

Go and Lead

The Relationship Blueprint series week 6

by Chris Famisaran

Well, good morning, everybody. How are you all doing today? My heart is full. I see some of you haven't seen in a bit and it's good to see you. Now, today's sermon title is called *Go and Lead*.

And I have a little bit of trepidation. I got up here thinking, yes, awesome. This is really the culmination of what I was really wanting to talk about. In order to be able to lead effectively in leadership, you have to listen, you have to care, you have to respect, you have to trust, you have to influence in order to be able to lead. And today I got to church and as I was looking around, a former associate of mine is standing Pastor Jillian, thank you for joining us today.

But my boss is also here today as well. How nervous of me. Everything I got to talk about, he could, you know, he could critique me. I'm kidding. Elder Brett Poynter, where are you at? He's hiding. He's waving. That's my boss. He's our region director. So I want to make sure you're known and seen. Thanks for joining us today. He didn't tell me he was coming today, so the pressure is on me as it is every day. I look forward to being able to share something I'm very passionate about. And as I was reading, as I was discussing, as I was preparing for this message, I realized that I'm not going to be able to contain everything. I could have at least four or separate sermons just on this topic alone. So today is a primer. Okay? We're going to come back to this very topic in a couple of months after summer, maybe around August or September, and dive deeper into this, because I want to make a statement. Everybody here in this church, okay, **every one of you sitting here and in this church is a leader. Every one of you is a leader.** Let's dive into that.

Before we get into that, let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you for the opportunity to gather together and to Lord, talk about leadership. Lead and guide us in Jesus name. Amen.

How many of you remember in the early 2000s when the Los Angeles Lakers were dominating, especially against the Kings? Oh it was a glorious time. The Kings in the Portlands were our arch nemesis, right? And yes, we had Kobe, we had Shaq. We had all of these wonderful people. But, you know, while they did lead, they did get the buckets. They did get the shots. They made tremendous defensive saves. They were leaders on the court. And then you had what we would consider the locker room leaders, little older veterans who know how to lead and sometimes be able to show, to show with. Not just by saying, but doing. I think of Rick Fox, who he, before he came to the Lakers, he could have gotten a much bigger contract. But no, he said, I am going to take a much lower salary because I want to win. And as you see it, you know, he. Not only he may have not have been the flashiest player, but he, he was, he played his. His role, helping to pass and everything. And he led on the court and off the court. If you remember, he. He was one who. He made sure he was kind of, in a sense, an enforcer. When he didn't like something, he let the other team know. Especially when, you know, do you remember when he and I think it was Doug Christie got into a discussion, which they ended up chasing each other through the different halls because they wanted to fight. Now, I'm not advocating for violence or fighting, okay? But him sticking up for his guys showed leadership. Derek Fisher, Point Guard, one of the smallest guys on the team, though, led with influence. He showed, he talked. He kept people in line. They cared for each other, they fought for each other. And sometimes leadership, it doesn't have to be the biggest start. Anybody can be a leader.

Now, I want to go to Second Kings, chapter five today. I want to look at the story of Naaman. And yes, you're going to talk about this particular story later this week in your various small groups, but I want to look at some other things that I want you to keep in mind as we talk about leadership. Okay? All right, Second Kings, chapter five, starting at verse one. We all there?

Okay. All right, verse one. Now, Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. Aram, I believe it's Syria, it was called Aram back then. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram.

He was a valiant soldier, but he had what? he had leprosy. Now, let's also look at context. The word leprosy that is used in the Hebrew could actually refer to several, essentially skin conditions. He could have also had psoriasis. He could have had eczema. He had issues. So it may not have literally been leprosy, okay? Because you know what happens with leprosy? You start to lose different parts of your skin, right? But let's just say he had a horrible skin condition and it affected him.

But if we go back, we can see that Naaman, he was a commander. He was the commander for the king of Aram. And he was a great man. Not just an okay guy. He was a great man. He was highly regarded, meaning he was respected. They trusted him. People listened to him.

Now, verse two, it says. Now, bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and taken a young girl captive, a young girl from Israel. And she served Naaman's wife. And she said to her mistress, if only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy.

You see, Aram would sometimes have little skirmishes with the northern kingdom. And so Aram's men had gone in to one of the villages and they'd taken her back captive, and she served Aram's wife. Now, what's interesting, I hadn't thought about this before, but as I was reading up on this particular story, you know, this young lady, did she have to say anything to her mistress? No. In fact, because of her husband's position and orders, she was taken from her family. We don't know the status of her family. Were they killed? Were they run off? Were they also taken off? If somebody were to invade your country, your home, and take you away, would you be excited about that? Highly unlikely, right? I mean, maybe it was a better life. I don't know. But most people would think, hey, this, this isn't cool. But she never forgot her identity because, you know, she's living in Aram. Why should she mention anything about her home country? And yet she says, hey, you know, there's a guy I know. If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy.

And this prophet that she's talking about is the prophet Elisha. Now, she's an Israelite. She didn't have to say anything. But something tells me that if she were to mention this, by the way, she wasn't asked. She volunteered. She offered. This information means that she respected either her mistress or him enough and cared enough about him that she would say something. Because if you're taken from some, from your home, do you want to give this new country any information? Want to help them? Usually not.

Okay, all right. So she's taken. And then verse four. Now, Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. By all means, go. The king of Aram replied, I will send a letter to the king of Israel. So Naaman left, having taken with him 10 talents of silver, 6,000 shekels of gold, and 10 sets of clothing. And the letter that he took to the king of Israel, read with this letter, I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy.

Okay, so they continue on. And as soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he. He tore his robes and said, am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me?

And it was not uncommon for them to kind of just be very unsure about that other country over there. Are they going to try to invade us again? It's difficult having to keep pushing them back and keeping them out of our country. And so the king, though, you know, he doesn't just send his guy in. If he sends his guy in, it could be fought, there could be a battle. So he sends people ahead to say, hey, I am sending my trusted commander. I want him to go and be healed. And of course, the king has no idea what he's talking about. Can you blame him for being suspicious? And when he says, well, he's sending him to me to be healed, I have no idea.

Now, verse eight. When Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him with this message, why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door

of Elisha's house. Elisha, notice this as well, Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed. That sounds awesome. But how does Naaman take this news? Not very well, right?

Because in verse 11 he says, But Naaman was what? He was angry. And I said, I thought he would at least surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord, his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. He doesn't even have the decency to come outside and tell me himself. He sends a messenger. And he says, are not Abaniah and Farfrae the rivers of Damascus, but better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed? You have to understand, too, that the river Jordan was not exactly known for being a clean river.

Okay, now verse 13. Naaman's servants went to him and said, my father. Okay, It's a term of respect. If the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more? Then when he tells you, just wash and be cleansed? It's like taking a bath, right? Getting the water.

Dunk your head seven times, you'll be good to go. So he went, he dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him. And his flesh was restored and became clean, like that of a young boy. In fact, his skin was so good, it was brand new. Okay?

Then Naaman, verse 15, and all of his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood there before him and said, now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel, so please accept a gift from your servant. Then the prophet said, as surely as the Lord lives whom I serve, I will not accept a thing. And even though Naaman urged him, he what? Refused? And if you will not, said Naaman, please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never make again a burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other God but the Lord. But may the Lord forgive your servant for this one thing. When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down, and he is leaning on my arm, and I have to bow down

there, when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord forgive your servant for this. Elisha said, go in peace.

Now throughout this whole story, there are examples of listening, of caring, of respecting, of trusting and influence. When you look at this story, where. Where are those who were listening? Obviously, Naaman had to listen to his wife and ultimately listen to this Israelite girl. There's a lot that has to happen there, okay, when it comes to leadership as well, okay, when it comes to leadership, **everything rises and falls on leadership** (John C. Maxwell). Anything that is good is going to have good leadership. Or if it's going to stand the test of time, you can, as a leader, get results. If you're a great leader, it will continue. If you're a horrible leader, what are you going to get? Resistance and poor effort.

But in this case, now, in the characteristics of good leadership, **humility is the number one characteristic of leadership**. Naaman had to humble himself and listen to a young Israelite girl who was a servant. If you think about that, okay, he's highly respected. He could have gone anywhere, but he listens to a young girl and goes into her country. Naaman humbled himself. He listened. And you also see too that this young girl cared enough about Naaman to say something. In a sense, she was probably taking a risk just by mentioning that. So Naaman, he goes he listens.

He had to trust Elisha. He had to trust this young servant that everything would be okay. And at first, did he trust Elisha? No, he got mad, he got upset. There are so many other ways that I could have been healed. In fact, he could have just said, God, heal Naaman and everything would be fine. But no, in a sense, Naaman had to have a little faith to get into a dirty water, dunk his head seven times afterwards, of course, we see that he genuinely does care. He does gain respect. He respects Elisha enough to go back and say, hey, here are some things. And by the way, he didn't trust him because if he had trust him before, he would have given all of the wonderful silver and shekels and everything beforehand.

But he doesn't. He's not sure yet. He wants to make sure that he gets the treatment before he gives the money. And what does Elisha do? He says, no, it's not necessary. I am simply caring, as God had called me to do. The amount of money that Naaman was carrying was roughly about. I think it was \$150,000 in coins, and then another roughly 3 million in gold. You wonder why Gehazi got a little bit excited, right? And that's just the money, okay? But there was other things that he carried for easily could have made a profit. But Elisha wasn't about making money. He was humble, he listened, and he was faithful to God. And he said, this is not necessary. You talk about respect. After that, he said, you know, he shows up with respect. He shows tremendous respect to Elisha.

And you see the influence within Naaman. You see that people genuinely cared about him. If they didn't, if his servants didn't care about him, they wouldn't have said, hey, Naaman, look, it's just some water, okay? He's a prophet. What do you have to lose, essentially? Oh, humility can be challenging.

Another characteristic then, about leadership is **being responsible and taking ownership**. Naaman couldn't do this alone, and he couldn't just sit there and hope to be healed. He had to take action. And sometimes that means taking action and realizing, hey, you know what? Maybe I made a mistake. Or, let's not wait. Let's be proactive. We'll talk about that in a second, okay? But be responsible. As a leader, you're responsible for everything, even if you didn't actually mess up.

Years ago, I forgot which Marine General it was. It was , I think. Was it Gentry or Gary? There was a helicopter that went down and a number of Marines were killed. And as a commandant of the Marine Corps, he went and visited the families, and he said, I am sorry. This is my fault. Now, was he flying the helicopter? Was he maintaining the helicopter? He wasn't, but he was in charge of the Marine Corps, and it was important for him to say, hey, everything is on my responsibility under me, and it's my duty and my job to

ensure that everybody holds to the highest standards and does it right. And they didn't. There was a failure, and he felt convicted and responsible.

True leadership realizes that everything under your purview. Your responsibility, it is yours. You may not have actually physically messed up, but you're responsible now. You have a responsibility. Okay, how do we fix this? How do we grow? How do we make things do things better?

Part of also being a great leader is **listening to new ideas and suggestions**. If you're a boss or a parent, okay, you have people. You want them to do something right? What is the best way to ensure that they actually get the job done? Listen to them. Help them to know that they are valued as husbands and wives. It's important that we listen to each other.

I was listening to this podcast yesterday, and in the podcast, one of the hosts, I think his name is JP Dunnell, he was saying, if you cut your spouse off, you're losing half of your wisdom. If you cut your spouse off, you are losing half of your wisdom. She said it. He did it. She said, if you. Pastor, when you. I mentioned this last night in a small group, and she said, pastor, if you say this, Gustavo's going to nudge me. That's awesome. If you truly love your spouse and you are a team, because that's what marriage is. You're not two individuals living in a house and maintaining a home. You are a team. You are one. If you don't listen to your spouse, you're cutting off half your wisdom. One of the biggest, greatest gifts that I have ever been given is my wife. My wife, she's so much smarter than me, and she is in tune. She has a sense for things that I just. I don't get. And one of the benefits. One of the biggest gifts that I have is I get to talk to her every day. And when I don't know what to do, or maybe I'm just talking about something, she's very observant, and she'll tell me, hey, what do you think about this? Or she'll just tell me I'm wrong when I need to be told, I'm wrong.

True leadership is listening to those you are in charge of or you have been granted to steward. Because leadership is also. It's not a right, it's a responsibility. **Leadership is not a right, it is a responsibility**. So listen, ask things, hey, how can we do this better?

When those of you who are those who are responsible, those who you're responsible for, when the boss says, hey, this guy actually cares about what I think. And when you say, when you try to solicit ideas, don't just say, hey, what do you guys think? And not mean it. Because again, if somebody's been asking you something, okay, what do you think? And you know, they don't care. Do you really care?

Be proactive. Take action. It's better to be proactive than to wait. If there's an issue that's been simmering, do your due diligence, but also take care of it. Because the longer it takes, the harder it gets, right?

And sometimes, too, there are going to be challenges and life. It's going to be, again, it's going to be challenging. You cannot always control things that happen to you, but you can choose how to respond. **You cannot control everything that happens to you, but you can choose how to respond.** Do you want to be proactive and deal with the situation, or do you want to just wait and let it fester and let it get worse? Leadership means you do not want to wait. Be proactive.

And the last thing when it comes to leadership is **empower others**, help others, give them responsibility. As a pastor, the first thing I said, one of the first things I said here is I want to help educate, I want to help equip, give you the tools, but I want to empower you to go out and do awesome things for the Lord. When you think about it, you know, maybe as a parent or in your work environment, if you're a supervisor, if you're a boss, give people responsibility.

Do you have a child or do you have an employee who just is difficult? Maybe they just, they love to. They love to be the Debbie Downer. Always think of the negative things, right? And you're trying to get them on board. Come on, please be part of the team. You know what you should do? Give them some responsibility. What I mean by that is not authority, but responsibility. Have them teach a class. Have them say, hey, here's what I want you to do. I want you to figure out how to get it done. I want you to create a plan how to clean your room, right? We have a big project, I want you all to Talk together, come up with a solution. Because if you're the boss and you're telling everybody

what to do exactly, and you want them to do it step by step, do they have any ownership in that? Do they care? Not my project. It's the boss's project. And when you don't listen, when you don't respect, when you don't care, when you don't trust and you don't try to influence, when it goes sideways, whose fault is it? Can you blame the workers? Yeah, you can. But who's the boss?

Empowering others means you educate, equip. Now, when they come with a plan, don't just sign off. It's perfectly acceptable to say, hey, let's ask some questions. Because maybe they're gonna come up with some ideas. Maybe not the most fruitful ideas or the best ideas, but don't just tell them, hey, that that plan is miserable, try something new. Ask questions. Because as you start to ask questions, it helps them to think, what are the solutions we can come up with? Do you want your plan to be done because you're the boss, because you want to look awesome, because you want to control and you want to get all the credit? Or do you want to be humble and let your people, your kids, shine?

One of my greatest leadership failures. I've never told this, but I remember this. And to this day it haunts me. I wasn't a pastor yet. It was shortly before I was pastor and I was serving as a boys director. And it was evening, it was towards the end of summer, and if you've ever worked at summer camp, it's exhausting. And I was serving as the boys director and I was really irritated about how the guys were not listening. They were letting the kids do all kinds of stuff. They weren't following the rules and this and that. Okay, if you know me, I'm. I try to follow policy, right? Maybe to the T. I sometimes don't think maybe. What's the spirit of what the. What this, this suggestion is, this rule. And I remember it was late at night, it was probably about 9:00. And I just was fed up with all of the guys and all the kids. And we got done before the kids were supposed to go down to go to bed. All of the girls exited and I told all the guys to wait. And I laid into them how they were failing, how they were wrong, and how I expected better and how the kids were not acting as they should.

It's hard for me to admit this. I've never admitted this. I failed deeply. And I could see on all of their faces, their eyes, their mouths quenched, they

scrunched up. I knew I had messed up and I lost them. They didn't respect me and they shouldn't have because I failed them as a leader. I didn't listen to them. I didn't ask about them. I didn't care. Actually, I did care, but I didn't care enough. I didn't care enough to say, hey, how can I help you? How can I support you? We had counselors who were struggling personally, and I didn't know or have enough empathy to be able to listen to them. And I didn't think about it that much. But until later, you know, when you look back and you reflect and you read and you realize, oh, man, I wish I could have acted differently that night. And it's a reminder that, number one, I'm not as awesome as I think I am. I'm not as awesome as I think I am.

He said he would do that. He said he would do that. Thank you. Thank you.

I'm not as awesome as I think I am. I've made plenty of mistakes, and I will make mistakes in the future. I hope that I have enough humility and say, though, I'm sorry. I apologize. Here's where I got it wrong, and here's what I want to do to do better. We're all works in progress. Amen.

But that. That moment back in 2005, that haunts me. I never, ever want to be so selfish, so hypocritical. It's a painful lesson, and I use that as motivation to do better.

And why am I leading all of this To conclude, God has called us to be disciples. Amen. And in order to be able to spread the gospel, you have to have leaders. And I don't want you to be just leaders here in the church. I want you to be leaders in your home. I want you to be leaders in your community, in your work. Everywhere you go, you have the ability to lead. And while you may not be necessarily the top person, you could be the third or the fourth or the seventh in the chain of command. And yet you can still help by letting people be aware. Make people notice, hey, we've got this situation. How do we handle that? A great leader asks for help, just as Naaman did. Naaman sought advice. He listened. And ultimately, he found that people cared about him and he cared for others. He was respected. He eventually learned to respect others. He had to learn to trust. When it seemed completely crazy. But he found that

he could trust in God, the true God, in the very end. His influence was already great in Aram, but he learned to be influenced by the Lord.

So may the Lord influence you. May you be a positive influence around those who you're surrounded by. May you listen, may you care, may you respect, may you trust, influence, and above all, go and lead.

So out of the six attributes that we have been discussing the last six weeks, we've learned in a series, what is your strongest and weakest attribute? Where can you grow? Are you strong or can you learn to listen more? Are you strong and caring? Or could you learn to be more caring? Respect, trust, influence.

And as you practice these, okay, **go and lead by listening, caring, respecting, trusting, influencing, and leading those around you to be a more capable disciple.** Not just as a disciple, but all aspects of your life. You take ownership of your mistakes, you listen to your spouse and those around you. Your life is going to change. Amen. That is my prayer and my hope for you all as we go forth in Downey, wherever we are, to serve the Lord.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, thank you for the opportunity to once again study not just about leadership, but how we can have awesome relationships. Lord, as we close out the relationship blueprint series, help us to be faithful, capable disciples of all the attributes that we have learned. Help us to apply them faithfully that we can not only have great, wonderful, strong, healthy relationships, but also help us to have the ability to lead, guide us and direct us in Jesus name. Everybody said Amen.

Grace and peace, everyone.