

MONDAY MANNA

28 August 2017

MARKS OF A GREAT LEADER

By Robert J. Tamasy

I seem to be an information packrat. I collect articles, columns and various notes, and hang onto them for years for future reference, not knowing when or how I might use them. Recently I came across a column from 2005 that appeared in the respected business journal, *Forbes*. Entitled "Five Marks of a Great Leader," it was written by Paul Johnson, a British historian and author. He asked, "What makes a real leader? How can we recognise one?"

Johnson offered the view that among the qualities great leaders possess, they must include:

- *Moral courage*: "The willingness to stick to one's beliefs, to pursue a course of action in the face of overwhelming criticism, great adversity and the faintheartedness of friends and allies."
- *Judgment*: "Courage without judgment is pointless and may be dangerous. When I need advice turn to someone who has knocked about the world and cheerfully survived 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.'"
- *A sense of priority*: "Sorting out the truly big from the small takes an innate horse sense that's not given to most human beings...it is nearly always the hallmark of a great leader."
- *Disposal and concentration of effort*: "Leaders must allocate their time and energy."
- *Humour*: "A subordinate always serves more zealously and obeys more faithfully a leader who can joke, and the public warms to a potentate who can make them laugh."

Reading the Bible, we find these traits also emphasized there. Here are examples of what it says:

Moral courage. When Joshua assumed leadership of the Israelites from Moses, God emphasized the need for courage. "*Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous...*" (Joshua 1:6-9, 18).

Judgment. Being able to discern right from wrong, good vs. the best, is indispensable for effective leadership. "*... that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ*" (Philippians 1:9-10).

A sense of priority. Effective leaders never lose sight of what's most important. "*No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.... But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*" (Matthew 6:24,33).

Disposal and concentration of effort. How can energy best be expended, making certain to be able to complete critical tasks, and particularly not having to redo work due to unsatisfactory quality or workmanship? "*Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?...*" (Luke 14:28-30).

Humour. One way to maintain a good sense of humour is to avoid having an over-inflated sense of self. "*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you*" (Romans 12:3).

© 2017. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Tufting Legacies*; co-authored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's website is www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com, and his biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

What do you think of Johnson's "Five Marks of a Great Leader"? Are there any that you disagree with, or would replace with another leadership quality?

How would you define "moral courage"? Does your definition agree with that of the world around you? If not, what are the differences?

How can a leader gain a sense of priority, and then maintain priorities once they are established in the face of other competing interests and demands?

Consider obstacles that arise in attempting to make God the first priority in business, as well as one's personal life. Why can it be difficult to accomplish this on a daily, consistent basis?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about principles it presents, consider the following passages:

Joshua 10:25-28

Matthew 7:24-27

Luke 10:27

Romans 12:2

1 Thessalonians 5:16