

Theology Pub March 2020 Leadership

1. What are the qualities of a good leader? I.e., what makes a good leader a good leader?
2. Consider the story from the book of John (13:1-17) about Jesus washing his disciples' feet. In this story, Jesus gets up from the table during the last supper to personally wash his disciples' feet. After he finishes, he says the following:

Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Very truly, I tell you, servants^[d] are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.

- What do you think Jesus meant by that?
 - Should leaders always lead, or should they sometimes be followers? Is Jesus exhibiting a leader/follower dynamic? Can you think of other examples of this dynamic in leaders?
3. What does it mean to be a leader in the context of a Christian disciple, or for someone of another faith?
 4. Can you think of other examples in the Bible about good leadership? What about examples of good leadership in your own lives, or in popular culture?
 5. What are the qualities of a bad leader? I.e., what makes a bad leader bad?
 6. Consider King Herod I (or Herod the Great), who ruled Judea at the time Jesus was born. Herod endowed his realm with massive fortresses and splendid cities. He patronized the Olympic Games, and he balanced ruling over both pagans and Jews. Yet, he also murdered one of his wives and his firstborn son, and he was also responsible for the murder of male children two years old and under in Bethlehem. Does Herod deserve his title of “Herod the Great?”
 7. Consider Steve Jobs, the business leader of Apple. He was highly successful, and led Apple to corporate greatness after the company had become stagnant for more than a decade under different leadership. However, according to Psychology Today, “He was obsessively controlling, and given to fits of rage, throwing tantrums and yelling at employees and board members. He could tear down someone's ideas, or the person him/herself, in a public display. Some have said he took credit for others' ideas, and his confidence led to a sort of over-the-top arrogance.” Do you consider Steve Jobs a bad leader or a good leader? Or is this more of a grey area?

8. Can you think of other examples in your own lives, history, or popular culture that remind you of Herod, Steve Jobs, or bad/grey area leaders in general?

9. In 2017, Gallup International conducted an international poll to determine the favorable and unfavorable scores of major global leaders (they interviewed 53,769 persons globally). Consider the following favorability scores:

German Chancellor Angela Merkel: 49%
French President Emmanuel Macron: 45%
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi: 30%
British Prime Minister Theresa May: 38%
Chinese President Xi Jinping: 37%
Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud: 26%
Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu: 25%
Iranian President Hassan Rouhani: 24%
Turkish President Erdogan: 28%
US President Donald Trump: 31%
Pope Francis: 56%

What do you take away from those scores, if anything? Fun fact: In 2015, just before he left office, then-President Barack Obama had a 59% global favorability rating from Gallup International.