

Matthew 23:1-12

1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; 3 therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but **do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.**

4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. 5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long.

6 They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, 7 and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them Rabbi.

8 But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. 9 Call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father--the One in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, **the Messiah.**

11 **The greatest among you will be your servant.** 12 All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Be A Servant

West Asheville PC(USA)

When I was in college I had to write a theory of development. It didn't have to be a completely different theory, but it had to have unique principles to it. I was completely overwhelmed by the assignment. Who was I to imagine, or design, a new theory.

Eventually I had an original thought working with the idea of role models. Yes, role models. I argued that our development was guided by our acts of emulating, or copying, our heroes. From our youngest days we identify people we admire and want to be like. Pretty simple isn't it?

I wish we were in church so you could tell me some of your role models. Instead I must just share some of mine. My dad was my first. He worked hard providing for us. Sometimes he brought TV repair work home and I got to help. It was a time of much love I now know. It was much later in life that I learned that not all children have such a positive presence in their lives.

As we age we find more role models. Some of mine were John Wayne, Bob Hope, JFK (Bob and John share my birthday), my high school coach, Martin Luther, Jr., my Pastor, my uncles (I had 8), my teachers, my school janitor who also taught my Sunday school class, etc, etc. Many of my role models were also great leaders. Maybe not John Wayne :), but many. Not all role models are good, but the ones we value are certainly good.

So what makes a person a good role model? Smart, brave, kind and caring for others, funny, dependable are important to me. I know if you look back on your life you will identify many good, and great, role models in your life.

Leaders may be good role models also. So what does a Leader look like? Really??? Can you look at a person and know they are a good role model or leader? If you think you can, you are sadly mistaken. Good and bad leaders will LOOK much the same.

What are the behaviors of a leader? **How they ACT is much more important than how they look.** It reminds me of the word LOVE in the Bible. Almost every use of the word love is used as a synonym for ACT. "Love thy neighbor" is not about warm fuzzy feelings. It is about Doing!!! So what behaviors, or Acts, show a leader.

The message of Jesus in today's scripture passage answers that question. He warns the people to judge their leaders by their behaviors. Jesus says, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on **Moses'** seat(the seat of wisdom and truth); 3

therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but **do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.**

4 They tie up(put on) heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.(Some things never change) 5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long.

6 **They love to have the place of honor** at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, 7 and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them Rabbi.”

Any of that sound familiar? We are about to elect leaders of our city, county, state and nation. Maybe you have already voted because you know it is important to be a part of choosing leaders. So how does a Leader lead? Mica 6:8 tells us, “8 “The Lord has told you, O mortal, what is good; and **what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?**”

Sounds clear to me. How about you???

I wanted to draw a picture, or map, or litmus test for you but didn't want you to think I was biased so I went to the internet, **the source of all great wisdom (LOL)**, and found this article. There were only a few million definitions, but the first ten I read had these attributes in common, so here we go.

Ten Attributes of Truly Great Leaders

Among the experts we noted, there are 10 qualities we've discerned that they agree are essential qualities:

1) Communication

Great leaders are expert communicators. They spend most of their time listening. And when they speak, they're not just clear -- they are sincere and consistent in what and how they communicate. *(This trait, out of all of them, almost always is first on everyone's list -- that's how important it is.)*

2) Integrity

The greatest leaders in the world are impeccable with their word. Integrity is a conscious choice. Their actions match their words and are congruent with their values. This inspires confidence in their followers.

3) Values

The best leaders are mindful of their core values. They share them unabashedly and will do whatever it takes to hold true to them. Their values set the tone and provide behavioral guidelines for their followers.

4) Vision

Great leaders know where they're headed and why. They've always got one foot in the future and one in the present. They view their role as manifesting their vision of the future.

5) Passion

Passion fuels great leaders. It is a never-ending source of energy that separates the doers from the dreamers. It is what initially attracts followers and inspires them.

6) Confidence

Confidence is necessary for staying the course when things get tough. Great leaders have an abundance of confidence. *(This can quickly turn into arrogance without the next quality to temper it.)*

7) Curiosity

Along with listening, great leaders ask lots of questions. Their curiosity is insatiable. They constantly learn and hone their own skills. They are open about what they don't know because their confidence lets them learn, absorb, and apply what they've learned. And they're equal opportunity learners -- they're willing to learn from janitors to CEOs, from plumbers to musicians. They are ego-less when it comes to learning.

8) Positive Attitude

Great leaders might get "down," but this is not their typical outlook. They are eternal optimists and always see the future as a reality. They find a way to solve a problem, or overcome a new challenge. Attitude is often a choice. Great

leaders choose to exude the type of attitude that will influence their team in a positive way.

9) Competence

They are the best at what they do, always accomplishing more than expected. They accept what they're not good at and are so self-secure that they surround themselves with people whose strengths complement their own. As a result, they attract followers who are continually inspired.

10) Empowerment

They set their people up for success. They don't leave them to fend for themselves, nor do they throw them under a bus -- for any reason.

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I should have 'Preached' this sermon 4-6 weeks ago. It may have helped you to make your decision about those who would be our leaders. I really expect that this group already knows these truths, but it doesn't hurt to review them.

At the end of today's passage Jesus adds a final word about being a **great** leader and it's surprising. After his words of condemnation of the Pharisees and scribes, and his instruction for all to learn their teachings for they are to be learned and trusted, Jesus adds,

"11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted."

By this truth you will know how to judge a great leader, to be like Jesus himself.

Amen.