

Go

Taking Ownership series

by Chris Famisaran

If you've been blessed by our praise team. Please say Amen. Thank you and thank you, Ben. Let's pray Lord as we conclude our Taking Ownership series. Lord be with us and guide us in Jesus name. Amen.

Well, I hope and pray everyone is well. Did you enjoy the precipitation that we experienced this last week? Nice little rain. Over the last month we have been looking at essentially taking ownership of your life and also how you lead. We're going to be talking more about that specifically today. Then in our first week we talked about humility, taking ownership, being responsible, being accountable, and also building up relationships. In week two we talked about how to simplify things. Last week we talked about prioritizing what is most important that we can accomplish and focus. And today I want to talk about how as a leader we teach to also educate, equip and empower.

So there once was a manager, I believe it was at a bank, who noticed that the elevator button on their floor was broken. And every day employees would push that button hoping and praying that it would work so they don't have to take the stairs. Now the manager could have ignored it. It's not his job to fix it. But instead the reports follows up and even post a sign to help others avoid the frustration. "Don't bother." Leadership isn't just about big decisions. It's sometimes noticing even the small decisions that affect others.

In taking initiative, Nehemiah was inspecting the broken walls and the people did not take enough action. So he said, hey, we need to do this, let's get something done. Likewise, a well known CEO of a company was taking out the trash. The CEO, the president. This was undignified. How unbecoming. Why hadn't somebody else done it for this person? And yet their CEO responded. If I expect my team to take care and worry about the little things, I also have to show them too. Humility in leadership is building trust and respect. As Philippians 2 talks about, do nothing out of selfish ambition, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. And as you think about your life in your home, in your work, in your neighborhood, wherever you have in your life influence, do you empower, encourage and entrust or encourage your team to do the job?

I'd like to go to the book of Exodus. We're going to look at several passages and these are the passages that we're going to be focusing on. If you're joining us online, maybe if you

want to take a quick screenshot so you can easily remember, or if you're here and you don't have a chance to write Everything down or you accidentally lose your piece of paper. Come back to this lesson. You can find them here. Okay. Exodus 18. It's a passage we've highlighted in the past, but it bears going back to. We talked about it actually, in our Sabbath school, our adult Sabbath school, several weeks ago, Exodus 18. And I want to look specifically, starting at verse 13. And the context here is that Jethro, Moses, father-in-law, who was a priest from Midian, visits Moses. He brought back his wife and his two boys, and Moses goes and shows him all the things that God has been doing. And Jethro is impressed, and he actually gives thanks. He's happy to see the success. But then when we get to verse 13, it says, "The next day, Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people. And they stood around him from morning until when? Evening. All day long. And when his father in law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, what is this you're doing for all the people? Why do you sit alone as judge while all these people stand around you from morning till evening? And Moses answered, because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it's brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions."

Does that sound very relaxing? It sounds exhausting because you have to remember the context. Who is Moses leading? Everyone. Thousands and thousands and thousands of people. And when there's ever a dispute, you have to listen to every one of them. That sounds exhausting. What did Moses not realize that needed change? Could he control everything? Parents, if you have more than one kid, do they get along all the time? If kids can't get along, what about grownups as well? Thousands of them. Disputes are bound to happen. And it might be a big dispute. It could be a small little problem that if they just talk it out right when Jesus said, hey, if you got an issue with your brother or your sister, what should you do? You should go talk to them, try to find a way to work it out. And yet they were bringing all of these problems to Moses. He was trying to oversee everything. And so, you know, we're human. We imagine Moses having to oversee and make all these judgments in every single disagreement. Everybody's pleading their case as to why. Can you imagine, though, leading thousands and thousands of people, and when they come to you for a decision and they don't get the response that they wanted, how do you think they're going to feel about Moses? Maybe a little disgruntled right. Well, he didn't see it my way. I'm right, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. No wonder they probably got irritated when they complained. Maybe there was a little bit more added to that frustration.

So what does Jethro recommend? Let's go back to verse 19. And so Jethro says, actually, let's go to verse 17. "What you're doing is not good. You and the people, these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you. You can't handle it alone. Listen to me now, and I will give you some advice and may God be with you. You

must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him, Teach them his decrees and instructions and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people, men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times and have them bring every difficult case, the simple cases they can decide themselves, that will bring your load lighter because they will ensure it, share it with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, you will be able to stand the strain and. And all these people will go home what? Satisfied.”

Jethro could see the strain and the stress that's on Moses face. Sorry, I can't talk today. And what he's essentially saying, you're trying to control everything, and yet why don't you try to delegate responsibility? So set people over those who are faithful, have integrity, and that way you can focus on doing the job of instructing and leading the people. We see a similar story in the book of Acts, chapter six, where those who were being treated unfairly and the disciples, they couldn't manage everything. So they asked seven individuals to step forward, to be recommended, to help oversee the practical matters, the daily operations, so that they could be focused on praying and, and teaching. So we see here that Jethro is teaching and educating Moses on how he could do better.

Now, Moses, did he have to listen to Jethro? He didn't have to, but there has to have been a relationship there. Moses, of course, could have said, no, God appointed me. I'm going to continue to do what I want to do. But there was a relationship, not just of a father-in-law and a son-in-law. But where did Moses run to when he got in trouble with Egypt? He ran and found Jethro's home. Jethro took him in, taught him how to lead and how to shepherd the sheep for 40 years. And so there has to have been a decent enough relationship built up. And so Moses listened. Now he tended Jethro's flocks. How did he do that? Did Moses grow up as a shepherd? No, he actually grew up in a very. Well, he had it pretty well. He was educated, he was smart, he was intentional for 40 years. And then he goes out to the desert, has to start all over. Jethro had to teach him how to find the water, how to feed them, how to protect them. And relationships are not built overnight. It takes time. Sometimes it also, when you struggle together, relationships are bonded even tighter. It takes work and intentionality. And so when Jethro spoke, Moses listened. So Jethro shares. Hey, here's my advice. Pick some people, delegate. It's going to require losing control. But in the end, is Moses going to be happier? Is Moses going to be more effective?

Verse 24. Verse 24. “Moses listened to his father-in-law in law, did everything he said. He chose capable men from all of Israel and made these leaders of the people officials over thousands, hundreds and fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. And only the difficult cases were brought to Moses, but the simple ones, they decided for

themselves. And then Moses, his father, Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.”

And so, by listening and practicing what Jethro shared and instructed, things got better for Moses. And so, as you're given responsibility, as you're given authority, as you're given influence, are you humble enough to listen for feedback, but also be able to instruct and teach and make sure and prepare that the people that you have influence over are properly trained and know how to move forward?

So **the essence of a leader is to educate, equip, and empower.** The essence of a leader is to educate, equip, and empower. I'm going to go a step further; **Leaders should train people out of their own job.** Mean you're trying to give up your job, but let's say you get a promotion, you're needed elsewhere. Do you want to have a plan in place for somebody to take over so it can be a smooth transition? What if you get called to move across the country? Who knows? But leaders train people out of their own job. When it's time to make a change, somebody can step in. And ultimately, what are we trying to do? We're trying to multiply leaders.

But **leaders also serve as mentors.** Just because you may not be their, quote, boss or leader afterwards. Do you want to be somebody that somebody can always come back to and seek advice? There are several people that I have in my life that I learned a lot from and I still, from time to time I will come back and say, hey, I got a problem. I don't know how to handle this situation. So sometimes it's intentionally. You need to be able to listen and reach out. But start small. As leaders start small and share the responsibilities and increase the complexity. Clearly define what you expect from them. You have to build and of course, trust. Build respect and trust within the team.

And as a leader as well, should you include others in the process? Absolutely. Give them opportunities to lead, to suggest and to take ownership in the plan. And just as a leader also shares the wins and takes ownership with the losses, oftentimes a solid plan by the leader is better than the sorry. A solid plan by the team is often better than the plan that a leader has and tells them what to do because they've thought about it, they've, they've tried to dissect how can I do better? And especially when you take ownership, you want to succeed. And a leader asks the questions to help make sure that they stay on track and get feedback. So what does a leader do? The leader ensures that the people also have influence and are set up for success. How are you educating the people that you are influencing over to be able to do their job? Are they getting the training that they needed? Do you have follow up training and are you resourcing your team properly? Jesus himself also did this.

Can we let's go to Luke 10 real quick. Luke 10 I briefly want to look at this passage and this is when Jesus sends out the 72. Luke 10 all right, still here, a few pages flipping. Okay, Luke 10, "After this, the Lord appointed 72 others, sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. And asked the Lord of the harvest, therefore to send out workers, workers and do a harvest field. Go. I'm sending you out like lambs among the wolves. Do not take a purse or a bag or sandals, and don't greet anyone on the road. Whenever you enter a house, first say peace to this house. If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them. If not, it will return to you. Stay there eating and drinking whatever they give you for the worker deserves his wages. Don't move around from house to house and when you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered and heal the sick who are there and tell them the kingdom of God has come near to you. But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, whenever. Even the dust of your town, even the dust of your own town, we wipe from your feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this, the kingdom of God has come near. I tell you, it will be more bearable and on that day for Sodom than for that town."

So is Jesus intentional about what he expects of them? He gives them, point by point, instructions and how to do so, what to avoid and follow through. And then, of course, verse 17, it said, "the 72 returned with joy and said, lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." And so it sounds like there was success, right?

So Jesus also intentionally taught through parables. He listened to them, continued to process even more when they said, lord, I don't get this. Now, as we start to land the plane, imagine being a carpenter. Not just a carpenter, actually, a master carpenter. And there's three tools on the carpenter's belt that you can share with.

- Number one is a measuring tape. A measuring tape to teach them how to assess and understand the materials that they have to work with. And this essentially represents how you educate them. How are you learning through Scripture, understanding the Bible, and also gaining wisdom?
- The second thing that you need in a carpenter's belt is a hammer to help equip them, to build them, shape them and repair, equipping the people that you have influence over, the skills or the spiritual disciplines, the resources to live out their faith and to serve people.
- And lastly, as you teach and you train, giving them a blueprint not just for one project, but for many projects, whether it's building a shelf up to building a home. This helps to empower and encourage them.

And when all is said and done, as you educate, equip and empower, tell them to go. Jesus, famously, before he went into heaven, sent, said. "Then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make what disciples? Okay. Followers of Jesus, of where? Jerusalem, of all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to what? Obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age."

So we're all called to lead. And leading doesn't require that you have to be a specified designated leader. Each of you can lead in your home in your school, in your work, your neighborhood, wherever you go. Maybe leading means by getting ahead, making sure that everything is set before you're even told. Right? Find ways to be able to make things better. Jesus called us to go out to educate, equip, and empower followers of Jesus to make a difference in this world. So as we move forward, may God bless you, lead and guide you to go forth and to lead, reflect. Do we want to do the questions now or do we want to. Okay, so this week. Sorry, I forgot to flip through all these.

How can you help educate, equip and empower those you have influence over? Okay, who in your life can you help to educate and influence and quip in this week, I want you to find three people to teach something new, but also equip three people with a new tool or a resource. And lastly, I want you to empower three people to take a step of faith and lead.

Now, as promised, we have a few questions that people have either sent in or apparently I have a secret question that Bill doesn't know. I mean, that I don't know that Bill's come up with. So we're going to take a couple things.

We're not going to take a lot of time, but yeah, two questions. Two questions that he doesn't know. Oh, I'd have done more, but then I've been in trouble, so. All right, first question. Pastor, if I want to serve and be in ministry, what should I do?

Well, number one, we ask that you be consistent, that you be present, but actually just ask if you want to serve here in the ministry. If there is a particular part of the church, you know, whether it be a deacon or whatever, ask, let us know. If there is something that we maybe as a ministry that we do not have, let us know as well. We can see how can we set you up, how you can be trained and be equipped. And ultimately, we want to encourage you to serve. You know, recently we've stood up a men's prayer group, a women's prayer group. I know as well. A couple years ago, we started the drama group. There's areas to serve. So at the very least, ask one of our leaders, Bill, myself. All it takes is to ask.

Okay, all right, so how do you, you know, if you're a leader, how do you deal with somebody who's maybe critical, complaining, telling you you're not doing it right?

Well, number one, we talked about leadership is based on what, relationships? How's your relationship with that person? Are you. How. How can you solicit Feedback? Well, there are concerns and complaints. Concerns. Ask them how would you do things differently? What are some tips? How would you encourage that? And when they've given you some good, solid feedback, maybe ask them, would you like to be a part of that solution? Get them involved.

Yeah, I know that I always say, you know, if you want to come complain, I don't have a lot of time for complaints. If you want to come with solutions and how we can improve, I got all day. We can talk about it.

I think we're gonna skip that one for now. Okay, what should motivate a good leader?

Well, what's the long term vision of what you're trying to accomplish? Right. You wanna share what you had mentioned earlier this week?

Yeah. So, you know, I think for me a good leader is one that has a servant's heart. So many times we look in the world, our leaders are power hungry, authority hungry. They want power and prestige. But hopefully here at the church, we're getting leaders that want to serve. Because I'll be honest with you, if you become a leader at this church, there's no power. You know, somebody said, oh, you just want all the power. Well, there's no power. You know, all you get is more work to do here. So hopefully we have a servant's heart.

Well, what's the other part that you mentioned? Ultimately, we want to see what,

We want to make heaven crowded.

Yeah. Ultimately, what are you trying to accomplish? How does that motivate you? Here at the church, we're kingdom minded. We want to see everybody know Jesus and to be with Jesus in the kingdom.

Okay, all right. So what if I don't want to lead? I just want to help out. Okay, Can I do that or do I mean, do I have to be a leader?

Yeah, absolutely. Well, you don't need to be a designated leader, but if you want to be able to minister. Absolutely. For sure. You know, again, what areas do you, are you interested in? And you know, do you have any particular gifts? If you don't know your gift, then let's help you find your gift. We have several tools that we could use to help, you know, find your gift. And maybe it's not a normal gift, it might be something that you're passionate about. Like, you know, if you're passionate about photography, whatever it may be, your job could be a gift to help educate others as well. Okay. So be creative. But you know, just because maybe you want to work behind the scenes. Absolutely, that's fine. But we do want to get you involved

One last one. Being leader sounds like a lot of work and effort. And, you know, I'm already slammed. You know, there's so much to do, so many things going on. Why would I sign up for one more thing? That's the one he doesn't know was coming.

You got me good with that. Well, I mean, ultimately, yes, it has. We talked about prioritizing and whether you can serve even for five minutes a week or five hours a week. When it comes to serving, you could have a gift of encouragement. How much does it take? How much time does it take to send a text? How much time does it take to even just pray? We had several prayer requests that came in this week. We have a prayer team. How much time does it take to even just pray for 15 seconds a minute about a particular situation, such as somebody being in the hospital, somebody dealing with a difficult situation? There's all manner. There's many ways to serve. It doesn't have to be a big thing. Even just simply praying for the ministry of the church or praying for individuals can help create a positive impact.

Yeah, I think a lot of times we think that a leader is somebody they're going to be up front and have to speak and lead, whether it's maybe here or Sabbath school or something. There's a lot of things you can do where you never go up front. Sending cards to people, encouraging people, praying for people. Maybe you're helping in Sabbath school by just helping them cut out their supplies for the week, you know, or whatever it is. There's a lot of things you can do where you never have to be up front.

Well, let me. Let's look at this realistically. How many people are sitting here in the pews and how many people have gotten up on the platform? Just because you're called to be a leader doesn't mean you have to be up front. There's many ways that we serve in all aspects.

Okay. All right, thank you, everyone. Let's go ahead and pray. Father in heaven, thank you for all that you're doing in our lives, Lord, you've called us to lead not just here at church, but in our homes and all aspects of our lives. Help us, Lord, to educate, equip and empower those and where we need to learn as well. Remind us, help us to be humble, to take ownership of our faults and shortcomings, to know how to learn and grow to be more faithful, dedicated worker for you. In Jesus name, Amen.