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## Biblical Leadership: Insights for Today's Managers

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### Abstract

The scholarly literature in management has paid little attention to the study of Biblical figures as leaders. This paper aims to advance the effort to fill this gap by demonstrating that many insights about successful and unsuccessful leadership may be derived from the Bible. Successful leaders demonstrated a willingness to be different, a passion for justice, humility, and a concern for others. Unsuccessful leaders were sidetracked from their mission by the hunger for power or by lust and envy.

### Introduction

There is a great deal of interest in discovering what makes an individual effective as a leader (e.g., Conger and Kanungo, 1998; Nahavandi, 2000; Yukl, 1998). Scholars have examined everything from films (e.g., Dunphy and Aupperle, 2000) to literature (e.g., Clemens and Mayer, 1999) to history (e.g., Kaltman, 1998) in the quest for helpful insights into what it takes to achieve success as a leader. Examples of great leaders cited in textbooks are usually taken from business (e.g., Charlotte Beers, Michael Dell, Sam Walton), politics (e.g., Winston Churchill, Joan of Arc, John F. Kennedy), social activism (e.g., Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr.), and/or sports (e.g., Phil Jackson, Michael Jordan). One difficulty with using business leaders has been that the hero of today may be viewed as a knave in the future. In some cases it becomes apparent with the passage of time that the successful business

leader is not to be emulated. Rather than creating a successful firm through visionary and inspirational leadership, s/he has used deception and dishonesty and duped the public into believing that a company was flourishing when it was actually performing very poorly.

Clemens and Mayer (1999) were among the first to demonstrate that there is much wisdom regarding leadership in literature and examined the works of such authors as Homer, Plutarch, Plato, Shakespeare, and Hemingway. The scholarly literature in management has paid scant attention to the study of Biblical figures as leaders, although some recent studies have begun to fill this gap (Friedman and Langbert, 2000; Herskovitz and Klein, 1999, 2000). The Bible has had a profound effect on a countless number of people. To the believer, it is the word of God and provides a blueprint for how individuals should lead their lives. Even non-believers recognize the Bible as an important work of literature and a valuable tool for teaching timeless lessons to humankind.

The Bible is the most popular book of all time - it is estimated that as many as 6 billion copies have been sold - and is the source of many metaphors and scenarios that can be very helpful to those teaching principles of leadership. Even for those who have no interest or inclination to lead, an examination of the deeds and misdeeds of Biblical leaders can be useful in understanding the importance of ethical behavior. In fact, Kass (2003), a prominent bioethicist, has found the Book of Genesis to provide answers to modern ethical questions such as the permissibility of unrestricted human cloning. The Bible is replete with stories of history's earliest leaders, some successful and some unsuccessful, some with a great deal of charisma and some with none. Moreover, using the Bible as a source of information enables one to consider ethical leadership in discussions of leadership.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the Bible may be used as a resource in learning what it takes to be a successful leader as well as what characteristics and traits result in leadership failures.

### **Abraham: caring about people**

Abraham was the leader of a clan. It is clear from the Bible that he was a charismatic leader and, indeed, his influence on several major religions is apparent to this very day. Feiler (2002)

notes that Abraham is the individual at the spiritual center of three monotheistic religions -Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The solution to the reconciliation of the three religions may lie in understanding and following the message of Abraham. What made Abraham stand out as a leader? The following incidents in the life of Abraham shed light on what it takes to become an effective leader.

Abraham was extremely hospitable to strangers. The Bible (Genesis 18) relates that on one sultry day, Abraham was sitting at his tent's entrance and noticed three strangers. He ran towards them and invited them to come to his home and "wash their feet" and eat a "morsel of bread." Abraham did not offer them very much in order to make it easy for them to agree. In actuality, he provided them with freshly baked bread, curd and milk, and a tender calf. Moreover, Abraham stood over them and acted as host and waiter. Abraham was an elderly man, yet when the Bible describes Abraham's activities on that day, it uses such language as: (Genesis 18:6, 18:7): "And Abraham hastened to the tent..." "Abraham ran to the cattle."

Abraham's concern for others was also manifested when he heard that God intended to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham pleaded with God to spare Sodom if there were 50 innocent people there. After being informed that the city would be spared for 50, Abraham asked God to spare it if there were 45 innocent people. Eventually, he worked his way down to ten and God agreed to spare the town if ten innocent people could be found there. Unfortunately, ten innocent people could not be found in the entire city of Sodom, and it was destroyed (Genesis 18: 23-33). This story demonstrated Abraham's great love of humanity and his optimism. Abraham could not believe that some people were so wicked that they were hopeless. A leader must have an authentic love for his followers and be concerned for their welfare.

It is not easy-and may often be dangerous-- to be different from the people around you. Abraham's clan was distinct and unlike the people that surrounded them. Abraham was a monotheist in a pagan society and spread the name of God wherever he traveled (Genesis 12:8; Genesis 13:5; Genesis 13:18). Abraham planted a grove in Beer Sheba "and there he proclaimed the name of God, Lord of the Universe" (Genesis 21:33). It seems that the purpose of this grove was to provide hospitality for travelers and to spread monotheism through the pagan ancient

world.

Abraham's view on hospitality to strangers was also diametrically opposed to the philosophy of Sodom and Gomorrah, countries that hated strangers. Strangers were not treated well in much of the ancient world and Abraham himself was afraid when traveling with his wife to Egypt. He feared that he would be killed so that his wife could be stolen away (Genesis 12: 11-13). Leaders of organizations have to be willing to reject the status quo and do things differently. Great leaders have visions that require great changes. Individuals who are afraid to do things differently are unlikely to make their mark as great leaders.

### **Joseph: don't seek revenge for past indignities**

Joseph became the Grand Vizier of Egypt. What makes this even more incredible was that he started life in Egypt as a slave. Much can be learned about leadership from Joseph. Hertz (1992, p. 186) summarizes the life of Joseph as follows: "He is the man of vision, the man of dreams; but to this he joins moral and spiritual strength in all the vicissitudes of life."

The Bible relates how Joseph was sold by his brothers at the age of 17 and toiled as a slave for 13 years (Genesis 37-39). He was placed in charge of Potiphar's household. Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Joseph but was rebuffed by him. Joseph did not want to betray Potiphar's trust and refused to sin against God. Joseph fled from the woman's advances but she got even with him by lying and claiming that Joseph had attempted to sleep with her. Joseph was placed in prison and languished there for several years.

Despite all this, Joseph remained an individual of great integrity and a man of faith. When Pharaoh tells Joseph that he has heard of his ability to interpret dreams, Joseph attributes his preternatural ability to God. Joseph not only interprets Pharaoh's dream but also advises him how to solve the problem of the seven-year famine. In Joseph's words (Genesis 41:33-34): "Now therefore let Pharaoh seek out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint overseers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance."

Joseph's brothers had wronged him in the most horrible way imaginable: they sold him as a slave. He had the opportunity to

get even, and could easily have justified it, but Joseph had no interest in vengeance. The story of Joseph is not the story of the Count of Monte Cristo, a tale of revenge. Joseph tested his brothers to determine whether they had changed. Once he established that his half-brothers were treating his only full brother, Benjamin, properly-indeed, Judah offered himself as a slave in place of Benjamin-Joseph revealed himself to his kin. The Bible states (Genesis 45:15): "He kissed all of his brothers and wept on them." Joseph had no interest in avenging himself and made clear to his kin that he would take care of their entire families during the seven-year famine.

When their father Jacob died, the brothers thought that Joseph might take vengeance against them. Joseph made clear to them that he had no intention of avenging past wrongs (Genesis 50:19-20): "Fear not! For shall I then take God's place? Although you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good." A good leader is not concerned with avenging slights to his or her honor. Rather, she cares about what is best for the entire organization. Had Joseph taken revenge against his brothers there would not have been a Hebrew people to leave Egypt and enter the Promised Land. A good leader is concerned about what is best for the entire organization and will overlook personal slights. Individuals who spend their days trying to get even do not make the best leaders. A leader has to be concerned with what is best for the organization (or country) and is not concerned with settling personal scores.

### **Moses: be a servant-leader**

Moses was an individual who started out without any charisma and developed over time into a charismatic leader -arguably the greatest leader who ever lived- over time. God selected Moses as the leader of the Hebrews, as the individual who would take them out of Egypt.

The first Biblical depiction of Moses as a young adult showed his sense of justice. Moses saw an Egyptian taskmaster beating a Hebrew slave. It is not clear whether he was beating or attempting to kill the Israelite since the Hebrew word, makeh, can mean to beat or to kill. Moses killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand (Exodus 2:12). The next day, Moses saw two Hebrews fighting and said to the wicked one: "Why are you beating your fellow?" After Pharaoh found out that Moses killed an Egyptian, Moses escaped to Midian. In Midian, Moses saw another injustice: the male shepherds drove away Jethro's

daughters, who were also shepherds, right after they finished filling the troughs in order to water their father's flocks. He responded to this injustice and stood up for Jethro's daughters. These incidents make clear what was unique about Moses: a strong sense of justice and little interest in power and wealth. Moses must have realized that identifying with the Hebrew slaves was not a wise move. He was a prince, raised by Pharaoh's daughter, yet gave up all this power because of an injustice committed against Hebrew slaves. Moses did not learn his lesson. He was a fugitive from Egypt and, arriving in a neighboring country, immediately got involved in another incident. This was, perhaps, not a wise move for a fugitive but was an indication that he possessed the traits of a leader even then: a willingness to stand up for justice and the willingness to be different.

We do not know how long Moses stayed in Midian, but it was obviously a long time, since Moses was 80 years old when God spoke to him through the burning bush. Moses definitely was not interested in power. In fact, God had a difficult time convincing Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt. Moses used several different reasons to turn down the job (see Exodus 3: 11- 4:13). The reasons ranged from "Who am I...?" to "I am not a man of words." It is clear that Moses did not care for power. Moreover, he was a very humble individual. In fact, the Bible states (Numbers 12:3): "Now the man Moses was very humble, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." Individuals who love wielding power often become megalomaniacs and will do anything to keep this power. Their love for power interferes with their judgment and they become very ineffective, and oftentimes evil, leaders.

Because Moses was not power hungry, he had no problem sharing power. He adopted Jethro's advice regarding the importance of delegation of authority and set up a hierarchy of judges (Exodus 18). Years later, Moses told God that the burden of taking care of the Israelites was too much for one person (Numbers 11:16-17). The Lord instructed Moses to appoint seventy elders to a council that provided Moses with guidance and help in leading the people. Moses was not envious of the seventy elders. When he heard that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp his reaction was quite different than Joshua's. Joshua told Moses to make them stop. Moses' reaction was (Numbers 11:29): "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!" Good leaders should not be afraid to share

power or be jealous of other individual's achievements.

Moses was probably the first servant-leader. Robert K. Greenleaf first introduced the concept of servant-leadership in 1970. The servant-leader is primarily a servant. S/he wants to help others in the organization reach their potential. The desire to lead then is a natural consequence of this need to continue to find ways to provide service to individuals and the organization. Servant-leadership is the antithesis of autocratic, authoritarian, and hierarchical leadership. Numerous books have been written about servant-leadership in the management as well as the religion literature (Autry 2001; Blanchard 2003; Carver 1996; Greenleaf 1983). Additional information about servant-leadership may be found at the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership website: <http://www.greenleaf.org>. It should be noted that both Moses and David are referred to as servants of God numerous times in the Bible (see, for example, Numbers 12:7, Joshua 1:2, II Samuel 7:5). This is indeed the highest praise in the Bible that one is a servant of God, i.e., a believer in the law of God that stresses justice and helping the weak. Autry (1991) goes so far as saying that good management involves loving/caring for the people that work for you. Servant leaders care for their employees and want them to succeed.

The Israelites needed a servant-leader with humility that would overlook slights to his dignity. The Israelites not only tried God but also treated Moses contemptuously on several occasions. Their unceasing complaints included the following memorable lines: "Were there no graves in Egypt that you took us to die in the desert?" (Exodus 14:11); "Who will feed us meat? We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt for free." (Number 11:4-5); "Why is God bringing us to this land to die by the sword?" (Numbers 14:3); and "Why did you take us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no food and no water, and our souls are disgusted with the insubstantial food?" (Numbers 21:5). Despite all the grumbling, Moses interceded on behalf of the Israelites and even quarreled with God, when necessary, to forgive them. God was prepared to destroy the entire nation on several occasions, but Moses convinced God not to punish the entire nation after incidents such as the Golden Calf, the spies, and the rebellion of Korach (Exodus 32: 31-33; Numbers 14: 13-16; Numbers 16:21-22). On some occasions, God made the offer of destroying the Israelites with a plague and making Moses into a great nation (Exodus 32:10; Numbers 14:12). Needless to say, Moses turned down this offer. Moses felt he was responsible for the Israelites and even had the temerity to

ask God to erase him from His book (usually interpreted as either the Torah or the book of life) if he did not forgive the Israelites (Exodus 32: 32). This pattern of the people sinning and Moses interceding with God on their behalf is a repeating theme in the Pentateuch. Only a leader with great humility and patience could have kept defending a "stiff-necked people" who did not know how to show any gratitude or appreciation. A great leader has to care more for his people than his own aggrandizement.

### **Pharaoh: be willing to change**

The Pharaoh of the Exodus was certainly a tyrant: he was so concerned with the growth in the population of Hebrew slaves that he ordered that their newborn boys be thrown into the river (Exodus 1:22). His major weakness as a leader, however, was his unwillingness to change. After the third plague, Pharaoh's advisers were convinced that this plague was the "finger of God." Pharaoh's heart was "strong," however, and he refused to yield to Moses' demands (Exodus 8:12-15). It took 10 plagues for Pharaoh to give in and finally allow the Hebrew slaves to leave Egypt. Pharaoh was still not convinced that he did the right thing and a few days later he took his army and went after the Hebrews. His final blunder was following the Hebrews into the sea that had miraculously split. Pharaoh's entire army was destroyed.

The lesson to be learned from this story is that no leader should be so obstinate as to refuse to modify a plan or strategy. An effective leader has to be willing to admit defeat and try a new approach. Pharaoh was undone by his inflexibility and intractableness. He wanted the Hebrews to remain as Egyptian slaves and was not going to change his mind regardless of the consequences.

Another lesson that can be learned from Pharaoh is that leaders should not be tyrants. Oppressing one's followers will ultimately lead to disaster. In fact, when the Hebrews left Egypt, a "mixed multitude" of slaves joined them (Exodus 12:38). Pharaoh was not only oppressing the Hebrews but other peoples as well. Leaders have to work with their followers, care for them, and exercise their power with kindness and concern.

### **Samson: watch what you say to outsiders**

Samson had the potential of being a great leader. He was



courageous, willing to take risks, and was on a divine mission to save his people from the Philistine oppressors. Before he was born, his parents were instructed to consecrate him to God as a Nazirite. Samson was dauntless and killed 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass (Judges 15:15). Unfortunately, his infatuation with Delilah not only sidetracked him from his divine mission but also resulted in his death. Samson foolishly told Delilah the secret of his supernatural strength and she betrayed him to the Philistines. They shaved off Samson's hair and were then able to capture and blind him. Leaders should not allow themselves to be sidetracked because of infatuations. Moreover, telling secrets to lovers is never a wise move for anyone, certainly not a leader.

### **Gideon: designate your successor**

Gideon was a great warrior and with only 300 soldiers defeated the Midianite army (Judges 7). After Gideon's miraculous victory, the people asked him to rule over them, but Gideon refused to be a monarch since he felt that only God should "rule" over people (Judges 8:23). It should be noted that the institution of the monarchy in Israel was reluctantly established by the prophet Samuel more than 160 years later (I Samuel 8). For a period of about 400 years, Israel was governed by judges. Gideon led the Israelites as a judge for 40 years.

Gideon, who had 70 sons, did not believe in a monarchy and did not designate a successor. Abimelech, the son of his concubine, on the other hand, did want to rule as a monarch and convinced the people of Shechem, after his father's death, that they would be better off with him as a ruler than having the 70 sons of Gideon rule over them (Judges 9). He arranged for the murder of all of his brothers and only Jotham, the youngest, survived by hiding from the assassins (Judges 9:5). Abimelech was not very successful as a leader and only reigned for three years. He fought a civil war against the inhabitants of Shechem - the same people who crowned him as king. Abimelech ultimately destroyed the town of Shechem but was killed while destroying the town of Thebez.

This story demonstrates that the danger of not designating a successor. By not deciding on who should become judge after his demise, Gideon caused the death of almost all of his children. His successor became the most immoral, power-hungry, and least competent of his children. Leaders have to consider the problem of succession and not ignore it and must

ensure that the successor will be the one who is best able to keep an organization (or country) thriving.

### **Boaz: compassionate leadership**

Boaz was a very successful landowner who lived in Bethlehem. Ruth the Moabite was a convert to Judaism who returned from Moab with her former mother-in-law Naomi after her husband died. Ruth had been married for 10 years but did not have any children. Naomi and Ruth were in dire poverty and Ruth therefore had to go into the fields to gather the gleanings that were left for the destitute. The Book of Ruth provides many interesting insights into how Boaz, a dominant businessperson ran his business. Boaz enters his field and he is the first to greet his reapers (Ruth 2: 4): "The Lord be with you." They respond to him and say: "The Lord bless you." Boaz notices a woman among the gleaners who looked different than the other gleaners (not surprising given that she was from a different country). Upon learning about her, he makes sure that the laborers will not harass her and tells them to purposely drop some wheat so that Ruth will have no trouble accumulating a large amount of food. The Book of Ruth ends with Ruth asking Boaz to be her "redeemer" and marry her. Boaz is an elderly man and marries her because of his great compassion. It is clear that this is not a traditional love story. Boaz refers to her as (Ruth 2:8; 3: 10, 11) "my daughter." Boaz' act of kindness resulted in a son (Obed) who was the grandfather of David. Thus, the entire Davidic line resulted from an act of kindness shown by Boaz.

### **Saul: do not envy the success of others**

Saul was the first king of Israel. He had the potential of becoming a great leader. His son-in-law, David, was not only loyal to him but was extremely dedicated to Saul's son, Jonathan. Saul became sidetracked by envy. He heard women singing (I Samuel 18:7): "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." His insane jealousy of David forced David to run away. Saul was obsessed with killing David and even committed the horrible atrocity of eradicating a city of innocent priests because they gave David some food while he was a fugitive. Ultimately, Saul and three of his sons were defeated and perished in a battle with the Philistines. It would seem that Saul might have won this battle along with David and the latter's warriors at his side. The consequence of Saul's envy was the destruction of his family and the end of his reign. Good leaders should not be afraid to share power or be jealous of the

accomplishments of others, especially not the successes of subordinates.

### **David: do not ignore injustices**

David was extremely brave and faced Goliath in battle before he had any military experience at all. Goliath was actually surprised that the Israelites were sending an inexperienced young boy to fight him (I Samuel 17). David demonstrated faith and humility when he told Goliath (I Samuel 17:45): "You come against me with sword, and spear, and javelin; I come to you with the Name of God." Later on in his life, David sings a song of gratitude to God (II Samuel 22). In this song he notes (II Samuel 22:27-28): "With the pure You act purely; with the corrupt You act perversely. You save the humble people..." This is not a song where David boasts of his own strength; rather, the song makes it clear that David owes everything to God.

The story of David's affair with Bath-Sheba is well known and David was punished for this transgression (II Samuel 11-12). He did penitence for his wrongdoing and it did not cause any long-term adverse effects on the kingdom. David's mistake in the matter of Amnon and Tamar, on the other hand, caused more problems for his kingdom than his affair with Bath-Sheba and almost resulted in the loss of his kingdom.

Amnon was David's eldest son and in line for the throne.

Amnon fell in love with his half-sister Tamar and raped her (II Samuel 13). David heard about this and "he was very angry" (II Samuel 13:21). David, unfortunately, did not punish or even rebuke his son. Absalom, Tamar's full-brother, was furious at what Amnon had done, bided his time, and two years later he arranged for Amnon's assassination. Eventually, Absalom organized a rebellion against David and forced his father into exile. David ultimately defeated Absalom, but at a great cost in human lives. David was himself devastated by the death of Absalom (II Samuel 18).

The above story indicates what might happen when injustices are covered up rather than dealt with honestly. Had David punished Amnon for what he did to Tamar, Absalom might not have felt the need to take the law into his own hands. Moreover, he would not have lost respect for his father and would not have had the audacity to rape his father's concubines and rebel against him. Leaders have to be scrupulous about justice and should not ignore injustices committed by subordinates, even if they are designated successors.

### **Solomon: when blessed with the wisdom to judge others, judge yourself as well**

God appeared to a young King Solomon in a dream and offered him anything that he wanted (I Kings 3). Solomon did not ask for wealth, longevity, or power; he asked for (I Kings 3: 9): An understanding heart to judge people and the ability to discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this great people of Yours." Solomon requested what a great leader needs: wisdom, a passion for justice and concern for people.

Solomon's mistake as a leader was in spending vast amounts of wealth to build his home (I Kings 7), an endeavor which took thirteen years. He built it after completing the Temple, which was quite elaborate, and took seven years to complete. In fact, the Temple required a corvee of 30,000 men to build (I Kings 5:27). This was not enough for Solomon and he made (I Kings 10:18) "an immense ivory throne and overlaid it with glittering gold." The throne was quite magnificent and consisted of 12 golden lions-one on each side of the six steps. Solomon also acquired a massive number of horses and chariots (I Kings 10). He also married an unusually large number of women and had 700 royal wives and 300 concubines (I Kings 11:3). All this placed a heavy burden on his subjects and caused problems for his son who succeeded him.

The lesson to be learned from the story of Solomon is that leaders who become preoccupied with self-aggrandizement, rather than serving the people, will ultimately fail. Solomon's excesses were responsible for the breakup of his kingdom during the reign of his son Rehoboam.

### **Rehoboam: do not treat followers harshly**

Rehoboam was the son of King Solomon and was approached by the people after the death of his father and asked to lighten the huge tax burden placed on the people to finance the extravagances of Solomon (I Kings 12:4). Rehoboam sought counsel from two different sets of advisors. The elders advised him (I Kings 12:7) to take a gentle approach with the people and thereby ensure their eternal loyalty. The advice of the elders affirmed that a leader is a servant of his followers and his role is to serve them. This advice would be consistent with many management theories of today.

Rehoboam's young friends advised him to take a tough line with

the people and say to them (I Kings 12:14): "My father made your yoke heavy, and I shall add to your yoke! My father chastised you with sticks; I shall chastise you with scorpions!" Rehoboam followed the advice of his young friends and responded harshly to the people.

The people joined Jeroboam, who was from the tribe of Ephraim, and rebelled against Rehoboam. Israel was thereafter split into two kingdoms: Judah consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (David, Solomon, and Rehoboam were from the tribe of Judah) and Israel consisting of the other ten tribes.

The lesson to be learned from this story is apparent. A tough leadership approach demanding obedience from followers can easily cause a rebellion. Leaders can accomplish more by inspiring followers with kind words than by threatening them with harsh words.

#### **Ahasuerus: take counsel**

The story of Ahasuerus, King of Persia, is told in the Book of Esther. Ahasuerus does not seem to be a very intelligent king. He had his wife, Vashti, executed for disobeying him by not coming to his feast. He wanted to show off her beauty and she refused either because she was reticent and/or figured her husband was drunk. Some years later, he listened to Haman and agreed to eradicate an entire people for a bribe of 10,000 silver talents. What is the reason Haman wanted to exterminate the entire Jewish people? Because one person, Mordechai, an elderly Jew, did not prostrate himself before him. Later on, the King cannot remember giving the authorization to Haman to eradicate the Jews and asks his new queen, Esther, who is the one who dared plot this mass execution (Esther 7: 5). The Persians had one interesting institution that protected them from foolish kings. Every king had a council of seven. The verse notes (Esther 1:13-14): "Then the king conferred with the experts..." These experts had access to the king and acted as a combination cabinet and supreme court (the verse notes that they "knew law and judgment"). It is interesting to note that Ahasueuerus consulted with his council of seven when he was trying to decide how to punish Queen Vashti but did not consult with them when agreeing to Haman's request to eradicate the Jews in his entire kingdom.

Two important lessons can be derived from this story: (1) Every manager should have someone to consult with before making a

major decision. (2) Using one's position to get even with people over previous slights is not only unproductive but can be self-destructive. Haman was extremely successful-he had a large family, power, wealth, many children-and lost everything because he was miffed that an elderly man did not bow to him.

## **Conclusion**

James A. Froude, an English historian, noted the following:

History is a voice for ever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong. Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for cruelty and oppression, for lust or vanity, the price has to be paid at last; not always by the chief offenders, but paid by someone. Justice and truth alone endure and live.

This lesson applies to organizations as well as societies, and can be clearly seen when studying the leaders of the Bible. The major traits possessed by the successful Biblical leaders studied in this paper were courage, a willingness to be different from those around them, a passion for justice, humility, and concern for others. They did not care for power for its own sake and saw themselves as servant-leaders; were willing to tolerate abuse and disrespect because of their great humility. After all, leadership is not about what you can do for yourself, it is about helping your organization and your people.

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