the cucumbers and melons, the leeks and onions and garlic. But nothing tastes good out here; all we get is manna, manna, manna.'

Moses felt so disappointed with their negative mindsets and ungrateful spirits that he “ Said to the Lord, ' Why have you afflicted your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight that you have laid the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them that you should say to me, ' carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child, to the land which you swore to their fathers?' . . . I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me. If you treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness”. Can you detect Moses' desperation? Can you hear his anguish, helplessness and hopelessness? His emotional state is in such disarray that he is feeling wretched, worthless and grimly inadequate. Does any of this sound familiar?

Often, many leaders don't even get a break from their own families when what they need most, is to get a respite of peace and tranquility in the midst of their personal battle. It is deeply stressful and painful to feel you are waging war with your spouse, children, and or extended family members, as you try to fulfill your God-given mission. In Moses' case, even his own sister and brother were conduits of evil surmising against him. They had convinced themselves that there wasn't anything that made Moses more special or particularly gifted that qualified him to rank higher than themselves or gave

him the authority to wield so much power over the escaped nation. The siblings' leadership envy seemed to be getting the best of them: " Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married. So, they said, ' Has the Lord indeed spoke only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?'" .

Have you ever been there? Your people are against you. Your own family is against you; and it appears that even the Lord is against you? Leadership is not for cowards! I suspect you have heard a variation of this accurate statement. We all know very well that volume of responsibilities and accountability we carry, coupled with our human brokenness, can result at times in our feeling that the leadership load is just too much, that God is not taking care of you or that perhaps He doesn't even care! So why bother even trying to continue?

I am assuming that Isaiah's " leadership moment" was no less trying than Moses's was. During this period of deepest angst, Isaiah was given the leadership task of speaking prophetic words to God's people even as an attack and occupation from the Syrian armies was frighteningly imminent. Would he be able to muster up the fearless courage to invite them to trust in God, even in the midst of national devastation? Or, might he instead choose to shirk his God-appointed mission which was intended to avert his people from giving themselves over to dark dissolution and debilitating despair? Isaiah was called in a time of crisis to share a salvific message of hope, healing, and victory. His message echoes with the familiarity of the Good News Gospel message that we are invited to share with a more modern

culture, also doomed for destruction, unless they choose to believe in Jesus' salvific message.

Amid this time of turmoil, God's people, and even the prophetic voice himself, needed the promised divine reassurance that they would be protected and saved. And healing reassurance is indeed what they received from the Lord: " You are my servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand".