

***THE FLEXIBILITY OF JESUS' LEADERSHIP STYLE IN LIGHT OF
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH***

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CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Goleman's Six Leadership Styles	3
The Contextual Aspect of Jesus' Leadership	5
Jesus and the Goleman Leadership Matrix	6
Visionary	6
Coaching	9
Affilitive	12
Democratic	14
Pacesetting	16
Commanding	18
Conclusion	20
Bibliography	22

Introduction

In recent years, interpersonal skills have become more essential to effective leadership. At times, leadership has been viewed as primarily a matter of authority and control, but now effective leadership is more likely understood in regard to the ability to motivate and inspire others. In this climate, “one variable that has recently gained much popularity as a potential underlying attribute of leadership is the construct of emotional intelligence.”¹ Emotional intelligence can be described as the ability to understand and to utilize the emotional dimension of human life in a way that translates into personal well-being and successful and healthy relationships. Research into emotional intelligence has evolved over the last two decades into a field of study with increasing impact on the interpersonal dimension of leadership.

Howard Gardner is considered by some to be a significant instigator of emotional intelligence research with his writings about multiple intelligences in 1983.² Intuitively, researchers began to seek answers as to why people with high IQs were often not as successful in the workplace and various other venues as some people who had only average IQs.³ In 1990, Peter Salovey and Jack Mayer published research on human intelligence in what has been commonly referred to as “people smarts” and were credited

¹Benjamin Palmer, “Emotional Intelligence and Effective Leadership” *Leadership and Organization Development Journal* 22 (2001): 5.

²Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

³Robert K. Cooper, *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership and Organizations* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1996), xi.

with coining the term “emotional intelligence.”⁴ Salovey subsumed Gardner’s research by expanding these concepts into five main domains of knowing one’s emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships.⁵ Building on Salovey’s foundational research, in 1995 Daniel Goleman popularized the term with his book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*.⁶ Since this initial book by Goleman, there has been a wide proliferation of published works and attempted applications, particularly in the military and educational settings.⁷

In light of the potential influence of multifarious contextual factors and researchers’ assumptions in the various settings in which emotional intelligence has been studied, in some instances the validity of the data and its interpretation have been questioned.⁸ Yet, research has overwhelmingly affirmed that without the ability to sense his or her own emotions accurately and to perceive their effect, the individual will be greatly impaired in regard to interpersonal relations and in individual emotional health.⁹ Therefore, the implications for emotional intelligence on leadership theory have been

⁴Peter Salovey and Jack Myer, “Emotional Intelligence,” *Imagination, Cogitation and Personality* (September 1990): 185-211.

⁵Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 23.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Sharon M. Latour and Bradley C. Hosmer, “Emotional Intelligence: Implications for All United Air Force Leaders” *Air and Space Power Journal* 16:3 (Winter 2002): 27-35.

⁸Roberts, Richard D. “Emotional Intelligence: Pop Psychology or New Construct?” *Contemporary Psychology* 48:6 (Dec. 2003), 853-855. Donna Harrington-Lueker, “Students Need Emotional Intelligence” *The Education Digest* 63: 1 (September 1997), 7-10.

⁹ Daniel Bowling, and David Hoffman. *Bringing Peace into the Room* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 156.

immensely important. The following explores the implications of Goleman's research on the concept of a flexible leadership paradigm and specifically how in the Gospels Jesus exhibited each of these styles in the appropriate and opportune context.

Goleman's Six Leadership Styles

In exploring the field of leadership, one can find myriads of paradigms and matrixes in categorizing various styles. However, few have much quantifiable legitimacy. Daniel Goleman's matrix is a notable exception. In a March-April 2000 *Harvard Business Review* article, Goleman presented research "on a random sample of 3,871 executives selected from a database of more than 20,000."¹⁰ The result was six leadership styles that were measured in regard to their effectiveness. Continuing to refine his research, Goleman coauthored *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*.¹¹ The terminology was changed slightly but the concepts were the same.

Four of the styles were found to have positive correlations with creating proven factors for an effective climate for working relationships. The visionary style was characterized by a leader who could inspire constituents to work together for the realization of certain ideals through the achievement of specific goals. This was found to be the most effective style. The coaching style majored on helping the follower to improve in performance by building long-term capacities. The affiliative style was identified as the capacity to create harmony by connecting people to each other. The democratic style focused on receiving input from constituents and forging a consensus

¹⁰Daniel Goleman, "Leadership that Gets Results," *Harvard Business Review* (March-April 2000): 78.

¹¹Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee. *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002).

through participation. The coaching, affiliative, and democratic were all found to be styles that brought positive results in approximately equal fashion.¹²

Two styles were consistently negative. Pacesetter emphasized the setting of challenging goals but was often negative because it was poorly executed. The most negative of the six styles was the commanding style which works from an authoritarian power base.¹³

Goleman's main point about each of these styles was that they all have a context in which they can be successful. He likened them to the use of clubs in golf strategy. He wrote, "Imagine the styles then, as the array of clubs in a golf pro bag. Over the course of a game, the pro picks and chooses clubs based on the demands of the shot. . . . The pro senses the challenge ahead, swiftly pulls out the right tool, and elegantly puts it to work."¹⁴ For instance, the commanding or coercive style is often abused and the result is an overall negativity in being effective as a primary style. Yet, in an emergency the need for someone to take charge can be a matter of life and death. In this aspect, Goleman espoused similar concepts found in the Situational Leadership Theory of Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard.¹⁵ The common idea they shared was that context makes a difference and the wise leader will understand which style needs to be used at the particular moment. Goleman noted that the leader who had the ability to use the various styles in the proper context would be superior to one who was stuck in only one of these modes. Tony

¹² Ibid., 53-69.

¹³ Ibid., 71-88.

¹⁴ Goleman, "Leadership that Gets Results," 80.

¹⁵ Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behavior* 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1982).

Alessandro and Michael O’Conner echoed this thought when they declared, “Remember, there is no such thing as the best, all-purpose leadership style. Instead, the best leaders are those who realize what a job, role, or specific situation requires for successful performance and then ensure those outcomes.”¹⁶

The Contextual Aspect of Jesus’ Leadership

The Gospels recorded Jesus in a wide variety of situations and contexts. He encountered very distinctly different types of people. Jesus was, for the most part, popular with the *am ha-ares* or “the people of the land.” More than ninety percent of the population fit this category as they were not aligned with more well-known groups such as the Pharisees or Sadducees. Among them were the religious who could not keep the strict ceremonial aspects of the law as well as the irreligious. Mostly they could be described as the disenfranchised.¹⁷ Bruce Metzger noted that because Jesus “was friendly with this class of people and freely associated with them. . . . He was regarded with animosity by the religious leaders of his day.”¹⁸ As a result, the leadership context of Jesus could at times quickly change to the polar opposite, from the adoration of the crowds to the spiteful rejection of some of the religious elite. Such a variation in circumstances represents a helpful backdrop to observe whether Jesus exhibited a truly flexible leadership style.

¹⁶Tony Alessandra and Michael J. O’Conner, with Janice Van Dyke, *People Smarts* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994), 171.

¹⁷Bruce Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content*, 2nd edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 47-48.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

One important stipulation is to note that indications of flexibility in the leadership style of Jesus are not to be confused with inconsistency of character. To do so would be akin to saying that in the Old Testament God is inconsistent because sometimes He delivered judgment while at other times He extended grace. Of course the context of varying spiritual states of those involved was the difference. When people humbly repented, God extended mercy. When they obstinately refused, then God brought judgment. Yet, God was perfect in His holy consistency. In the same way, Jesus exhibited the full range of the holy character of God and confirmed the sapience of the writer of Ecclesiastes who observed the nature of situational relevancy when he declared, “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven.”¹⁹ The following brief study of some correlations of the flexibility of Jesus’ leadership style with the Goleman matrix is illustrative that Jesus is the perfect model for what emotional intelligence research is declaring to be essential for leadership success.

Jesus and the Goleman Leadership Matrix

Visionary

The visionary style of leadership has the greatest positive impact on the leader’s constituents. The ability to inspire followers to be motivated for a great cause is the supremely effective means of accomplishing significant goals. The Great Commission statement of Matthew 28:19-20 was the greatest visionary declaration ever uttered. No undertaking could match its audacity and scope.

Robert Gundry observed the astonishing contrast of the great commission with the exclusivist Jewish mindset. Without this exhortation and ones in similar emphases such

¹⁹Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NAS).

as Luke 24: 45-49, John 20:21, Acts 1:8 and other passages, the likelihood of Gentile evangelization was minimal. Though initially the church was tardy in carrying out this great vision, the force of it upon believers was able to overcome “the Jewish limitation of Jesus’ ministry, the Jewishness of the first disciples, the temptation to avoid persecution from unbelieving Jews by remaining a Jewish sect, and the initial concentration on Jerusalem.”²⁰

Visionary leadership involves more than just a single grand declaration, but it also involves communication that is calculated, strategic, and reinforced often. Repeatedly, Jesus “reminded his disciples that his mission, his driving purpose, was to seek and to save the lost people.”²¹ “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” Jesus declared.²² Jesus demonstrated this priority in the inclusiveness of His ministry. Though the primary focus of the earthly ministry was to the Jews, even within the umbrella of Judaism itself, small children, women, outcast sinners, and despised poor were included. The account of the healing of the Syrophoenician woman’s daughter was a dramatic example of what was to come. Morna Hooker noted, “Many of Mark’s readers will themselves have been Gentiles. For them, the story will have provided reassurance that Jesus himself responded to the faith of a Gentile and gave her a share in the blessings of the Kingdom.”²³ Jesus repeatedly took opportunity to expand the disciple’s horizons. In

²⁰Robert Gundry, “Matthew,” in *A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982, 596.

²¹Bill Perkins, *Awaken the Leader Within: How the Wisdom of Jesus Can Unleash Your Potential*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 106.

²²Matthew 4: 19 (NAS).

²³Morna Hooker, “The Gospel According to Saint Mark,” in *Black’s New Testament Commentary*, ed. Henry Chadwick. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991) 182.

the aftermath of the encounter with the Samaritan women, Jesus declared, “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields that are white for harvest.”²⁴ For Jesus to have uttered that in the midst of Samaria was a profound moment for impression upon the disciples.

Visionary leaders must avoid the distractions from the main mission. Jesus faced such choices. The temptations recorded in Matthew 4:1-11 were a sinister attempt to lure Him away from the true Messianic mission.²⁵ Robert Dale labeled the temptations as “a strategic tug of war.”²⁶ Henri Nouwen framed the temptations from a leadership standpoint as the temptation to be relevant, spectacular and from leading to being led.²⁷ Jesus refused to be detoured from His mission.

Jesus recognized the many temptations that His followers would have for corrupting and compromising the priority. Jesus intended His followers to also be visionary influencers. Urging His followers concerning the importance of keeping this priority, Jesus utilized stark oriental hyperbole when he taught, “And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than having your two feet, to be cast into hell.”²⁸ Bob Briner and Ray Pritchard, interpreted this passage as meaning that “we must be ruthless in discarding those activities and programs which do not

²⁴John 4: 35 (NAS).

²⁵Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” In *The New American Commentary*, Vol. 22. ed. David Dockery. (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 82.

²⁶Robert D. Dale, *Leading Edge: Leadership Strategies from the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 28.

²⁷Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), ix, x.

²⁸Mark 9: 45 (NAS).

contribute directly the goal as outlined in the mission statement.”²⁹ The followers of Jesus were so impassioned that many would literally follow Him to their own crosses of persecution rather than abandon the vision He had given them. There can be no greater illustration of the power of the visionary leadership of Jesus.

Coaching

Whereas the visionary leader influences the entire organization through an inclusive vision, the coaching style emphasizes the art of the one-on-one encounter. The coaching leader is willing to invest in each person in guiding a relationship that is customized. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee observed that the large amount of time required is considered prohibitive by some leaders despite the proven success of this style.³⁰ In contrast to this unwillingness, Jesus was willing to devote much of his three-year ministry to coaching the disciples.

Marshall Sashkin and Molly Sashkin emphasized that coaching leaders discern the skill level of the followers and as a result will range from being very detailed and directive to only offering support.³¹ The relationship of Jesus with his disciples is a perfect example of this characteristic flexibility of both allowing followers to be challenged and providing sufficient support to prevent catastrophic failure. In Mark 6: 7-13, Jesus sent the disciples out with authority and significant kingdom work to perform. William Lane stated that “Jesus authorized the disciples to be his delegates with respect

²⁹Bob Briner and Ray Pritchard Briner, *More Leadership Lessons of Jesus: A Timeless Model for Today's Leaders* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 144.

³⁰Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 60.

³¹Marshall Sashkin, and Molly Sashkin. *Leadership that Matters: The Critical Factors for Making a Difference in People's Lives and Organization's Success* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003), 24.

to both word and power” and that the “rich background in the juridical practice of Judaism . . . acknowledged that the ‘sent one is as the man who commissioned him.’”³²

At times the disciples failed in the opportunities that such delegation afforded them. Mark 9: 14-29 recorded that the disciples were unable to cast out the “deaf and dumb spirit.” As a result, Jesus redeemed the situation by casting out the spirit himself. In Matthew 14: 22-31, Jesus allowed Peter’s attempt to come to Him by walking on the water. Upon becoming fearful, Peter began to sink. Jesus immediately rescued him. Robert H. Mounce noted that this incident has been taken as a type of parable of Peter’s career in that “he fell and had to be rescued and restored by Jesus.”³³ Speaking of the business context, Goleman, Boyatzis, and Mckee observed that coaches are . . . good at delegating, giving employees challenging assignments that stretch them, rather than tasks that simply get the job done. . . . Further, coaches usually tolerate a short-term failure, understanding that it can further an employee’s dreams.”³⁴ Exemplifying the best characteristics of the coaching style, Jesus allowed His disciples to be stretched beyond their comfort zone but would not allow them to sink.

Exhibiting another quality of an effective coaching style, Jesus did not attempt to be equal in the amount of time that He spent with people. Just as he moved from the large audiences in the time of His public favor to a more focused and private time with the twelve, He also gave an even more in-depth concentration to the inner circle of three,

³²William L. Lane, “The Gospel According to Mark,” In *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse, F.F. Bruce, and Gordon Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 206-207.

³³Robert H. Mounce, “Matthew,” In *A Good News Commentary*, ed. W. Ward Gasque. (San Francisco: Harper & Row), 1985.

³⁴Goleman, Boyatzis, and Mckee, 61.

James, Peter, and John. Briner and Pritchard observed that “He saved His most important teaching” for three of these.”³⁵ They alone were the witnesses of Jesus’ transfiguration. Successful coaching recognizes specialized potential that sometimes requires an immoderate investment of time.

Another important aspect of the coaching style as practiced by Jesus was his didactic emphasis. Briner and Pritchard observed, “Leaders are teachers. . . . Jesus was addressed as ‘Rabbi’ or ‘Teacher’ more often than any other title.”³⁶ He utilized moments of apparent failure as teachable times. In the above example, when Peter sank, Jesus asked the question, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”³⁷ Likewise, in the previous example when the disciples failed to exorcise the demon, Jesus instructed the disciples privately that “this kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.”³⁸ Jesus’ teaching was a total commitment of Himself to the development of the disciples. Gunter Krallmann maintained, “The many occasions on which the Twelve witnessed the totality of Jesus’ life and activities, added up to one all-inclusive textbook from which they could learn both on cognitive and experiential level all the key lessons pertinent to their future engagement for the kingdom of God.”³⁹ Jesus was the quintessential coach who invested

³⁵Briner and Pritchard, 123.

³⁶Ibid., 41.

³⁷Matthew 14: 31 (NAS)

³⁸Mark 9: 29 (NAS).

³⁹Gunter Krallmann, *Mentoring for Mission: A Handbook on Leadership Principles Exemplified by Jesus Christ* (Waynesburo: Gabriel Pub. , 2002), 60.

everything in “this core of men who would later be able to help him accomplish God’s far reaching purposes.”⁴⁰

Affiliative

Affiliative leadership seeks to connect people and to tear down walls and barriers.⁴¹ The diversity of the twelve that Jesus chose was illustrative of the power of the connecting nature of Jesus’ leadership. Jesus’ passionate concern that the disciples be one was reflected in the high priestly prayer when He entreated the Father that the disciples “be perfected in unity.”⁴² Attempting to develop relationships among the twelve was a monumental challenge. Political opposites were among the disciples, from a radical zealot, who identified with the most drastic of means to overthrow the foreign oppression of Rome, to a collaborator who collected taxes for the foreign oppressor. The extremes of contrast were apparent in personalities, from Peter of a sanguine nature to the volatile choleric nature of James and John and from the apparently quieter disciples who were scarcely noticed in many gospel passages to the forceful and ruthlessly ambitious Judas.

Affiliative leaders are adroit at building a team by modeling compassion even in the most challenging circumstances such as what Jesus faced with the disciples. Jesus was the consummate model in this regard. Matthew 20: 34 recorded that upon hearing the blind men call out for help Jesus was “moved with compassion”⁴³ Craig Blomberg observed this same word in Matthew 9:36 (compassion upon the crowd who were like sheep without a shepherd), 14:14 (at the feeding of the 5,000), and 15:32 (feeding of the

⁴⁰Ibid., 47.

⁴¹Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 63-66.

⁴²John 17: 21-23.

⁴³Matthew 20: 34 (NAS).

4,000). He described the Greek word *splanchnos* as a word that could refer to bowels or kidneys but in these instances meant “a deep, gut-level ‘compassion.’”⁴⁴ Thus, the disciples witnessed the authenticity of the compassion of Jesus.

Effective leadership does not allow compassion to be divorced from the priority of the mission. The compassion of Jesus was connected to his mission in two instances where He wept. Luke recorded that Jesus wept openly over the spiritual condition of Jerusalem.⁴⁵ Robert Stein compared this to the sorrow of the prophets over the impending judgment.⁴⁶ Likewise, Jesus wept at the sight of those who were crying over the death of Lazarus.⁴⁷ Gerald L. Borchert believed that this weeping was similar to that in the previously noted instance in Luke 19. He maintained that in light of the fact that Lazarus was about to be raised, His weeping was in regard to the mourners missing the Kingdom message.⁴⁸ In other words, Jesus cared for humanity in an ultimate way, more than just in a brief moment of emotion. He desire for them to become part of the Kingdom mission and find ultimate and not just temporal deliverance.

The larger perspective kept Jesus from the potential pitfall of the affiliative style, loss of focus. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee observed that this is the reason that effective leaders often use the affiliative in conjunction with the visionary style.⁴⁹ Jesus

⁴⁴Blomberg, 166.

⁴⁵Luke 19: 41.

⁴⁶Robert H. Stein. “Luke,” in *The New American Commentary*, Vol. 24. ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 484.

⁴⁷John 11: 35.

⁴⁸Gerald L. Borchert. “John 12-21,” in *The New American Commentary*, Vol. 25B. ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 360.

⁴⁹ Goleman, Boyatzis, and Mckee, 66.

did this in perfect balance. He responded to their incessant rivalry by reminding them that there was something more important than their individual ambitions. He gave them the kingdom of heaven perspective.⁵⁰ Humility and concern were to be reflected in their lives. Jesus, as an affiliative and visionary leader, sought to reproduce these qualities in the disciples. He declared to them that “if anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”⁵¹

Democratic

To find the democratic mode among the flexible patterns of the leadership styles of Jesus would seem to be counterintuitive. Considering the subservient role of the disciples to Jesus, it is hard to envision an application of the democratic style in the ministry of Jesus. Certainly one will not find in the Gospel accounts a formal democratic process among Jesus and His disciples. The agenda was nonnegotiable. Yet, there are times that Jesus subtly allowed the disciples to wrestle with the proper solution to the problem. At the feeding of the four thousand, Jesus confronted the disciples with the problem of providing for the multitudes when he noted, “If I send them away hungry to their home, they will faint on the way.”⁵² As was often the case, the disciples did not have the correct response and had to be directed by Jesus. This is similar to the coaching style where persons are brought along in a process for growth, even it means initial failure.

The primary role for the democratic style of leadership in Jesus’ repertoire was in regard to teaching. Jesus frequently reflected the spirit of the democratic leadership

⁵⁰Matthew 18: 4.

⁵¹Mark 9: 35 (NAS).

approach in His teaching methodology. Though Jesus did have a number of authoritative declarations, He also employed methods which allowed the disciples to reason through a process by which they would come to see a particular insight. The parables represent a frequent way in which Jesus used an inductive approach. Fred B. Craddock noted Jesus used the inductive method when he wrote, “He taught primarily in parables, a literacy form by which meanings are not made explicit and listeners must invest a great deal in the attempt to understand.”⁵³ The parables confronted Jesus’ followers with “a demand for interpretation.”⁵⁴ Peter Rhea Jones observed how frequently “rhetorical questions characterized parables.”⁵⁵ These questions drew listeners into the issues of the story and engaged them to come to a solution which they had resolved rather than one told to them in an authoritative manner.

Jesus not only used questions in parables but also employed the Socratic method in regard to the most profound issues. In Matthew 16: 13 Jesus asked, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” Mounce observed that the purpose of this question was primarily “to correct in the minds of the disciples a misconception of Jesus’ role.”⁵⁶ Jesus then moved to the “critical question”⁵⁷ as He inquired, “But who do you say that I am?”⁵⁸ Primarily Jesus utilized the democratic approach in the teaching mode but without the

⁵² Mark 8: 3a.

⁵³Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 57.

⁵⁴K. R. Snodgrass, “Parable,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 596.

⁵⁵Peter Rhea Jones, *The Teaching of the Parables* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1982), 56.

⁵⁶Mounce, 160.

⁵⁷Ibid, 161.

⁵⁸Matthew 16: 13, 15 (NAS).

potential weakness of this style which is indecisiveness. The correct answer of Peter that “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” confirmed the success of Jesus’ use of this method.

Pacesetting

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee warned that the pacesetting style often has negative consequences. On the surface this is difficult to understand. It would seem that modeling proper behavior would be very effective. Pacesetters literally do attempt to set the pace. They are the first ones at the office and the last ones to leave. Yet, Goleman’s analysis revealed that this style tended to focus on goals almost exclusively to the neglect of people. Further, pacesetters tend to be micromanagers, assuming that no one can do it as well as they can.⁵⁹ Another weakness of this style is that pacesetters are tempted to live a façade, to appear more than they are. Image does not really fit reality.

Jesus did not exhibit the duplicity that is often found in the pacesetting style. The disciples literally followed Jesus, and they observed no hypocrisy in Him. When He asked if anyone could convict him of sin, there was no one who could, not even the disciples who had been with Him continually. Such intimate exposure to a perfect model brought the desire for identification with Him and the kingdom that He proclaimed.⁶⁰

Another potential weakness of the pacesetting leaders is that they may choose to put the performance of tasks over the needs of people. On more than one occasion it seemed that this was the tendency of the disciples. When Bartimaeus the blind beggar

⁵⁹Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 72-74.

⁶⁰ Darrel L. Bock, “Luke,” in *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*. ed. Grant R Osborne (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 202.

cried out to Jesus the disciples rebuked him, but Jesus stopped, called him over and healed him.⁶¹ Likewise, when children were brought to Jesus the disciples rebuked those who had brought them, but Jesus “took them in His arms and began blessing them.”⁶²

In Luke 11: 1-4, the depth of Jesus’ prayer life prompted the disciples to request, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Interestingly, Jesus did not give them burdensome instruction such as “pray all night as you have seen me do.” Instead, Jesus gave them a model which gave them the essential guidelines but allowed them to personalize their own prayer. He did not give them something to be repeated “mechanically or with slavish verbalism.”⁶³ Jesus was interested in the disciples’ personal development, something that those who have the primary model of pacesetting unfortunately neglect. In this and other instances, Jesus exhibited the positive motivational qualities of pacesetting without the negatives of micromanaging, obsession with task over the needs of people, and duplicitous conduct.

Commanding

When considering Jesus as a model for flexibility in leadership style, the uniqueness of His person as the only begotten Son of God obviously means that some correlations are invalid. His divine nature affords Him certain actions that are without question improper for His followers to emulate. For instance, when Jesus declared that the sins of the paralytic were forgiven, some of the scribes accused Him of blaspheme.⁶⁴

⁶¹Mark 10: 46-52.

⁶²Mark 10: 13-16, (NAS).

⁶³Norval Geldenhuys, “The Gospel of Luke,” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. F.F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 319.

⁶⁴Mark 2: 7.

To declare such authority is to assume the role of God. Yet, the commanding style of Jesus that is present in the accounts of the Gospels does remind Christian leaders that at times it is also appropriate for them to use it.

One example of the commanding style of Jesus was recorded in John 2: 14-16. If one moves past the issue of the chronology of this event in regard to the attempts to harmonize it with the Synoptic Gospels, it is apparent that John's account of the cleansing dealt with an essential question of the Jews concerning His actions. Raymond Brown translated the question as "What sign can you show us, authorizing you to do these things?"⁶⁵ Jesus responded that it would be the sign of the resurrection which of course validated His divinity. The uniqueness of Christ's position did not prevent Him from sharing His authority with His disciples. An example was Mark 6: 7 in regard to unclean spirits. Here it was evident that Jesus gave His followers authority over evil.

The difficulty in using the command style is that it is effective only if used sparingly and in the appropriate situations. The authorization in Mark 6: 7 would certainly affirm the appropriateness of using the commanding style in the presence of unmitigated evil. Similarly, with certain moral issues in acute situations, there is no room for negotiation or consensus building such as with the democratic style. Further, there may be no time for patience of the coaching model. Like Paul when he exercised the commanding style in rebuking Peter for failing to be inclusive of the Gentiles,⁶⁶ modern day Christian leaders may occasionally find themselves in such a context. In such cases, they should not hesitate to employ this style as necessary.

⁶⁵Raymond E Brown, "The Gospel According to John," in *The Anchor Bible*, Vol. 1. ed. William F. Albright and David Noel Freedman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 114.

⁶⁶Galatians 2: 11-14.

Like soldiers in battle, Christian leaders may also find themselves in a grave crisis that demands immediate action. When such times occur, the Christian leader must take action. However, crises must not be created to justify the use of authority. It should be noted that Jesus made an extensive effort to diffuse crises. Often He instructed those with whom He performed miracles to remain silent. At Nazareth, His enemies were filled with rage and intended to throw Him off a cliff, “but passing through their midst, He went His way.”⁶⁷

The ultimate example of refusing to use the command style of leadership when the power was present to do so is the crucifixion of Christ. The writers of the Gospels made it clear that Jesus laid down His life willingly, not because He was not able to vanquish those who sought to kill Him. When Peter attempted to organize resistance to the His arrest, Jesus declared, “Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”⁶⁸ Christian leaders today can follow the model of Jesus in this regard. As Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee demonstrated, this style should be used “judiciously.”⁶⁹ Just because one has the power at a particular moment to use the commanding style does not mean that it is most effective choice. The restraint of Jesus at the most supreme moment of provocation is a powerful indication of perfect balance and flexibility in utilizing a variety of leadership styles as advocated from researchers in the field of emotional intelligence.

⁶⁷Luke 4: 28-30 (NAS).

⁶⁸Matthew 26: 53 (NAS).

⁶⁹Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 78.

Conclusion

The writer of Proverbs declared that “like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word that is spoken in right circumstances.”⁷⁰ In the same way that effective words are contextual, so is effective leadership. An important dimension of emotional intelligence for leadership is the ability to recognize the right response in the particular situation. Just as the life of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels gives passages to ponder in regard to what He would do in the life situations of today, there is also ample material to attempt to find an answer to the question of “How would Jesus lead?”

The interpersonal and situational interactions of Jesus that modeled leadership for His followers are too complex to be contained in Goleman’s six types of leadership styles. However, of supreme importance is that Jesus utilized all of these styles and, therefore, modeled perfectly a situational/contextual approach. Superior leaders perceive and respond based on the particular circumstances and personalities they encounter at the particular moment while poor leaders do not.

A more difficult question would be to determine the frequency order in which of the six leadership styles were utilized. The exact proportions would be debatable because at times Jesus employed multiple aspects of the various styles. Goleman noted how combining traits of the various styles indicated effective leadership. In addition, there is overlap in these categories. From this brief study it would appear that in regard to the four positively correlated styles of Goleman’s matrix, the visionary, affiliative, and coaching, are more overt in the leadership of Jesus and the democratic style is more subtle. This difference is attributable to the unique position of Jesus as the Son of God.

⁷⁰Proverbs 25: 11, (NAS).

In the negatively correlated styles, the commanding is more often present than the pacesetting. Again, no doubt the divinely authoritative position of Jesus was the key reason. Yet, in demonstrating pacesetting and commanding leadership, Jesus utilized their effective components in precisely the right circumstances and avoids the trappings of the abusive and destructive aspects that often come from the employment of these styles.

Obviously, there are other leadership systems that could be applied to the life of Jesus in the Gospels. However, the paradigm by Goleman is a helpful tool for demonstrating leadership principles that are neither time nor culture bound. Though beyond the scope of this study, there is a particular need for an examination of the factors that precipitated the movement of Jesus from one style to another and even to different combinations of styles as the situations warranted. As the leadership environment in the information age continues to distance itself from the classic rigid command and control model and more to the multifarious approach of Goleman, a more vigorous pursuit of the applicatory lessons from the flexibility of the leadership style of Jesus is likely to receive increasing interest.

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