



Practice these things, and live by them so that your progress will be visible to all. Focus on working on your own development and on what you teach. If you do this, you will save yourself and those who hear you.

– 1 Timothy 4:15-16

“I’m not a leader,” most people say if asked about their role in a community or organization. In fact, any hint of the responsibility of leadership scares many people. Yet as followers of Jesus, we are called to the Great Commission, to walk with more people toward a transforming life with Jesus. And we are to model that life in a way that invites others to want to experience the love and grace Jesus offers for themselves. So perhaps, we are *all* called to be Christian leaders, living our faith outwardly in a way that draws others into the love we’ve come to know. What if in 2021, we all claimed that we have a leadership role to play in carrying the love of Jesus to others? What does it mean to you to be a leader in Christ and for Christ?

As we pick up our journey through the Bible this month, we’ll continue to use the following two questions as our guide:

- 1) How does my life help others to see and know the love of Jesus?
- 2) What are we doing to contribute to a more Christ-like community?

Lead the Way

JAN 3

LEAD FOLLOWER

JUDGES 8:22-28

(Parallels Disciple Bible Study Week 8: Leadership)

The books of Joshua and Judges in the Bible continue a pattern that began as soon as God's people were out of Egypt: chasing after other gods, consequences, turning back to God, peace. Sound familiar? Perhaps things haven't changed all that much. The Bible shows us that in those times when the people were chasing after other gods and experiencing the pain, God called unlikely, flawed people to help people turn back to God. The requirement to lead wasn't an accomplished resume, but a willingness be faithful to God's instruction.

Followers of Jesus provide direction and purpose for others by living Christ-centered lives.

JAN 10

SAFE AND SECURE

1 SAMUEL 12:20-25

(Parallels Disciple Bible Study Week 9: Security)

We want to feel safe. Some install alarm systems with cameras on homes. Many are taught to fear strangers. Some live in communities with gates and walls. We put on seatbelts. We buy cars that we think have the best safety features. We elect leaders and we want them to make decisions that protect us and protect our rights. We build up weapons to protect ourselves. So are we safe and secure? Where does safety and security come from?

Followers of Jesus show leaders respect but find their ultimate safety and security in God.

Lead the Way

DAILY QUESTIONS

JAN 4-9

LEAD FOLLOWER

Monday	Read Joshua 1:1-9. How does your life today reflect that God is with you wherever you go?
Tuesday	Read Joshua 24:14-24. What does it mean to commit yourself or your family to “serve the Lord”?
Wednesday	Read Judges 2:16-19. In what ways is God raising leaders today to deliver people from suffering and injustice?
Thursday	Read Judges 8:22-28. What is the role of a Godly leader?
Friday	Read Judges 16:23-31. Do you have to be flawless for God to use your leadership to make a difference? Why or why not?
Saturday	Read Mark 10:42-45. How are you leading others to know Jesus by serving?

JAN 11-16

SAFE AND SECURE

Monday	Read 1 Samuel 1:9-20. Where would you like to grow in your prayer life?
Tuesday	Read 1 Samuel 8:1-22. What are the dangers of putting allegiance to human rulers or leaders before allegiance to God?
Wednesday	Read 1 Samuel 12:20-25. What does it mean to you to “fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully”?
Thursday	Read Deuteronomy 8:10-20. What makes it easy to trust and give credit for prosperity to sources other than God?
Friday	Read 2 Samuel 22:1-30. How do you find safety and security in God’s promises?
Saturday	Read 1 Kings 3:4-15. What does leadership that is centered in faithfulness in God look like?

Lead the Way

LEAD FOLLOWER

SERMON ON JAN 3, 2020

Choose a question to get started!

- Who would you consider a great leader?
- What qualities make someone a leader?

Read Joshua 1:1-9 and Joshua 24:14-24.

The name Joshua has the same base in the Hebrew language as the name Jesus. It means “Yahweh saves” or “Yahweh is salvation”. God instructs Joshua, like Moses before him, to lead by example, having courage and confidence that God is with him and with God’s people. But leadership for Joshua, like Moses before him, wasn’t going to be easy. The people were drawn again and again toward putting their faith in false idols and other gods. The last thing we’re told in Joshua’s story is that as the people settled into the promised land, Joshua gave them an invitation to make a promise to serve only God. Leading by example, Joshua said to people, “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

- How do our lives today reflect that God is with us wherever we go?
- How do our lives not reflect God’s presence with us?
- In today’s world and culture, what do you think it means to commit yourself or your family to “serve the Lord”?

Read Judges 2:10-19.

The name of the Book of Judges easily can mislead us today. Judges, in this book, aren’t those who make decisions in a court of law, but leaders that God raises for specific tasks – to call for obedience, to deliver the people from an enemy, to bring people together. Within Judges, a cycle that began with Adam and Eve continues – the people turn away from God, there are painful consequences and chaos, the people turn back to God, there is peace and stability, the people forget the source of this peace and turn away from God again, and the cycle continues.

- Do you think the Biblical cycle of humanity turning away from God and then returning to God is being repeated today? Why or why not?
- Who do you see God raising up as leaders today and for what purposes?

Lead the Way

Read Judges 8:22-28.

People often read Judges and find the stories strange and captivating. In one of the first accounts, that of the leadership of Deborah, the leader of the opposing army is killed when the woman he flees to for safe keeping drives a tent peg through his head. Bizarre stuff. In addition, many of the main characters in Judges aren't so much heroes as antiheroes. They are often fatally flawed. Sampson is prideful and lustful. Gideon lacks faith. What sets the judges apart, however, is their trust in God and their willingness to do what God asks. When they are faithful, people find direction and hope. When they are unfaithful, people are led astray.

- Do you have to be flawless for God to use your leadership to make a difference? Why or why not?
- Give examples, both positive and negative, of how the lives of followers of Jesus effect how others see and know God today.

Read Mark 10:42-45.

In Sunday's sermon, Pastor Brian invited everyone to see themselves as "*lead followers*". We follow Jesus by serving others, and in serving others, we set an example, leading others to do the same. Hence, "*lead followers*". ***Followers of Jesus provide direction and purpose for others by living Christ-centered lives.***

- How are you a leader of others as a follower of Jesus?
- How are you leading others to know Jesus by serving?

FaithFit Challenge!

In the next 2 weeks, spend at least an hour serving others.

Need some ideas:

1. Ask Pastor Kathy for a list of names of those who need encouragement and care and spend some time writing and sending cards to them.
2. Schedule a time to volunteer somewhere that serves our community as a representative of Clay Church – the Food Pantry, Cultivate Culinary, Hope Ministries, etc.
3. Sign up for the Clay Church prayer list via email, and pray through the list for 10 minutes each day with your family.

Lead the Way

SAFE AND SECURE

SERMON ON JAN 10, 2020

Choose a question to get you started!

- **What makes you feel safe?**
- **When is a time you didn't feel safe?**

Read 1 Samuel 8:1-22.

1 Samuel begins with a childless couple. Sound familiar. Samuel's mother, Hannah, prays fervently for a son, and says if a son is born, she will give that son to serve God. God grants she and her husband a child, a boy, and she names the boy Samuel. He is born to be a prophet. Samuel is often understood today as the last of the Biblical judges and the first of the Biblical prophets. As his story unfolds, the books of both 1 and 2 Samuel wrestle with a tension around God and king, or God and nation. The people want a king. A good king, like the good judges of the past, could turn a people and a nation toward God. But there is also a warning. When the people look for security only in human leaders and institutions, and stop relying on God, or when a king turns away from God, there is great danger. The first leader blessed by Samuel, Saul, falters as he turns away from God and gets consumed by power.

- **What are the dangers of putting allegiance to human rulers or leaders before allegiance to God?**
- **What kinds of attitudes and actions demonstrate a leader's faithfulness to God's will?**
- **What does leadership look like when a leader puts God first, or sees God as the source of security and peace?**
- **In what ways have you experienced leaders being vulnerable to power?**

Read 2 Samuel 22:1-30.

As Saul refuses to follow God's direction, Samuel anoints David to be king. David, too, will give-in to power, most infamously committing adultery with Bathsheba and then sending her husband to his death. Yet David is faithful to God's instructions, and he repents and turns back to God when he makes mistakes. Following God's direction, David is delivered from Saul's attempts to kill him, defeats enemies of Israel, and emerges as the greatest king Israel has ever known,

Lead the Way

- What makes it easy to trust and give credit for prosperity to sources other than God?
- How do you find safety and security in God's promises?

Read 1 Kings 3:4-15.

David's son, Solomon, begins his rule after his father's death with the same devotion to God as his father. While this doesn't last until the end of his reign, his commitment to God as a young ruler continues a time of peace and prosperity for the people of God. This week's message highlighted how Solomon's request of God at the start of his rule represents the heart of a faithful, Christ-centered leader. He asks not for power, or wealth, or fame. He asks for the gift of discernment to guide others with a sense of right and wrong.

Followers of Jesus show leaders respect but find their ultimate safety and security in God.

- As followers of Jesus, what responsibilities do we have to hold our leaders accountable?
- What does it look like to live a life that finds safety and security in the promises of God? How does that differ from the world and human institutions?

FaithFit Challenge!

Write a prayer that expressed your trust in God's promises.

Using 1 Samuel 2:1-10 (Hannah's prayer) and 2 Samuel 22:1-51 (David's song) as guides, write a prayer that shares what God has done in your life, how you can trust God's promises, and how you will respond in faith to God's love.