
The Jesus' Legacy and Traits as a Leader

People often remember leaders that hold the innate ability to radically transform lives long after those leaders pass away. Leaders possessing these traits record their legacies in the hearts and minds of those they inspire. Jesus Christ drastically transformed millions through his leadership, leaving a legacy worthy of examination. Through an accomplished life of sacrifice and discipleship, Jesus Christ cemented his status as an effective leader.

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22 (2012), states leaders of character possess empathy and the Army Values. In Luke's narrative of the crucifixion, Jesus displayed selfless service and empathy (Luke 23:26-43, English Standard Version). Jesus placed the salvation of others before his own welfare. Jesus displayed great empathy by suffering a situation where he experienced the same physical death as humankind. Further, his pardoning of the criminal on the cross exemplifies Jesus' boundless understanding and compassion for others (Luke 23:39-43). Jesus demonstrated loyalty and integrity during Satan's temptation. After 40 days in the desert, Satan came to tempt Jesus to abdicate his position as the messiah (Matthew 4:1-3). Satan tempted Jesus three times (Matthew 4:4-11). Jesus had an opportunity for instant gratification from Satan, but his allegiance to God prevailed (Matthew 4:10). Jesus chose the hard right over the easy wrong. In his understanding of his mission, he knew trials were coming. Jesus seized the opportunity to provide an example that the hard right is the correct choice. By making this choice, Jesus modeled a leader of unmatched character.

Leaders project to those around them they are capable of leading through their appearance, actions, conversations, and deeds (ADRP 6-22, 2012). Leaders with presence need to have confidence. ADRP 6-22 (2012) states confidence comes from "professional competence". Jesus' calming of the storm displays unparalleled confidence. While Jesus and his 12 disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee one night, a storm suddenly erupted, which worried the 12 disciples (Mark 4:35-37). Unlike the disciples, Jesus first displayed his calmness by remaining asleep (Mark 4:38). After waking, Jesus had the confidence to rebuke the storm and to explain to the disciples the source of his own confidence comes from faith (Mark 4:39-41). Jesus knew he had the authority to rebuke the storm, which left him resolute in the face of chaos. Leaders with presence are resilient. Jesus remained devoted to his mission despite his testimony, "a prophet has no honor in his own hometown" (John 4:44). J.B. Phillips (n.d.) places this in the first year of Jesus' ministry. Jesus went on to preach, perform miracles and signs for two years after rejection. Jesus' endurance despite adversity is the hallmark of resilience and leaves no doubt of Jesus' presence as a leader.

In addition to character and presence, Jesus had great intellect. The Pharisees presented Jesus with a conundrum. They asked Jesus whether they ought to stone a woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-7). Jesus first stooped down on the ground and wrote in the sand and then stood and said, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7). Jesus exercised mental agility in redirecting the accusation of sin from the woman to the Pharisees through self-examination. Secondly, Jesus exercised sound judgment by deflating tension by writing on the ground (John 8:8). He could have confronted the Pharisees in this situation with the statutes of Mosaic law they violated; he could have stood nose-to-nose and allowed personal conflict to boil over. Instead, Jesus afforded everyone their own space. The

crowd recognized their own flaws and left the scene (John 8:11). Jesus' innovation is evident through his parables. J.B. Phillips (n.d.) records 41 parables in his "Parables of Jesus". Jesus uses his parables to convey principles of heaven, salvation, hell, and Christian doctrine to believers while confounding unbelievers. Jesus had to invent a way to communicate truths to his followers in public places because the Pharisees and Sadducees were looking for reasons to accuse Jesus and his followers of blasphemy.

Leaders that leave legacies understand how to accomplish their missions by leading others. ADRP 6-22 defines leading others as "providing purpose, motivation, and inspiration" (6-7). Jesus used this in creating his team of disciples, the team proved instrumental in the execution of his ministry. When Jesus called his first disciples to his team, he instructed them to put their fishing nets out to catch fish at the worst hour (Luke 5:4). To their surprise, they caught so many fish their nets could hardly contain them (Luke 5:6). Jesus then gave them their mission to catch men, and the first disciples gladly pursued Jesus (Luke 5:10-11). Jesus gave the disciples a purpose by providing them a clear task in becoming "fishers of men"; he inspired and motivated them by showing them their potential as part of his team. Jesus' disciples respected him as a leader who led by example. Jesus spent his three-year ministry traveling, preaching, and performing miracles. Jesus' followers had an example to successfully imitate when, during and after his ministry, he tasked them to go out and advance the mission. Jesus sent his first force out in his ministry when he sent out his followers to go and preach to others, just as he had done (Luke 10:1-20). Jesus' skill in both building teams by leading them and preparing them through example calcify his prowess as a leader.

Jesus developed the teams he led as well. Jesus' disciples needed knowledge, training, and experience to be successful. Jesus prepared his team for success by first preparing himself, preparing the climate of the organization, and developing his team. The competency of develops, according to the Army, includes the characteristics prepares self and develops others (ADRP 6-22, 2012). The night before the Romans crucified Jesus, he went to Gethsemane's garden and prayed so hard he sweat blood (Luke 22:38-44). The crucifixion, the most challenging task Jesus faced on earth, required the most strenuous level of preparation. Jesus also invested in the development of his disciples. He marked his ministry with occasions of bestowing wisdom on the disciples. The best example of Jesus' commitment to developing others comes after Jesus' death when Jesus gives Peter his final instructions. Peter had just denied Jesus three separate times (John 18:15-27). After Jesus' resurrection, Jesus asks Peter three times if Peter loves him, each time issuing Peter a new command (John 21:15-19). The BBC's "Religions: Christianity – The Disciples" (2011) remarks Peter was "rash, impetuous and even foolish at times." Jesus, therefore, exploited this opportunity to teach Peter gentleness, humility, and how to lead others through mistakes. Jesus' threefold question to Peter acted as a mighty lesson in leadership and development. This type of development takes a holistic view of the person and their developmental needs.

In knowing what each of his teammates needed developmentally, Jesus equipped himself and his team to produce astounding results. ADP 6-22 (2012) lists "gets results" as the single competency under the achieves leader competency. Jesus worked throughout his ministry to get results, first by achieving results on his own to set the example, then by equipping others with guidance and resources to achieve. Jesus performed several well-known miracles such as the feeding of the five thousand, healing paralytics and blind, and driving out demons. Another impressive accomplishment of Jesus was his teaching to forgive. Jesus forgave a woman at a banquet for her adulterous ways (Luke 7:36-48). This precedent set by Jesus set his disciples

up to go and forgive sins, and for Paul, the writer of several epistles in the New Testament to powerfully write about the nature of forgiveness. This forgiveness gave the woman at the banquet, and those who believe in Jesus, peace (Luke 7:50). Jesus showed how he gets results; he also empowered his team to do the same. Jesus gave his followers the ability to heal the sick and proclaim the good news (Luke 10:1-12). After Jesus' ascension into heaven, he bestowed the ability for the first-century Christians to heal the sick and even raise the dead. Jesus' empowerment of his team through the Holy Spirit equipped them for prolonged success. Jesus' legacy endured the test of time because his success was contagious.

The endurance of Jesus' impact on the community stretches from the first century through the modern day. Following his ascension, the early churches experienced an explosion in growth. The reason, according to Helmut Koester (1998), is the churches focused on equality, love, and charity. Jesus gifted these teachings to his disciples during his ministry prior to his death; through his teachings, the first churches laid their sociological roots. Equality, charity, and love created atmospheres of dignity, safety, and inclusion for all. As Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians (3:26-29), those who are in Jesus Christ, they are all the same, and no distinction exists between them. The church's inclusion resulted in radical charity in the first century. Property owners would sell all their land to support the church and its members (Acts 4:37). The church extends this compassion through today. Every year, Operation Christmas Child provides underprivileged children with boxes of hygiene items and toys. Samaritan's Purse, a Christian organization, runs the charity. In Augusta, Georgia, several churches partner with iCare, an organization established to offer safety to victims of sex exploitation. Jesus commands us to emphatically love others; Christians wholeheartedly accepted this command. They have housed orphans, fed widows, healed the sick, and helped the poor by their obedience to this command.

The greatest aspect of Jesus' mercy is its unceasing nature. Jesus and his followers have shown me his mercy on countless occasions. Through this first-hand experience, I have grown to become the leader I am today. Jesus' compassion has broken me over my own treatment of Soldiers when they make mistakes. Early in my career, I was intolerant of imperfection. For every mistake a Soldier made, I equipped myself with an unjustified response. I became angry at the Soldier, and not the action. After becoming acquainted with Jesus' patience and charity, I learned to care for Soldiers through their mistakes. I did not forgive errors; I learned to forgive Soldiers. The model for charity Jesus established by giving everything for us also profoundly affected my development. I give my all in every endeavor now, and that is especially true when leading Soldiers. As a leader, I serve my Soldiers. Jesus modeled service for us in his death; his church models the same service for us in their charity. I possess greater discipline in giving my time, talents, and treasures to my Soldiers. Jesus sought to understand his father's intent before acting. Jesus was an excellent planner. In my career, I have used this principle to become better attenuated to the commander's intent. I do not want to act out of turn, compromising organizational success. Jesus' wisdom has fundamentally altered my life and career trajectory.

Due to Jesus' impression on my life and career, it is natural I root my leadership philosophy in the values he espoused. My leadership philosophy is: love honestly, openly, and always; leading is sacrificial. Great love for subordinates, peers, and seniors is the engine behind my action. Loving honestly means I must be honest with those around me. The truth is not always nice but is always necessary. Jesus called out sin when he saw it; however, his love for us remained. I need to be honest because honesty springs from sincere love for my comrades. Loving openly is to appreciate those around me. Soldiers deserve dignity, respect, and love by

virtue of their position; loving openly is giving them love so they experience their full worth. Loving always means loving in hard times, even when it requires sacrifice. Jesus gave us the ultimate description of this love: “Greater love has no one, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Loving always is sacrificial, to the point of death. This love entrenches the welfare of the team and the organization before the welfare of the self. Loving always is not meant to be easy always. That plays into the last tenet: leading is sacrificial. Leading based on the impact of Jesus’ legacy demands sacrifice. These tenets of my leadership philosophy keep me grounded.

For all Jesus has done in my life, it is my intention to carry the torch forward the rest of my days. As I continue to serve in positions of trust and authority, I want to be as loyal as Jesus. I purpose to choose the hard right, leaving a legacy of moral integrity. Just like Jesus, I plan to disciple, develop, and dispatch my subordinates to accomplish the mission. I hope I can effectively develop my subordinates to go out into the world and multiply their efforts. My greatest advocate, mentor, and my savior was loyal, compassionate, and a teacher. My greatest hope is to leave a legacy that replicates those three traits.

After two millennia, Jesus’ legacy remains a powerful foundation of leader behavior and traits. Jesus Christ’s actions and teachings bestowed a call for action that has resulted in incomparable positive community change. Jesus’ legacy and accomplishments served as a catalyst for change in my life and career. His charity, love, and grace spark the flames that fuel my desire to leave a legacy as a leader.