

LESSON 31 Devotional

Steps Towards Succession

Moses spent at least 40 years preparing Joshua to succeed him. Elijah, depending upon which scholar you believe, spent somewhere between six- and twenty-three-years preparing Elisha to take Elijah's role as prophet. Jesus only had three years to prepare Peter to be the rock on which the church would be built. Each of these situations and people were unique, yet God wanted their work to carry on.

In business, many people struggle with how to best prepare for the future of their business without them. Whether it's through death, retiring or selling the business, a business isn't likely to carry on unless there is some preparation of a leader or leaders to assume the responsibilities.

Let's examine how Moses, Elijah and Jesus selected and prepared for their succession.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read the following passages and make note of *who* selected these leaders as successors.
 - a. Read Numbers 27:18. "So the Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him.'"

 - b. Read 1 Kings 19:15-16. "The Lord said to him, 'Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.'"

- c. Read Luke 6:12-13. "One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. ¹³When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles."

- 2. Based on the following passages, what was the most prevalent method used to prepare the successors for their future responsibilities?

- a. Read Numbers 11:28. "Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, 'Moses, my lord, stop them!'"

- b. Read 1 Kings 19:21. "So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant."

- c. Read Luke 9:28. "About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray."

- 3. For a succession plan to be successful, the people who will be following the new leader need to be confident in the selection. After reading the following passages, discuss ways that were used to help this transition to go smoothly.

- a. Read Deuteronomy 31:7. "Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. ⁸The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.'"

- b. Read Deuteronomy 34:9. "Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses."

- 4. True success of a succession plan comes on the backside. When the people know the leader is anointed by God and they have confidence in that leader, you then have a good recipe for success. We read in Joshua 4:14, "That day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses."

After reflecting on the above passages and thoughts, what steps can you take as a leader to help your successor have the kind of favor Joshua had?
