

A major leadership lesson is using wisdom in dealing with people: The pressure they place on you – and new converts

I. PEOPLE PRESSURE

A. Our scrip shows a reality of leadership in ministry: People pressure

1. People will try and pressure you to go along with their agenda

a. **Money pressure:** 2 Kings 5:5 ...ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.

1. You need money for the work of God 2. Sometimes personal inducement will be offered

b. **Talent pressure:** Talented people – if they get upset your band/drama/CC ministry will suffer

c. **Large family pressure:** You'll lose a lot of people d. **Emotional pressure:** Guilt/tears/anger

1. 2 Kings 5:11 But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' V12 went away furious...

e. **Parental pressure:** Kids... e. **Older Saints:** f. **Powerful people pressure:**

2. There can be many reasons why people try and pressure leaders

a. **Ignorance:** King of Syria/Naaman knew nothing of being a prophet of God! Misguided

b. **Religious people:** Religion is based on pride (I know better) & self-will (I want my way)

c. **Carnal people:** Dominated by their flesh – make decisions based on their fleshly appetites

B. Some leaders struggle here

1. They don't like conflict/drama 2. They take it personally (I'm a failure – or people wouldn't be upset)

a. **Titus 2:15** These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

3. We can be tempted to give in to pressure

a. Allow people to do what they want b. Don't tell people the truth c. Don't correct/go against

II. HANDLING PRESSURE

A. We see how Elisha handled this pressure

1. He heard from God: A prophet – more than hearing Gossip

a. He no doubt had been praying – God gave him a strategy (2 Kings 6 he hears from God specific strategies)

1. 2 Kings 5:8 So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

b. This will help you withstand pressure: I know what God said to do!

2. Elisha clearly understood people: He knew that what Naaman needed was greater than what he wanted

a. Catering to his pride would keep him from experiencing God: So he didn't

1. Religious people 2. Disciples 3. Strong-willed people

a. Phil/Pat Payson came but wouldn't pray. PM made him come the same way as everyone else

3. Elisha knew Naaman needed to touch God for himself:

a. 2 Kings 5:11 But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.'"

1. People want you to do everything for them: Have you prayed? What does God's word say?

B. This is what triggers the power of God

1. 2 Kings 5:14 So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

a. This wouldn't have happened if he gave in to pressure

III. GRACE WITH NEW CONVERTS

A. We see Elisha's wisdom in dealing with a new convert

1. Naaman has been touched by God – but doesn't have full revelation

a. 2 Kings 5:17-18 So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon--when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing."

2. This is not good: But Elisha uses wisdom

a. There is something in him that wants to do right: (I want to worship the Lord)

b. Realistically: Someone he's met one time is unlikely to go back and make a major stand

3. So his response: V19 go in peace...he's not endorsing – but he's also not drawing a line in the sand

a. You're in or you're out, pal! b. Making a huge deal over issues: And you never see them again – what good did it do?

4. Elisha is leaving him to God: Change is a miracle of revelation!

a. Working with people at their level of revelation b. This is a timing issue