

**THINK LIKE JESUS
LEAD LIKE MOSES**

LEADERSHIP LESSONS

FROM THE

WILDERNESS CRUCIBLE

By
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	iii
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PART I

Principles of Godly Leadership

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The Three Challenges of Leadership	9

PART II

Molding Leaders in the Wilderness Crucible

Chapter 2: God Courage, Not Self Courage	19
Chapter 3: Committing to God’s Plan for Your Life.....	33
Chapter 4: Making Your Vision Their Vision	48
Chapter 5: Standing Up for Your People.....	60
Chapter 6: Purposefully Sharing Your Authority	73
Chapter 7: Praise to Uplift, Not to Manipulate	87
Chapter 8: Humble is as Humble Does.....	97
Chapter 9: Joshua: Preparation for Leadership.....	111
Chapter 10: Will You Enter the Promised Land?	125
Chapter 11: Without a Vision, the People Perish	140

PART III

Think Like Jesus, Lead Like Moses, Fight Like David

Chapter 12: The Ten Qualities of a Godly Leader.....	158
Chapter 13: Creating Noble Plans.....	171
Chapter 14: Awake, O Sleeper, and Rise, a Knight.....	185
About the Author	198
Index	200

Part I

The Principles of Godly Leadership

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Psalms 1:1-3: A Psalm of David

Introduction

In late 1991, I was driving to a job interview out of state. During that three-hour trip, I began to conceive of a book about leadership in the business place, using a character study of the life of Moses from which to develop principles of Christian leadership. It was to be in novel format, with a man from modern 20th century America waking up in the tent of Moses and having a series of conversations with him about how to lead people.

When I arrived home, I began putting pen to paper to try my hand at such a writing project, especially since it was evident that I would not get the job. Not long after I began that effort, a friend approached me about the challenge of a lifetime. He told me that he was working with the Tele-evangelist Pat Robertson, who in 1988 had run for President of the United States. He told me that Dr. Robertson had founded an organization called the Christian Coalition, and that a key goal of the new organization was to train and encourage Christians to become involved in the political discourse of the nation. The Coalition's motto was "Giving Christians a voice in their government again." Though America had been founded by Christians, the nation was rapidly forgetting its Judeo-Christian heritage. Central to the Coalition's strategy to implement that vision in the political arena was to help organize state affiliate chapters. Then Indiana U.S. Senator Dan Coats was up for re-election in 1992, and it appeared that his opponent, Joe Hogsett, would be a formidable one.

The Christian Coalition was very interested in chartering a state affiliate in Indiana as a way to help Senator Coats. Furthermore, my friend had promised to help them identify someone who could be the point person in helping to launch the new organization and become the State Director of the Indiana affiliate. Having worked together on several projects which had met with great success, he asked me if I would be interested in the position. I said yes, and immediately put the idea for the book in cold storage as I prepared for this new challenge.

Up until that time, I had never heard of the Christian Coalition. I worked as a government affairs consultant, writing a newsletter to which many of the lobbyists in Indiana subscribed. I came to learn that the foundation of the organization was based on three principles. First, that it be

issue-driven, not beholden to individual candidates or parties. Second, that it be driven by local grassroots organizations held together by a national umbrella organization. Third, rather than have the organization rise and fall with the rhythm of election cycles, the Christian Coalition would represent people of faith in the same way that the National Organization of Women represents women, or the Chamber of Commerce represents businesses. In fact, at the same time that I accepted the position, the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) was advertising in The Indianapolis Star for a State Director to run its Indiana Affiliate.

Thus, in April of 1992, I began a faith journey in which God taught me what it means to be a servant leader. During those years, I experienced the joy of working with people who shared a deep commitment to the Lord and a heart-felt desire to see our nation realign its governing principles to once again reflect the precepts of limited government based on the biblical foundations that had served our country so well since its founding. One of the tools that the Christian Coalition used to build its grassroots network was a two-day leadership school that its State Directors were responsible for organizing and teaching. As State Director of the Indiana Christian Coalition, I organized a dozen schools and trained over 300 grassroots political activists. Some fifteen years after my tenure with the Coalition came to an end, I still know people working in various governmental and political capacities who got their start in politics through one of those schools. The “pitch phrase” used to motivate people to attend the leadership schools was:

Think Like Jesus, Fight Like David, Lead Like Moses, Run Like Lincoln.

This book takes part of its name from that theme. Think Like Jesus, Lead Like Moses: Leadership Lessons in the Wilderness Crucible is the culmination of a story which God first began to write in my life nearly two decades ago. Much of the story of the Christian Coalition has been told with an eye toward the political legacy of the national organization, but little if anything has been written from the viewpoint of the grassroots leadership of that organization.

Looking back on my experience, I would not trade one moment of it away - not because I was blessed financially or career wise, far from it. I suffered the anxiety of financial distress, and the pressure of balancing my work for the Coalition with the commitment of my personal time to my wife Sally and our three children. The experiences of feeling that I was doing the Lord’s work, but suffering the stresses that commitment placed on personal finances and family relationships were not unique to me. Many of my fellow state directors experienced the same joys and faced the same challenges. While I don’t pretend to know their personal stories in detail, I am sure that were they to share those stories, they would mirror my own.

Like Moses, I did not start out as the leader God wanted me to be. In many respects, I accepted the invitation to become the State Director of the Indiana Christian Coalition out of a reliance on my own strength, rather than on God’s strength. Rather, God molded me in the crucible of life, just as He molds all of us, to become the kind of servant leader He wanted me to become. Moses left the comfort of Egypt to journey into the desert where God reshaped him for the purpose the Lord had called him to serve. In Moses, I see a model for how God trains up leaders. Through the lessons I learned in leadership as I spent time in my own in my own wilderness crucible, I was blessed by the experiences I shared with the many people with whom God placed me in contact. For those reading this book in the hopes that they will find an insider’s

tell-all memoir about the Christian Coalition, they will be sadly disappointed. By themselves, such stories would serve no useful purpose. It is my prayer that as you study the timeless lessons from the life of Moses, and read how God made those lessons real for me in my personal experience, the Lord will lead you to reflect on how He has been at work in your life.

No doubt when you do so, you will see how God has called you to provide effective leadership in your circle of influence; how He has called you to provide moral guidance to those around you; and in the process of all of this, how God has helped you grow into the leader He sees you becoming.

How This Book Is Organized

Think Like Jesus, Lead Like Moses: Leadership Lessons from the Wilderness Crucible is divided into three parts. Part I provides some context for the leadership story that I want to unfold. In looking at the literature on biblical leadership, there are two main “groups” of books – those that are heavy on biblical analysis of a person from the Bible, and those that provide biographical sketches of key individuals with a biblical theme. While there may be books out there that combine a biblical character study with an examination of the author’s personal life application, I would be hard pressed to identify one. Through this introductory chapter, I’ve been able to share the circumstances which led me to write this book. In Chapter One, I’ll lay out a foundation for why Christian leaders are needed in today’s world.

Part II forms the heart of the book. In this section, I provide ten chapters detailing the ten attributes of a godly leader distilled from a study of the life of Moses. Each chapter includes the following four attributes:

- An in-depth study of an event from the life of Moses which illustrates a key leadership attribute.
- A life application story of how I learned the leadership attribute from my tenure as the State Director of the Indiana Christian Coalition.
- A summary of a scene from a modern movie illustrating that leadership attribute, along with a link to the Internet where the reader can find a transcript of that scene.
- Questions for application drawn from the New Testament which relates to the leadership attribute. These questions are introduced by reviewing a scripture passage from the teachings of Jesus.

One of the areas to which I’ve devoted myself since leaving the Christian Coalition is teaching Sunday school – first in my church’s high school youth program, and now in adult classes. As much as possible, I attempt to develop in students the conviction that they must speak out in love when moral choices present themselves in the world around them. I have found that an effective tool in working with young people is to show video clips from movies which relate to the biblical principles we are studying.

Though I can’t show a movie in the pages of this book, I’ve done the next best thing. Each of the ten principles for leadership presented in these pages is illustrated by the transcript of a scene from a movie I’ve chosen for that purpose. For those using this book for a group Bible study, I encourage you to rent the video and use it as you discuss the material. I have found that by

using the movies suggested in this way, the application of the scripture is made not only relevant, but also fun.

In Part III, three chapters are provided which summarize the leadership attributes identified in the previous ten chapters, and the need for Christian leaders to step forward in all walks of life. In writing this section, I reflect back on some of the developments I have seen as I, and others like me, have become less politically involved, and refocused those energies into the ministries of the local congregation. I conclude with Chapter Fourteen by briefly examining why the new grassroots Tea Party movement can hopefully succeed where the Christian Coalition failed, as a new generation of “Gray Champions” rise to provide leadership at just the right moment in time.

The Principles:

Listed below are the ten leadership principles I have developed in this book. In Chapter 12, I will come back to summarize them and apply them to the lessons in leadership we distill in Part II of the book. In Chapter 13, I will apply them to the overall leadership strategy of accomplishing a major task – a leadership strategy I call “Going to the Other Side of the Hill.”

- Principle 1: Gain courage by trusting the Lord
- Principle 2: Understand God’s plan for your life, and be committed to its execution.
- Principle 3: Attract lieutenants in whom you can place your trust, and then trust them to accomplish the vision.
- Principle 4: Champion your followers – even at your own expense.
- Principle 5: Share authority through delegation in order to ensure the success of the people you lead.
- Principle 6: Affirm your followers’ self-worth and remind them that God cherishes them.
- Principle 7: Resist the desire to justify yourself, allowing God the opportunity to defend you.
- Principle 8: Invite the Holy Spirit to flow through you, so that He might choose and disciple others with a heart for the vision God has given you.
- Principle 9: Acknowledge the temptation to let success go to your head – and ask your advisors to help hold you accountable.
- Principle 10: Live a life of genuineness, demonstrating a true sense of empathy and understanding for your followers, inspiring them to act courageously as they pursue a vision to enter the “Promised Land”.

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever; the ordinances of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Psalms 19:7-10: A Psalm of David

Chapter 1: The Three Challenges of Leadership

Never before has life been in such a degree of flux. Our lives are lived at a rapid pace. Social structures like the family and the church, which once provided a sense of identity and community, have given way to internet chat rooms and spending significant time with our work associates. For many, life is empty, and because of that, people are exploring spiritual options. Ten years ago, *Fortune Magazine* ran the following statement on its cover: The July 9, 2001 edition for *Fortune Magazine*'s cover read:

“God and Business: Bringing spirituality into the workplace violates the old idea that faith and fortune don't mix. But a groundswell of believers is breaching the last taboo in Corporate America.¹”

Clearly, people across this nation are seeking to find eternal truth and apply it in the one area of their lives where they derive a significant amount of their social interaction – their work.

At the same time, there is a growing sense within the church that today, as never before, we need leaders. Several years ago, the elders of my church developed a set of Covenant Statements between God and our congregation. The number three statement reads “To seek to develop spiritual leaders who will go into the world to share the Gospel caring for those in their sphere of influence and in so doing, mentor and prepare future leaders who will in turn expand the outreach of the Gospel.”

In these two separate but important instances, we see:

1. That there are those who are seeking a deeper meaning to life, especially as it relates to their work, and;
2. There are those who recognize the need to raise up godly individuals to provide leadership.

¹ Gunther, Marc. *Fortune Magazine*, July 9, 2001

What a wonderful opportunity for Christian evangelism! To seize this opportunity for evangelism, however, it will take individuals filled with the Holy Spirit who, like the sons of Issachar, “understand the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do.” (I Chronicles 12:32). To apply this scripture to our times, consider two books, both of which were written nearly thirty years ago: The Third Wave and Megatrends.

The workplace environment has changed remarkably since Alvin Toffler wrote his book The Third Wave, in 1980. Toffler talked about the Information Technology revolution, a “Third Wave” which would reshape society much as the Agrarian and Industrial revolutions changed society in their time. He predicted a world of home-based businesses and stated that if even as little as 10 percent of the work force chose to work from home, our economic and social structures would “be altered almost beyond our recognition. It is a possibility – a plausibility, perhaps – to be pondered.”²

John Naisbitt, author of Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming our Lives, wrote his book in 1982, and saw something else. He predicted that the use “of electronic cottages will be very limited: People want to go to the office, people want to be with people.”³ Naisbitt believed that the more people surrounded themselves with technology, the greater their need for human, interpersonal relationships – what he called “high touch.” He said that if we allow ourselves to believe that technology will solve our problems, we will abandon any sense of personal responsibility for our actions. “In our minds,” he said, “technology is always on the verge of liberating us from personal discipline and responsibility. Only it never does, and it never will. **The more high technology we have around us, the more the need for human touch**.”⁴ (Emphasis in the original.)

Looking back from the vantage point of 2010, one would be hard pressed to see how Toffler could have been more right in his predictions of the future – our present. As a personal example of Toffler’s prediction, I have joined the ranks of work-at-home professionals, as I teach college courses online for several universities. Naisbitt was both right and wrong. People do want human touch – and through such internet tools as Twitter, Face Book and Skype, they have it. But it is also true that not as many people work from home as they might – at least, not yet. In a 2006 survey of people who telecommuted, one survey reported: “Only 11% of Americans who can telecommute do.”⁵

My work career began in the early 1980s when these two books were published. I have witnessed first-hand the emergence of the information economy Toffler and Naisbitt predicted would come. When I entered the professional business world, I wrote reports long-hand, gave them to a secretary who typed and gave them to a manager who edited them. Back then, cut and paste meant using scissors to cut out the paragraphs, re-arrange them, writing in the new sections the boss had requested, finally giving the revised cut-and-paste manuscript back to the secretary for re-typing. Today, the whole process takes place on a computer. The efficient employee does his own typing, understands and uses several software packages to produce the report, and can operate semi-autonomously.

² Toffler, Alvin. The Third Wave, William Morrow & Company, 1980, p. 223.

³ Naisbitt, John. Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming our Lives, Warner Books, 1982, p.46.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 53.

⁵ “Survey: Only 11% of Americans Who Can Telecommute Do,” Green Car Congress, July 13, 2006. Retrieved 9/15/09 at http://www.greencarcongress.com/2006/07/survey_only_11_.html

The problem, though, is that most of us aren't efficient at all with the high tech gizmos and gadgets at our disposal. As soon as we get comfortable using something – software, hardware, or both – things change. As Naisbitt predicted, “high touch” takes over in the form of the “experts” in the office fielding questions from everyone else and answering the same questions over and over again.

The Challenges to Leadership in a High Tech World

The result for many people in work environments where the norm is to “multitask” is that the employee either masters the various skills that at one time were performed by several people, or becomes extremely frustrated. Becoming frustrated, he either quits, gets fired or gets promoted to a position he's not qualified to handle (the so-called “Peter Principle”).

Because of these trends in the workplace, I've seen how business and not-for-profit professionals face three challenges.

Challenge #1: Provide Effective Leadership

The first of these is to provide effective leadership to their employees and management staff. For many managers, effective leadership means providing their people with the training they need to perform their work. Some managers also recognize that the employees they lead need to understand how their efforts fit in with the larger plans of the organization. Few managers, however, come to grips with letting those they lead take ownership of the organization's goals so that they become inner-driven, seeking to provide their best performance without needing constant supervision.

This point is true of not just employees, but the leading and developing of others in any circumstance. Whether it's a clerk reviewing paperwork, a volunteer coordinating some aspect of a church ministry, a child doing chores on Saturday morning, or a campaign volunteer knocking on doors, they require an understanding of their contribution to the greater good. They need to be able to become self-motivated to do the best job they can so that the good of the organization is promoted.

Perhaps the best book written on the subject of self-motivation from a secular viewpoint – and certainly the best I've ever read – is Napoleon Hill's Think and Grow Rich, first published **in** 1937. I was introduced to this book during a period in my career when I dabbled in the field of cooperative marketing, or network marketing as it is sometimes called. The process of motivating, training and leading independent business associates in a sales/marketing capacity opened my eyes to the fact that many people – Christians included - lack a sense of self-purpose. They don't realize that God has a plan for their lives, nor do they possess the commitment to be devoted to a long-term course of action. Born out of a study of America's most successful business leaders, Hill's section titled “Some Fertile Fields in Which ‘New Leadership’ Will Be Required,” listed the following five areas:⁶

⁶ Hill, Napoleon. Think and Grow Rich, Combined Registry Company Revised Edition (Fawcett Crest Book:New York), copyright 1960, p. 110. First published in 1937 by Wilshire Book Company.

First: in the field of politics there is a most insistent demand for new leaders, a demand which indicates nothing less than an emergency.

Second: the banking business is undergoing reform.

Third: industry calls for new leaders. The future leader in industry, to endure must regard himself as a quasi-public official whose duty it is to manage his trust in such a way that it will work hardship on no individual or group of individuals.

Fourth, the religious leaders of the future will be forced to give more attention to the temporal needs of his followers, in the solution of their economic and personal problems of the present, and less attention to the dead past and the yet unborn future.

Fifth: in the professions of law, medicine, and education, a new brand of leadership, and to some extent, new leaders will become necessary. This is especially true in the field of education. The leader in that field must, in the future, find ways and means of teaching people how to apply the knowledge they receive in school. He must deal more with practice and less with theory.

Leadership in these same areas is needed just as badly in our day, but with an important distinction. We do not simply need “new leaders” who try “new things” if the quality of their character is not also different. That is why the ten qualities of a godly leader have been the focus of this book.

Challenge #2: Provide Moral Guidance

The second challenge which business professionals face is the need to operate in a moral and ethical fashion. We live today in a culture Toffler and Naisbitt did not foresee – a culture where “anything goes” is the norm; where the terms “right” and “wrong” are relative. In his book, An Agenda for the 21st Century, Rushworth Kidder interviewed 22 world-renowned statesmen, philosophers, scientists and educators and asked them this question: “What are the major issues that will face humanity in the 21st century?” While a number of issues emerged, one that appeared again and again in the course of those interviews was “the real deterioration of public morality.”

The casual acceptance of moral relativism in our culture creates the temptation for leaders to become compromised every day. Allow me to share a personal example of this.

Within 48 hours of writing the draft of this chapter, a situation occurred at work which presented me with an ethical choice. At the time, I worked for a technology company where one of the services we provided was hosting web sites. In some cases, we provided our services to companies which already had a web site, in which case we made arrangements to transfer that service from their current provider to our company. When this happened, a letter of agency was required, and it had to be signed on the letterhead of the company which owned the domain name (i.e., www.abccompany.com).

In one particular instance, the company paying for our web hosting service didn’t own their own domain name. Furthermore, they had no idea where the individual was who had originally created their domain name. In fact, the business which technically owned the domain name was nothing more than a “Doing Business As” name (or DBA) of this individual. Since no one knew

where he was, and therefore couldn't get the letter of authorization on a letterhead which didn't exist, the regional Director of Sales suggested that we create and sign a fake letterhead. My direct supervisor, although he was uncomfortable with the idea of forging a document, said nothing.

This recommendation was not one which I wanted to pursue, and so after several hours of phone and Internet research, I was able to communicate with the agency which registers domain names and resolve the issue to all parties' satisfaction. Of great importance to me was the fact that I had met my obligation to my employer without compromising my Christian witness. This last point is especially important to me and, I believe, should be important to any Christian leader.

At the time this event occurred, I was teaching an adult Sunday school class based on a book titled The Christian Employee by Robert Mattox. Having spent a dozen years in the telecommunications sales world, I know from first hand experience the struggles people in the business world wrestle with as they seek to do the right thing. Their struggle can sometimes create conflict with others due to the demands placed on them in their jobs. Mattox's book is one to which I owe much in the development of my thoughts about Christian leadership in the workplace, and has influenced the development of this book.

Challenge #3: Growing Into a Leadership Role

The third challenge which leaders face in the workplace is the process of becoming a good manager, a good boss. Too many times, we concentrate on the end result of what is in fact a long process of growth and development into the person God intends us to be. Years ago, God led me to develop a Sunday school course on leadership based on a character study of the life of Moses. In developing this study, I found various movies containing scenes I believed illustrated the leadership qualities that Moses modeled. Having taught and refined that course several times over the years, I recognize the value of studying the life of Moses and applying it to leadership in the home and at church, as well as at work. Consider the first two issues we've identified confronting all leaders in the workplace: Provide leadership to their employees to motivate them in their jobs, and how to operate in a moral, ethical way. Now, ask any casual student of the Bible what they remember about Moses as it relates to the above two issues, and they will answer:

1. That he had to deal with a lot of grumbling (i.e., lead and motivate employees).
2. That he gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments (i.e., how to operate in a moral, ethical manner.)

But there's a third aspect of Moses' life that relates directly to all people who move from the status of employee to that of boss; to people who advance from the status of spouse to parent; to people who graduate from the status of church-goers to church volunteer; to people who advance from political campaign volunteer to candidate for public office. It is an aspect of Moses' life which most people know very little about. And, it is that aspect of his life which God has recorded for us in His Holy Scripture as an encouragement on how, with His grace, we can become the leaders He intends us to be.

What is this aspect of Moses' life to which I refer? It is the personal growth which he experienced through trial and tribulation as he faithfully obeyed God and led the children of Israel. Through the pages of this book, you and I will uncover the lessons Moses learned as God forged and molded his character in the wilderness crucible.

Part II

Molding Leaders in the Wilderness Crucible

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want; he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Psalms 23:1-4: A Psalm of David

Chapter 2: God Courage, Not Self Courage

When I think of Moses, the picture that comes to mind is that of Charlton Heston in the movie The Ten Commandments. Old Chuck is standing there, staff in hand, while lightning flashes and the Red Sea parts as the Children of Israel cross on dry ground to the other side. In sum, the mental image I have of Moses is one of solid granite, standing strong – the epitome of the phrase, “No Fear.”

Let's be honest – that's the way we like our leaders. Strong, decisive, sure of their course. In a word, fearless. Ask anyone whom you perceive to be a leader in your circle of contacts and that's how they'll describe themselves, right?

If they're honest, they'll say “Absolutely not!” All leaders have inner self-doubt, moments when they're unsure of their course, moments when they have fear. But in spite of their inner doubts and fears, they've also learned how to draw upon the courage they need to lead those who rely upon them – a courage which only God can provide.

The Book of Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell address to the Nation of Israel. In it, he solidifies the people's relationship to God, and prepares them for the transition of power to their new leader, Joshua. Moses begins his discourse in Deuteronomy 5:1, where we read:

Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully.

Moses then lays out the law of the Covenant, outlining the blessings which will follow if Israel obeys the Covenant, as well as the curses if they fail to live by that Covenant. Then, after delivering this recap, Moses offers the following words of encouragement. In Deuteronomy 31:2-8, we read:

I am a hundred and twenty years old today; I am no longer able to come and go, and the Lord has said to me, “You shall not cross the Jordan.”

It is the Lord your God who will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, just as the Lord has spoken. And the Lord will do to them

just as He did to Shihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when He destroyed them.

And the Lord will deliver them up before you, and you shall do to them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you. Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or

tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.

Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. And the Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear, or be dismayed.”

What a legacy Moses left for his followers – to be strong and courageous, for God “will not fail or forsake you.” Imagine being there as Moses spoke those words – how could anyone not be inspired? But you know what lends those words the power they possess? It is the fact that they are delivered by a man whom God has trained through the crucible of conflict in the wilderness to trust the Lord in order that he, Moses, might be strong and courageous.

Moses, at the end of his life, possesses God confidence which leads to courage. Along the way, God has taught Moses that self-confidence produces false courage, and that a reliance on self-confidence will only result in a courage crisis. Out of that crisis - which comes to us all – one of two things result: Either we will quit and choose to take the easy road, never again raising our heads to dive back into the battle of life, or we will allow God to reshape us into a tool He can use for His greater glory.

Let’s see how God did that with Moses.

Moses, Prince of Egypt

Remember that mental picture of Moses – Charlton Heston with his arms spread while the Children of Israel cross the Red Sea? Here’s a scripture reference that strengthens that mental image in our minds, from Acts 7:20-22.

And it was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God; and he was nurtured three months in his father’s home. And after he had been exposed, Pharaoh’s daughter took him away, and nurtured him as her own son. And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.

Moses has three things going for him: He’s educated, he’s handsome, and he’s a powerful speaker. But then, there’s another side to Moses. In Exodus 3:1-2 and 4:10, we read:

Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the West Side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. . . . Then Moses said to the Lord, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

Here, we see Moses as anything but self-confident, content to lead sheep – not men, and anything but a charismatic speaker. When we list out these attributes of Moses as described in these two sets of verses, it is as though we are seeing two totally different people. In point of fact, we are. In Acts, we’re seeing Moses as he was at age forty. In the Exodus passage, we’re seeing Moses as he had become by age eighty. The question is, what event occurred that changed his life so drastically, shattering his self-confidence?

Acts 7:20-22	Exodus 3:1-2, 4:10
1. Educated in all the learning of the Egyptians	1. Lacks self-confidence
2. Outstanding physical attributes	2. Leads sheep, not men
3. Powerful in word and deed	3. Slow of speech

Moses’ Crisis of Confidence

For many of us, there comes a time when we recognize that our own talents and abilities are not enough to get us through a tough situation. This creates a crisis of confidence, when we either learn to draw strength from a power beyond ourselves, or sink into depression and self-pity. In Exodus 2:11-15, we read of an event which changed Moses’ life. Although we are not told how Moses became aware of his Hebrew roots, he nevertheless did so. One day, when he was a grown man, Moses came upon an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave. After first making sure no one was watching, he struck down the Egyptian and hid the body. The next day, as Moses was among the Hebrews, he came across two who were fighting each other. Trying to separate them, Moses was rebuffed by one who accused him of wanting to kill him, just as Moses had killed the Egyptian the previous day. When Moses realized that the word was out about how he had murdered the Egyptian, he became afraid for his life and fled.

Acts 7:23-25 sheds some light on Moses’ state of mind and provides us some insights into how this affected him. We read as follows:

But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him; but they did not understand.

What a shock! Here Moses, a Prince of Egypt, was taking the side of the Hebrews. But instead of seeing that he was their deliverer – that he, Moses, a man educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians, “powerful in word and deed,” was here to save them – they instead scorned him. Moses had made three mistakes:

1. He had acted in self-reliance, not God reliance
2. He was self-motivated, not God motivated, so that any result of his actions would have been for his own glory, not God’s.
3. He was pursuing deliverance on his time-table, not God’s

Moses in the Wilderness

For the next forty years, Moses worked in the service of a man named Jethro, marrying one of his daughters, and then tending the man’s sheep. Now, sheep are fairly docile animals. They go where you lead them. They don’t talk back, and generally don’t play office politics, conspiring to cause you harm. Moses had spent forty years learning the wisdom of the Egyptians, including the art of power politics – and then spent the next forty years unlearning those lessons. During those second forty years of sheep herding, God was remaking Moses into a vessel which He could use for His divine purposes.

This is such a vitally important point. God has a purpose for your life and mine – and God certainly had a purpose for Moses’. There comes a point in each of our lives where we either choose to fulfill that purpose, or reject it. When Moses was ready, God confronted him with the purpose of his life. At the Burning Bush, God told Moses that he was the man who would deliver the Hebrews from Bondage.

In Exodus 4:1-17, Moses gave three excuses as to why he shouldn’t go. What a difference from the self-confident man Moses had once been! God answered each of Moses’ objections – but God’s key point is that He didn’t want just anyone for the job – not even Aaron. In another chapter, we’ll see why Aaron was unfit for the role God wanted Moses to play. For now, it is important to recognize that God was going to use the experience which Moses had gained during his years in the Egyptian Court and combine that experience with the patience and humility God had taught him during his years as a shepherd.

It is one thing for us, as students of the Bible, to read how God guided Moses more than 3,000 years ago. It is another thing entirely to realize that God told Moses up front exactly what was to come. In Exodus 4:20-23, God warned Moses of what he could expect:

1. That He would harden Pharaoh’s heart. Pharaoh wasn’t going to just lie down for Moses. God was telling him that he’d be in for a major confrontation over this.
2. Before it’s all over, Pharaoh would lose his first born. If he expected to hear Pharaoh say “well, yes of course Moses, it’s not your fault my son’s going to die – no hard feelings,” that just wasn’t going to happen. No, Moses must recognize he will come under attack.

What Moses was about to do would require courage – courage only God can give. To drive this point home, God required a sign of Moses’ total commitment to what he’d been asked to do.

Without total commitment to God's calling in his life, Moses would not be able to succeed. As a sign of his commitment, God required that Moses' son be circumcised.

For some reason which the text does not specifically state, Moses had not yet done this. Some have speculated that Moses hadn't done so at the request of Zippora, his wife. However, when God threatened to kill Moses if His command was not carried out, Zippora took a flint knife and performed the circumcision herself, stating in Exodus 4:25 that "you are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me." Through this experience, God taught Moses to have courage and to obey God without question. From this Moses learned that the first quality of a godly leader is:

Gain Courage by Trusting the Lord

Moses Returns to Egypt

With the lesson of this experience firmly etched in his mind, and with the knowledge of the trials that awaited him, Moses returned to Egypt. God prompted Aaron to meet his returning brother, and Moses told him of all God was doing (Exodus 4:28).

Moses accompanied Aaron, who assembled the elders of Israel to tell them of the mission God had sent Moses to accomplish. Note the people's response in Exodus 4:31 – that "when they heard that the Lord was concerned about the sons of Israel, and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped" God.

Here is the key question which must be asked: Would this have occurred forty years earlier if the people had risen up when Moses decided to take things into his own hands? I believe the answer is "Not a chance"! Because Moses at age eighty sought to honor God, and not himself, his courage came from the Lord and not his own abilities. That is why, at the end of his life, Moses could say: "Be strong and courageous, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail or forsake you."

Life's Lesson in Leadership

What events in your life has God used to develop the courage to trust Him? I hope as you read this book that you will ask God to show you how He has used events in your life to prepare you for the challenges you are facing today. Perhaps you will discover how God is even now using events to mold you into the man or woman He is shaping you to become. As I promised in the introduction to this book, I want to describe to you the story of how God molded me through becoming the State Director of the Indiana Christian Coalition.

The year was 1992. George H. W. Bush was running for re-election as President of the United States, and Senator Dan Coats, Republican U.S. Senator from Indiana, was facing a tough re-election campaign. The Democrats, led by a popular governor (and now U.S. Senator) by the name of Evan Bayh, had a serious chance at winning the seat.

I was working at the time as a political consultant and had built a reputation as one who knew the issues inside and out. In fact, I published a statewide newsletter called Indiana Issues. I also had a Masters Degree in Public Affairs from Indiana University. With this background in what we might call “the knowledge and wisdom of the Egyptians,” plus some connections with well-placed conservative Republicans, I was approached in the Spring of 1992 with an offer I couldn't refuse: To become the head of a new organization called the Indiana Christian Coalition.

Founded by evangelist Pat Robertson, the purpose of the organization was to train Christians to become actively engaged in politics at the grassroots level and do what the Moral Majority had failed to do: Train up people of faith who would help restore the moral fabric of the nation through their active involvement in politics.

My job description was to develop the organization, raise money, and lobby at the state legislature: In other words, be “The Man” in Indiana for an organization which, at the national level, was quickly becoming the mouthpiece of the Religious Right in American politics. I was promised funding from private sources for start-up purposes, access to a database of over 55,000 Indiana residents who were known supporters of Pat Robertson, and a marketing campaign which would help me attract and recruit volunteers. This marketing campaign would supply names of people interested in helping build local county chapters, thus becoming the true hands and feet of the organization. What's more, the Christian Coalition had developed a top-notch political action curriculum to be taught in a seminar format to train these activists to become effective in grassroots politics.

At the national level, the media took note of the Christian Coalition grassroots program. By way of comparison, the Christian Coalition was playing on “real grass – everyone else's was Astroturf.” The meaning of this was simple: Ours was a real organization with teeth that could turn out the vote. Virtually all of the other competing interest groups' grassroots efforts were considered artificial.

It was into this can-do environment, equipped with my own personal political skills, that I stepped into the role I was about to play. However, within a few short months, the individual who had promised to fund my star-up phase went bankrupt. I never saw the database of 55,000 names of Indiana Pat Robertson supporters. While the in-kind support from the national organization did come through, as well as a \$1,000 a month stipend for operating expenses, there was no money available with which to pay myself a salary. Running the organization from my home, I watched as my personal bank account began to dwindle. Clearly, from a purely human point of view, I was

going to have to focus my efforts on fundraising before I could do any of the real work of the Christian Coalition. And so, I began to work with our Delaware County organization to plan a fundraising dinner in Muncie, an event upon which I pinned my hopes to raise several thousand dollars.

But God didn't want the organization built through my own strength. As with Moses, He had other plans.

It was early September, 1992, days before the National Christian Coalition convention known as "Road to Victory." I received a call from a young woman who ran a daycare service out of her mobile home in West Lafayette, Indiana. That call changed my life. Connie had gotten wind of an ordinance being introduced in the West Lafayette City Council to amend the city's human relations ordinance to give sexual orientation protected civil rights status.

This young housewife, with no money and no training in brass knuckles politics at the local level, knew only one thing: God was calling her to take a stand and rally the citizens of that city to debate the ordinance. To counterbalance forums presenting a pro-homosexual perspective, she worked to raise money to host forums in which an evangelical Christian point of view could be presented. As she began to step forward, she reached out for help, and that is when she called me.

As I increased the time I was spending in helping Connie in her efforts, there came a point where I had to make a decision: Devote what resources I had at that early stage of the development of the organization to help the effort in West Lafayette, or continue as I had planned to focus on the fundraising dinner in Muncie and prepare to distribute over 500,000 voter guides in the November election. I decided to leave the plans for the Delaware County dinner solely in the hands of the people there to pull it off while I turned my focus to working with this young housewife to help in her fight in West Lafayette.

What became one of the key early battles of the Christian Coalition in Indiana began, not because I planned it or even wanted it, but because God had a better idea of how to build the organization than I did.

At the time, however, I couldn't see where the events in West Lafayette would lead. The dinner in Muncie, which we almost ended up canceling due to poor ticket sales just weeks before the event, was attended by over 130 people, but netted only \$600 in contributions after expenses. Though the dinner in Muncie was a failure from a monetary standpoint, it brought people out who later went on to organize other county chapters. Meanwhile, the news of the events in West Lafayette traveled throughout the state, laying a foundation for the growth of the organization that I could never have foretold or imagined.

I had wanted to raise money with which to build the organization, not to mention pay myself a salary so I could feed my family. Instead, God was raising up people eager to get involved and desiring to be trained. For me, it was the same lesson which Moses had to learn: For God to truly use me, He must first break me of the idea that I needed to rely solely on my own ability, strength and gifts. I had to learn that my abilities were not enough.

In a nutshell, He was asking me to be strong and courageous, and just trust Him.

Movie Scene from The Prince of Egypt

As you read this scene description from the movie The Prince of Egypt, consider how Moses was confronted with the fact that everything he believed about himself was a lie. Note that his confidence in himself was shattered. Please visit www.wisejargon.com/thinklead.htm for more information on this movie scene.

Setting:

Moses is in a temple, having just awakened from a dream. He runs through the temple with a torch to light the way, and comes to a wall showing Seti, his father, having Hebrew babies cast into the Nile. He then runs and speaks to his mother, who confirms that he is a Hebrew. The next day, he is with his half brother, Ramsees, who is building a temple. As Moses watches the Egyptian foremen whip the Hebrew slaves, h can bear their cruelty no longer. Moses attacks one of the foremen, causing the man to plummet to his death. As Moses runs to flee the city, Ramsees catches up with him. He can't convince Moses to stay, for Moses has discovered that everything he believed and knew about himself was a lie. With that, Moses leaves Egypt, journeying into the desert to discover his destiny.

Questions for Further Reflection

Point to Ponder: Have you ever been confronted with the reality that your own strength and power was not sufficient to see you through your time of trial?

In Jeremiah 2:13, the prophet Jeremiah declares that the people have committed two sins: They have forsaken God, “the fountain of living waters,” and second, they have “hewn for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” The message is that we tend to draw strength from our own wells, instead of allowing God to be the source of our strength.

This is the meaning behind Jesus’ words when he speaks with the woman at the well in John 4:7-42. Take a moment to read this passage. Notice that Jesus offers us living water, but we must first rest from trying to do things in our own strength. It takes courage to relinquish control – God courage.

1. In what ways is God showing you that the cisterns you have built in your life are breaking down?
2. Do you thirst for the living water Jesus offers, and the courage His strength can provide as you face the challenges and opportunities of daily living?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Interested in learning how to have David Lantz come speak to your organization, or to order a copy of **Think Like Jesus, Lead Like Moses: Leadership Lessons from the Wilderness Crucible?**

Then click on this link and complete the information form there

<http://wisejargon.wufoo.com/forms/info-about-think-like-jesus-lead-like-moses/>

David Lantz was the State Director of the Indiana Christian Coalition from 1992 to 1995, and has served as a political consultant to several political campaigns for statewide office. From 1989 to 1993, he wrote and published a statewide public policy newsletter, *Indiana Issues*. Since 2009, Mr. Lantz has been providing leadership training to various pro-family, pro-limited government groups and organizations.

Mr. Lantz is an Adjunct Professor of Business Management and Economics for the University of Phoenix, and teaches for several other Indiana colleges, including Ivy Tech. He was named the 2005 Faculty of the Year by the first graduating class of the Indianapolis Campus of the University of Phoenix. He has worked for such organizations as the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute and as a Budget Analyst for the Indiana Legislature. He prepared a socio-economic analysis of Central Indiana for Dr. Billy Graham's 1999 Indianapolis Crusade.

An adult Sunday school teacher at his church for the last twenty years, he has had several articles published in Christian magazines such as *The Lookout* and *Sunday Digest*. He is the author of two Christian historical novels, **The Brotherhood of the Scroll** and **The Sword of the Scroll**, as well as several other books. While with the Christian Coalition, he gave numerous speeches on the subject of Christian involvement in politics, and trained over 300 activists through that organization's Leadership Schools. Since 2009, Mr. Lantz has been providing leadership training to various pro-family, pro-limited government groups and organizations.

Mr. Lantz holds a B.A. degree in History and Political Science from Butler University (1979). He holds a Masters Degree in Public Affairs from Indiana University (1981). He is married to his wife of 31 years, Sally, and has three children.