

## Coffee with Phil. 23. Leadership 101

### Introduction

Well, hi and welcome to the podcast. Welcome to coffee with Phil. My name's Phil Strong and I am happy to be with you. I am glad you're with me, and wherever you are, driving in the car, walking on the road, or walking along the roadside, wherever you are I hope that you enjoy our time together, where we can learn to live a life of purpose on purpose.

Let's be intentional about the life that we're living. Did I say intentional? I don't think so. But it sounded like it in my headphones. Let's be intentional about the life we're creating. That is our legacy. In fact, the life we live is the story that reflects who we are, and today I want to speak with you about the topic of leadership.

Now before you think, ohh this might not apply to me because I don't lead anyone. That's precisely why it does apply to you. First and foremost, I have a belief that we are all called to lead ourselves well, and quite frankly, the reason most people live a fruitless, ineffective life is because they don't even lead themselves. They allow life to happen. They become a victim and they go with the flow so much that they just slow down the toilet. Let not that be you.

Let's talk about self leadership and in fact also I will today you use that as a segue to seek a way that we might serve others, and that's essentially what leadership is. Why am I doing this? Well, I move in plenty of different circles. I am involved in all different parts of the community and I would have to say over the years I've seen many, many people who have aspirations to be a leader, but I don't find many people who are willing to walk the pathway into leadership.

Leadership is not something that we get by right. It's not even something that comes because of a title, a leadership mantle, the life and the fruit of the life we live as a leader is, in fact, what others experience, and see as fruit in our lives, not just the job title or the tag we give ourselves.

So, I would confess to you that I don't necessarily consider myself to be a fantastic example of this. Whilst I am in a position of leadership, I'm very aware, in fact I'm more and more aware every day of the deficiencies I have as a leader, and so I'm trying to remedy that. I'm trying to put people around me that help with that, so I'm not going to hold myself up as an example of what it means to be a leader in this podcast. So, rest assured, we will find someone much more perfect, and I suppose the best example I could think of was Jesus.

So, I want to read to you a passage of scripture that just points us in the right direction about what the whole point of this session, Leadership 101, what does this episode lead us to? Here in Philippians chapter 2, verse 5, the author his name is Paul, he writes this. He says you must have the same attitude that Jesus had, though Jesus was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges. He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on the cross.

Well, folks, that's the process, what's the benefit? Well, we'll keep reading. Why would you want to humble yourself in obedience to God. Therefore, Paul writes in verse 9, God elevated Jesus to the highest place of honour and gave him the name above all other names that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven, and on Earth, and under the Earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God our Father.

Hey, one, I'm not trying to make you into Jesus, so you're not going to get elevated to the place of highest honour with a name above every name, that's Jesus. But we could certainly live by his example, and that's the whole point of this episode, that we would have an aspiration firstly to lead ourselves, that the fruit of our lives would also be influencing others, and we're not an influencer just because we call ourselves an influencer. We're an influencer because of the fruit in our lives, and Jesus is the example of how we might structure our lives.

So, I want to look at this. I want to look at a couple of things that Jesus said that give us a clue into how we might embrace the position, and the key really here, the position that we would adopt, to live a life like Jesus did, as someone who positively influences other people toward God, which is what I'm calling Leadership 101, we find in verse 7 the key for us. Jesus gave up his divine privileges. Other translations literally mean he emptied himself of all that he had, and he took the humble position of a slave.

## **If you want to be great**

Now, if I was trying to motivate you, I would not be pitching to you that you should take the humble position of a slave. But this is not a motivational talk. This is a podcast where we try and embrace a life of purpose on purpose, and I'm telling you that I am learning the best way to become a leader is to become a slave.

Ohh well, now that you've probably turned that ohh 90% of people probably turned it off by now, but if you're still listening, well done. Let's keep going because Jesus said this, let's jump across to Matthew Chapter 20, and in Matthew, really interesting situations happening, because what's going on is two of his disciples, James and John are trying to get favour, and they're trying to lobby themselves and position themselves to be the favoured ones of his crew. They even get mum involved. Mum comes to Jesus and she asks a favour, please put my two boys in the place of honour. Now you can tell straight away from what I just read you earlier, that Jesus is not going to be favourable towards this attitude, because he knows the best way to get elevated is to be humble, and this is not a position of humility. But we'll read on.

He's like, look, you know, you might wanna follow me, but you might not be able to walk the pathway I'm on, and then he says this, look, among you guys, meaning us, among us. It will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must first be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. Oh my goodness. There it is again, two like, we've had this word twice. He took the humble position of a slave. Who wants to be first, must become the slave. We'll talk about that in a second in the and later in the podcast.

But look at this, for even the son of man came not to be served, but to serve others and give his life as a ransom for many. If you want to be great, you must become the least, if you want to be a leader, you must come to serve others.

So leadership 101 is servant leadership, the way that we get favour before God, is the way we humble ourselves to serve others in servant leadership and in this part here, we're saying give our life as a ransom for many. What does this look like for me? Well, I have, I've got many aspirations. I've got many hopes, and I've got many dreams, and what I've chosen to do is put those in a box before God, and I've said OK, I give them to you.

If you know me, or you've listened to my podcast, you will understand I have a background in entrepreneurship, and business, in making money and helping others make money, creating wealth and essentially leading people into pathway of prosperity and fruit, that's something I really enjoy, but I've had to put it in the box, and I've had to say, you know what? What does God want me to do in this season of my life? To be a servant to him first and foremost, and then to others?

So, what I'm saying is I'm not being bitter about it. I'm not being, hey, look at me, how awesome I am, or please have pity on me. What I'm saying is the life of servanthood is a life of choosing to put aside our preferences, our desires, in order that we would come to a place, we would serve others, and as a ransom.

Now, what's a ransom? A ransom is a price that's paid in order to set others free. Now that's really interesting. So if, I'm a verbal processor, so I'm processing this as I'm talking to you, so have a little bit of tolerance for me. But I'm thinking about the saying, look, I've put aside what I would prefer to do in order that I would do what God asks me to do, and in doing so I'm becoming a ransom, meaning I'm choosing for my life to be the price that's paid to set others free.

When I choose to think about that in a healthy way, I now understand that my life becomes the price tag that enables others to be doing things that they couldn't do if they weren't free. This is just liberating for me. I'm sitting here literally in the studio thinking about this going, you know what? I'm prepared to continue to be the ransom, I'm prepared to continue to be the servant leader. I'm prepared to be the one who will put aside what I want or what I prefer, or what I'd rather be doing. I would rather choose that, and serve God by serving others, so that people could find liberty and freedom. I mean, that is a motivation for me. It's what gets me out of bed. It's what helps me to climb obstacles. It's what helps me to pick myself up, dust myself off, and move on in life. It's what enables me to find the humility to forgive others when they need to be forgiven, and you can catch the last podcast to hear more about that. But if you want to be great, first you must become a servant, and Jesus is our example.

## **Seek and save that which is lost**

Let's jump to another passage because I'm really going to challenge you to think about how you're going to live like this. But for instance, at the beginning I think I just talk about where I'm at, and so I'm going to jump across to Luke chapter 19, and this is the story where Jesus goes and has a cup of tea or coffee with Zaccheaus, and they have a feed, and there's a whole bunch of joy and happiness, and Jesus gets judged because he's eating with a tax collector, and look, Jesus says, guys, guys, it's not about what you think I should be doing. And verse 10. Here's the key for the son of man. Jesus uses that phrase to talk about himself. The son of man came to seek and save that which is lost. So, he can save that which is lost, and so we've got to understand that a servant leader. The leader that. Jesus wants us to be first and foremost leading our own lives.

Guys, if you're not going to lead your life, then someone else is and then you're just gonna find yourself on the wrong path. You gotta lead yourself first, but to be influencing others towards positive lifestyle, a life of purpose on purpose. A servant leader is one who seeks, to seek and save that which is lost, I'm connecting the dots here servant leaders, one who creates opportunities or solutions that help others out of hopelessness.

So not everyone's hopeless, I get that not everyone's lost. I get that. But what if we became motivated to find? Seek where Jesus came to seek? What if we were trying to find or seek those who were lost, or circumstances that were lost, or families that were struggling in their own struggles, and we decided to be part of the solution.

Now for me. I have a practical nature. I am someone that likes to build things I like to make pathways and so often one of the ways that I suppose I've learned to be an example of this is in a situation that I'm involved in, I might suddenly go OK what would Jesus do? But how would Jesus help them to find hope? And how can I do that? And sometimes that's about building bridges for them. Sometimes that's saying, hey, I've got a tool in my toolbox that I'd like to give you and that's going to help you to climb out of this hole, or it's help you to fix the broken window or it's going to be a way that you might find a better job. It's going to be a way that you might communicate with your spouse.

My job is to seek out to find those situation, and to be part of the answer in partnership with Jesus, now we've got to be very clear here. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, that we read about in Matthew 20. They thought they were so awesome that they deserved to be at the front that, quite frankly, as a pathway to you getting shot down.

## **A bond servant**

So, what I'm not saying is that I'm awesome, you should watch me. What I'm not saying is you should aspire to be receiving accolades for your good work. No, no, no. You should be a servant that humbles themselves to a position of a bond servant. Now we're going to come back to this word now that I mentioned earlier, Jesus was a slave. He humbled himself in obedience to the position of a slave. That's Philippians 2 verse 7. But another word that is translated for that is bond servant, slave is translated as bond servant.

Now you might think oh that sounds horrible and you know in our Western mindset where we like to be comfortable and have life easy and have people praise us, it does sound horrible but this is not the way the Hebrew people, or the Jewish people or followers of Jesus would understand it. Because in the reading of the Old Testament, which was the Bible, they had in Jesus Day, they would understand that people like Moses was called a bond servant. OK, people like David, King David, was called a bond servant. Even the prophet Elijah was called a bond servant, and so I have to say, when I look at this, I'm like, I like these guys when I read about them in the Bible. Moses he's a hero, David. He's a hero, Elijah. He's a hero now. All for different reasons.

I love this story. I love the evidence of the fruit in their lives, and I love the way they adopted our leadership mindset of being a servant to other people, so I admire them, therefore I want to emulate them. So I'm looking at this something OK, they want to be a bond servant. Moses wants to be a bond servant. David wants to be a bond servant. Elijah wants to be a bond servant. Maybe I should be a bond servant or Jesus. He was a bond servant, humbled himself and obedience.

As a bond servant, let me explain what this means. I did some research. Don't worry, I've done it for you, and here's what I discovered, a bond servant is someone who sells themselves to another for the benefit of the other. A bond servant is someone who sells themselves to another for the benefit of another. Now this is a horrible picture for you, but it's the best picture for you. This is willing submission to let go of control and be a servant to someone else in their situation.

I would go further than this and I would say to you Moses gave his life, by the time he got a turn around moment at the burning bush, he then gave his life to be a servant to the nation, it was a lifetime commitment. I would say to you that David, from the moment he was anointed future king, he then fought Goliath, he hid in the cave, but he was always finding a way to stay on the path that God had for him as a bond servant, a willingly submitted slave who gave his life to God's purposes. That's the key.

So, how do we be a leader? In this day and age, the way Jesus was, how do we not just have an aspiration to be a leader, but be willing to walk the pathway toward leadership? It's humility, like Jesus had, that makes us willing to give our lives to the purposes of God for being a solution to other people. Now you might think oh this is a bit deep and I don't really wanna do that. I just want to get on with, you know, doing my job, or living my life, or raising my family. I'll do this later. You know, when I'm not so busy or when I'm not so tired. I'll do it later in a different season of life. You don't understand me.

And I'm like, friend, you need to wash your mouth out with soap. You don't know how many days you've got left on Earth. But know this, you will answer for your attitude every day. You will answer for your attitude when you meet Jesus face to face and it might be tomorrow. So don't think you've got plenty of time. Don't think you've got a different season. Don't waste a moment. Get on and choose to be like Jesus, to humble yourself and obedience, and be a willing servant, who has a life commitment to the purposes of God to serve other people.

## **Serve God by serving others**

I used a phrase earlier and I want to close with this as we end our time together today, but I used a phrase earlier and this is it. We should choose to serve God by serving others. We are called as disciples of Jesus to worship God, and that we should. Our lives should point to him. Our lives should be an expression of who God is and it should be a message to others of who God is. I say this all the time, friends, people don't read the Bible, they read your life, they read your life and the fruit of your life to determine if they believe in who God is, and if you're a Christian, you say I live my life to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus, then. Well you can, words cheap, but your actions and your fruit is what counts.

So we should serve God by serving others, and I want to close with the scripture. I found this passage in the end of Colossians Chapter 3. Paul is writing to us, the church, and he says, slaves, there it is again guys. Slaves obey your earthly masters in everything you do, try to please them all the time, not just when they're watching you, serve them sincerely, because of your reverent fear of the Lord. So, whatever you do and your job, whatever you do as a volunteer, whatever you do as a family member, serve others sincerely because of your fear of the Lord. Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord, rather than for people, remember the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward and the master you're serving is Christ.

You know, I've got to say as a Church pastor this encourages me, because sometimes I get to the end of Sunday and I feel, or any day of the week to be honest, the way I live my life, that I get disappointed. I'm

like, man, that didn't go the way I hoped it would, or I didn't see the outcomes that I had dreamed about, and recently I had to get some help on this from one of my supervisors and some of my friends, and they all said the same thing. They said don't judge your effectiveness by the response of other people. You are required to serve them because God asks you to and you're doing it for God first and foremost. Don't judge your effectiveness by the response of other people, remember, work for them willingly as a servant, as though you are working for God.

So, when I get up and I minister as a pastor, or whether I lead as a leader or whether as I run projects, or disciple people, or just have cups of tea with other people. I've got to remember that I'm doing it as a servant of God first, and the way that I'm a servant of God, is that I'm a servant to other people. So I want to close this by helping you to think about how you might apply this.

## **What about you? Who are you called to serve?**

The first question that I think you could ask yourself, and by that I mean you should ask the Lord to help you, is who am I called to serve? What's a demographic of people that I have been shaped and prepared to serve?

Kathy's, my wife Kathy at the moment is preparing her second book that is designed to help young girls, and she's always known that she was shaped, designed and prepared, as someone who would be primarily serving young girls and young women as a primary target. I know that I get most inspired when I work with business leaders and community leaders, but that doesn't limit me from serving others.

But who are you called to serve? If you're starting out on this journey, then make it easy for yourself. Who am I called to serve? And then ask God, help me to seek and save that which is lost. So go back to Luke 19, verse 10, and look at it and understand that God is wanting you to find opportunities and people that need help, and to be the help that they need.

And so the question you'd ask yourself is how can I be that help? What do I carry? What's my gift? What's my opportunity? What I love about the story of the Good Samaritan, I think it's Luke 10, the reference there, the Good Samaritan used what he had. He put the man on his donkey. He took him to a place and he spent his money to provide the care that the man needed. That's seeking out and saving that which is lost. So you are called to, who you're called to serve, and what do you have that could help others? Where they are?

Hey, make sure you check the references. We've got references in the show notes. We've got a transcription. If you would like to review what's been shared today or find some key phrases that I've used, they'll all be in the show notes you can grab them by clicking the links at the bottom of the podcast and make sure you subscribe. We've got a new episode dropping each week and I am happy to share my life with you, with the hope that my life might be or the stories, the highs, the lows, the good, the bad and the ugly, might be something that helps you in your journey.

So, May God richly bless you wherever you are and I look forward to spending time with you again real soon. Take care.