

The Leaders We Need

Ezra 7:10

“For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach the statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (NASB)

If leadership is an art then Ezra was a true artist. He was able to win the respect and support of the king of Persia. He influenced the king to such an extent that Ezra was not only given permission to escort God’s people out of exile back to Jerusalem but every one of his requests for material assistance was granted. The biblical writer simply and theologically comments that, in relationship with the Persian ruler, “the hand of the LORD his God was upon him” (7:6).

But Ezra was not just an artist of influence with the Persian authorities. Perhaps Ezra’s most difficult challenge was being a leader of God’s people. The biblical record indicates that leading God’s people is challenging at best -- downright infuriating at worst. Think back on Moses, Joshua, Deborah, David, Jeremiah. So how did Ezra exhibit influence over God’s people during the difficult and discouraging days of their return from exile? He did it by example. He modeled integrity. He demonstrated a godly character. He championed devotion to God. He devoted himself to the study of God’s Word and he passionately taught it to others. And, the people followed his lead. Ezra motivated God’s people to unify toward the accomplishment of a common goal; the reestablishment of a particular people in a promised place for a specific purpose.

JMJ

Point of Prayer

Lord, help me to envision what being a leader in my chosen profession would be like; an artist of influence, combining a mastery of the subject matter with godly character and a commitment to teach others for the sake of God’s greater good.