

THE LEADER'S SENSITIVITY

(To The Needs of Those We Serve)

Text: I Kings 12:1-19

Subject: The difference between being received and being rejected.

Introduction

1. I Kings records the death of King Solomon (who reigned in Israel for 40 years).
2. Rehoboam (Solomon's son) was to take over the throne upon Solomon's death.

(But there was just one problem...)

- The people were weary from the heavy labors that Solomon had forced upon them.
- The people were desperate for a leader that was sensitive to their needs.
- The people pleaded to Rehoboam at the place of Shechem:

"Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you." (I Kings 12:4, NIV)

Question: How did Rehoboam respond to this request?

Answer: He said to the people, "Give me three days to consider it".

"Rehoboam answered, go away for three days and then come back to me for my answer." (I Kings 12:5)

(And then it happened)

After the people left, Rehoboam gets advice from two sources:

1. He calls for the elders who had served his father, who said to Rehoboam:
*"If you will be a **servant** to these people and serve them, you can be their leader forever."* (v. 7)
2. He calls for his younger friends who give Rehoboam foolish advice:
"Tell the people, if you think my father was hard on you, just wait, I'll be harder! My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions." (I Kings 12:10 & 11)

Question: What did Rehoboam do?

Answer: He chose to act on the foolish advice of his young friends.

What resulted?

- When Rehoboam announced his decision, the Israelites rebelled (and the nation of Israel was split on that very day).
- Most of the people split away from Rehoboam and made Jeroboam their King.
- The people rejected the insensitive, intimidating, manipulating "**Boss**" and exalted the "**Servant**" leader over them.
- The people resisted Rehoboam because he chose to intimidate (and dominate) them into subjection.
- The people renounced Rehoboam due to his unwillingness to humble himself before his people and identify with their needs.

The result was disastrous...

1. Because of Rehoboam's **pride** and refusal to humble himself before God, Rehoboam lost his influence as a leader.
2. Because of Rehoboam's **insecurity**, he chose to use carnal means to rule those around him.
3. Because of Rehoboam's **insensitivity**, he was resented by those under his authority (and ultimately rebelled against and deserted.)
4. Because of Rehoboam's **harshness**, God gave the nation over to a man who would **serve** the people. (We must always eventually loose what we obtain in carnal ways.)

Fact: Out of the original twelve tribes of Israel, Judah and Benjamin stayed with Rehoboam as king. (The other ten tribes went with Jeroboam who had no personal agenda and a genuine servant's motivation, until he later did evil.)

The moral of the story?

1. A **servant's heart** is the most important quality in ministering to the needs of the people!
2. A **servant's heart** will never allow us to "Lord it over" those entrusted to our care!
3. A **servant's heart** will allow us (and provoke us) to bear the burdens of those in need of a helping hand!

My Prayer

"Lord, help me to never be harsh or domineering which is born out of insecurity because of a refusal to walk transparent in the fear of the Lord."

Remember while serving people in need...

1. When a candle is newly lighted and needs to be moved, it must be carried at a slow pace or it will be extinguished.
2. A fire which is almost expiring may be revived by a gentle breath, but it will be blown out if the bellows are plied at full force.
3. You can drown a little plant by watering it too much.
4. You can destroy a lovely flower by exposing it to too much sun.

Remember what a biblical servant is:

A servant (DOULOS/DIAKONOS) is defined in Scripture as:

"One who advances others at the expense of them self, cares less who gets the credit, refuses to complain and doesn't need to be thanked for their service."

Nuf Sed!
Bill Kirk