

Leadership Principles From James

Introduction

John Maxwell has well said, “Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less.” If no one is following then you are not leading. However, influence can be used for good or evil. It can be a blessing or a curse, positive or negative, depending on how you lead and where you lead. In other words, leadership is a matter of both conduct and character. I want us to give our attention to each of these, the issue of conduct and the issue of character, for principles of leadership in James beautifully address both. What do wise, godly Christian leaders do on a regular and consistent basis?

I. They ask God for what they need. 1:1-8

1. Leroy Eims, author of *Be the Leader You Were Meant to Be*, writes, “A leader is one who sees more than others see, who sees farther than others see, and who sees before others do.”
2. To lead yourself, use your head;
3. To lead others, use your heart.
4. The wrong action at the wrong time leads to disaster.
5. The right action at the wrong time brings resistance.
6. The wrong action at the right time is a mistake.
7. The right action at the right time results in success.

II. They know actions speak louder than words. 1:22-25

1. Activity is not necessarily accomplishment.
2. When a real leader speaks, people will listen.
3. People at first do not follow worthy causes. They follow worthy leaders who promote worthy causes.
4. Influence does not come to us instantly. It grows by stages.

III. They help the less fortunate. 1:27

1. Trust is the foundation of leadership. When people see you reaching down to those beneath you, they will be inspired to respect you, trust you, follow you.
2. How do leaders earn respect? By making wise decisions, admitting their mistakes, and putting what’s best for their followers ahead of their own personal agenda.
3. A leader never forgets people are one of his greatest assets.
4. “When you become a leader, you lose the right to think about yourself.”

IV. They never show favoritism. 2:1-5, 9

1. Leaders touch a heart before they ask for a hand.
2. To push people down, you have to go down with them.
3. If you treat every person you meet as if he or she was the most important person in the world, you'll communicate that he or she is somebody – to you.

V. They have a balance of faith and works. 2:14-17, 20, 26

1. Integrity is about the small things. Phillips Brooks says, "Character is made in the small moments of our lives."
2. Leadership is developed daily, not in a day.
3. Lee Iacocca says, "Leadership means setting an example. When you find yourself in a position of leadership, people follow your every move."

VI. They control their tongue. 3:1-12

1. They never forget: words are powerful weapons.
2. Never say today what you wouldn't feel comfortable reading about in the newspaper tomorrow.
3. William Ward says, "Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you."

VII. They are peacemakers not troublemakers. 3:13-18

1. People want to go along with people they get along with.
2. This person does not go looking for trouble. He is not the kind of person who will fight at the drop of a hat and is willing to drop the hat himself. No, he will do his best to live in peace with all men.
3. He knows which hills are worth dying on and what battles are worth losing!

VIII. They make friends with the right God. 4:1-6

1. Priorities are a peculiar thing, but an unavoidable thing. We all have them. What are yours?
2. If you cross your values – whether by an inch or by a mile – you're still out of bounds.
3. It is always easy to do right when you know ahead of time who and what you stand for!

IX. They submit to God and are humble in Spirit. 4:7-10

1. In doing this we gain a security in Christ that puts us in a position to lead others. Why? Only secure leaders give power and praise to others.
2. Mark Twain said, “great things can happen when you don’t care who gets the credit.”
3. John Maxwell says, “The greatest things happen only when you give others the credit.”

X. They do not presume concerning God’s will. 4:13-17

1. To lead tomorrow you must be learning today.
2. We must remember who is God and who is not!
3. Don’t put off tomorrow what you can do today because tomorrow may not come.

XI. They put wealth in proper perspective. 5:1-6

1. Integrity commits itself to character and right over personal gain, to people over things, to service over power.
2. How well do I treat people from whom I can gain nothing?

XII. They seek the Lord in prayer when trouble comes. 5:13-20

1. Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry said, “A man’s got to know his limitations.” A Christian leader must also know his limitations and where to turn when he reaches them.
2. Crises seem to bring out the best – and the worst – in leaders.
3. When the pressure is on, great leaders are at their best. Whatever is inside them comes to the surface.

Conclusion

1. Who you are is whom you attract. Who are you attracting? What do they look like? Almost certainly they will look like you. The proof of leadership is found in the followers.
2. He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk.
3. We teach what we know but we reproduce what we are.
4. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Every man is a hero to somebody.” What kind of hero do they see?
5. The only inheritance a man will leave that has eternal value is his influence.