

Series: Reintroducing Jesus  
Text: Luke 6:12-16 part 3  
June 7, 2015: Gospel Community Study Guide

*This Study Guide is based on a sermon by Dr. Joshua Mack. You will find the link to the sermon here.*

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?sid=6815917458>

### **Getting Started:**

How would you define leadership? In other words, what does it mean to be a leader? What are some characteristics that you think are true of all effective leaders?

### **The Big Idea:**

Over the past several weeks we have been looking at Luke 6:12-16. For the most part we have talked very generally about what it means to be an apostle. This past Sunday however we looked more closely at the apostles as individuals. Specifically, we began studying the life of Simon Peter.

If there is one word that might characterize the role Simon Peter played in the life of the early church, it would be leader.

Can anyone think of any illustrations of his important leadership role?

Looking especially at the book of Acts, we see very quickly that Simon's impact is indisputable. But what exactly is it that made Simon Peter such a great leader?

### **The Reason Why:**

Now whether you realize it or not, this is an important question for us to think about. You might be saying to yourself, "Leadership, oh man, I don't have time to think about leadership, I am just trying to survive." But, really, we have to think about leadership for at least two reasons.

First, we are going to be led. We are either going to be led well or we are going to be led poorly. We need to be able to identify the difference between good leaders and bad leaders so we are able to turn from bad leadership to follow good leadership.

Second, we want to make an impact ourselves. Leadership at the end of the day is about impacting someone else, influencing them, and whether we become leaders of many people or just a few, all of us as Christians should want to make an impact on others for Christ, and to make that impact, it helps to slow down and think, what is it that makes someone a great leader?

### **Into the Text:**

As we look at Simon, we are going to see three key components behind his tremendous influence. In this study together, we'll just consider briefly the first. The first factor that may help us understand Simon's influence has to do with his natural gifting. In other words, what do we know about Simon as a person and how may God have used that to mold him into a leader?

To get you think about this, let me ask you some questions about Simon. Look up the verses if you need help:

Where was Simon born? (John 1:44)

Where was Simon living when we meet him in Luke? (Luke 4:31,38) What was Simon doing there? (Luke 5:10) Who all was part of this business? (Mark 1:19,20)

What was Simon doing sometime before he followed Jesus? (John 1:35-42)

What are some of the highlights of Simon's career in following Jesus? What are some of the lowlights?

John MacArthur summarizes what we can learn from Simon about some of the natural qualities in the people that God tends to use as leaders. Read this quote out loud and then afterwards have various members share their response to it:

"The first one is **inquisitiveness**. When you're looking for a leader, find somebody who asks a lot of questions...it's really important. People who don't ask questions don't wind up as leaders. You say, "I'm not sure I understand that." Very simple, curiosity is critical to leadership. People who are content with what they don't know and content with what they don't understand and content with what they haven't analyzed and content with problems they haven't solved can't lead. Leaders have to have an almost insatiable curiosity to know what they don't know, to understand what they don't understand. They understand that knowledge is power. Whoever has the information has the lead. If you want to find a leader, look for somebody who asks a lot of questions....That's the fabric of leadership... In the gospels, Peter asks more questions than all the other Apostles combined. I mean ,.. and we only probably have a part of it, it was probably all day every day for Jesus. "Yeah, Peter, just a minute, I'll answer you just as soon as I'm done with this person."

That takes me to the second point, **initiative**...Peter not only asked all the questions, he was always the first one to answer any question posed by Christ. And he would just dive in where angels fear to tread. Jesus said, "Who do people say that I am?" "Oh, they say You're Jeremiah, one of the prophets..." No, no, no. "Who do you say?" "You're Christ the Son of the living God."... During the Garden of Gethsemane, John 18, here comes the Roman soldiers from Port Antonia, 500 of them, let's say, including the high priest and all the retinue from the temple, they've come to take Jesus. Peter's there. Peter immediately, the crowd comes...swish...pulls out his sword,

takes a swing at the head of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, the high priest is out in front because he was the dignitary of dignitaries, so he's in the front, beside him is his servant. Peter tried to cut his head off, he ducked, lost his ear... But I mean, just think about it. There's a whole Roman army there, what does he think he's going to do? Go through the whole group? One at a time...shick, shick, shick. I mean...sometimes this initiative doesn't take the long view, or the broad view. It's just...boom. But that's the stuff of leadership....

There's a third element of raw material that leaders have and that's **involvement**. A true leader is in the middle of the action. A true leader is not sitting in the background telling everybody what to do while he lives a life of comfort away from the fray. A true leader goes through life with a cloud of dust around him. And that's why people follow him. People don't follow somebody somewhere else, they follow somebody in the fray. Jesus comes one night, He's walking on the water. And who out of all the disciples jumps out of the boat? Peter. There's the Lord, I'm here, I've got to get where the action is...bang, out of the boat. And he's walking on the water. And the rest of the disciples are just looking over, just kind of adjusting, trying to make sure they don't fall overboard in the storm. And he's out on the water. This is involvement, serious involvement. Jesus was there, he was here, he had to close the gap.

People look at this incident, they criticize Peter's lack of faith, he got out there, he looked around...oh, what am I doing...he started to sink. Yeah, he had weak faith. Let me tell you something about his faith. Where were the other eleven? They never got out of the boat. Talk about weak faith. Before you criticize Peter, remember where he was when he began to sink. People look at Peter's life and they say...Well, he's around the fire, you know, and he denies Jesus and he denies Jesus and the cock crows," you remember the story. But before you condemn Peter too quickly, he was alone in a position where such a temptation could hit him because he was doing his best to stay as close to Christ as he could. That's a leader. Everybody else may bail out, he stays as close to the action as he can get. I'm not interested in leaders who want to send down messages from afar, I want to see people who have a passion for the involvement."

### **Digging Deeper:**

In spite of all those natural qualities however, Simon never would have made a spiritual impact without something more significant going on in his life. He cannot be explained simply in terms of natural gifting. To understand Simon's influence you must go further and look at his commitment to Christ and then Christ's commitment to him. We are going to be thinking more carefully about these two components next Sunday when we gather as a church. This Sunday however we did look at one of Simon's fundamental spiritual commitments and that is the fact that he submitted himself completely to the authority of Jesus' Word. When Jesus said follow, Simon followed, no matter what the cost.

What price was Simon willing to pay in order to do what Jesus wanted?

No matter how gifted we are, we will never be the kind of leader God wants us to be or have the influence He wants us to have, unless we have made the same commitment ourselves. Are we willing to submit ourselves to the authority of Jesus' word over our lives no matter what the cost? The way we submit today to the authority of Jesus is by submitting our lives to what He has to say in His Word. Are you willing to do what the Bible says no matter what?

The great test of everything we do is the place Jesus occupies in it. Is He really Lord over what we are doing or is He just a person for us to talk about on Sundays? Is he in charge of us? Or are we living as if we were in charge of Him? Does He decide things in our lives or is he only there to help us get done what we want to get done? This is essential for us to ask ourselves. As A.W. Tozer once wrote, "All religious activities, from the simplest act of an individual Christian to the ponderous and expensive operations of a whole denomination, may be proved by the answer to the question, Is Jesus Christ Lord in this act?"

What are some common excuses people give for not submitting themselves to the authority of Jesus' word? What are some motivations you might give to someone who is struggling to submit to Christ's authority in his or her life?

### **Summing Up:**

What are some things you have learned about leadership from our study? What are some ways you would like to grow as a leader? What questions do you still have that you would like to discuss?