

LEADERS LEAD...PERIOD!

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney, Associate Editor
Wednesday, 20 March 2013 00:00



Leadership can be a very lonely place and a very lonely experience. Nevertheless, those who seek to make their mark in this world must become a leader at some point in their lives; that is if they hope to leave a meaningful legacy.

There is a scene in one of my favorite movies, "Troy," that always comes to mind when I think about what leadership means to me.

In the movie, Agamemnon, king of Mycenae, has united most of Greece's kingdoms under his rule and has advanced his army upon the nation of Thessaly, hoping to include it in his collection of ever-growing conquests. Triopas, king of Thessaly, makes a deal with Agamemnon to allow each of their best warriors to fight and determine who wins the battle; rather than engaging in an all-out war that would cost thousands of lives.

After making the agreement, Triopas calls on his humongous warrior, Boagrius, to come forth for battle. His presence prompts the army of Thessaly to cheer and roar with complete confidence in the outcome of the battle. Agamemnon, on the other hand, calls on the legendary warrior Achilles, but Achilles is nowhere to be found. This prompts Triopas to smirk and leads Agamemnon to send a young messenger boy to go fetch Achilles.

Once the young messenger boy arrives at the camp, he finds Achilles asleep in his tent. He wakes Achilles up and tells him that King Agamemnon had summoned him for battle. The young messenger boy also expresses his thoughts about the warrior Boagrius and tells Achilles how afraid he would be to fight him. Achilles gets on his horse, turns to the young boy and then says, *"That's why no one will remember your name!"*

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Not only did Achilles know his role, he also knew that he was a legendary warrior who had been blessed with incomparable strength and skill. He wasn't worried about associating himself with Agamemnon, whom he despised; instead his focus was on solidifying his own destiny and being immortalized in history.

One other part of that movie that stood out to me was when Agamemnon called himself clowning Achilles for not being present and prepared to fight when he was called upon. Achilles did not take the king's comments too well and tells Agamemnon to fight his own battle. The king, knowing he could not win the battle without Achilles, humbled himself and came down off of his high horse of pride. Achilles agreed to fight and as he walked towards Boagrius, he tells Agamemnon, *"Imagine a king who fights his own battles. Wouldn't that be a sight?"*

Achilles stepped up to the plate to fight Boagrius, without fear. It didn't matter who supported him or who believed in him, Achilles had confidence in himself and was committed to his purpose. Achilles showed up to the battlefield, ready to fight; he ran up to his opponent and easily defeated Boagrius with one blow from his sword. He wasn't seeking praise or accolades for what he had done.

As a matter of fact, he was looking to take on the next challenge. After beating Boagrius, Achilles walked up to the rest of the army of Thessaly and called them out by asking, *"Is there no one else?"*

Nobody else had the nerve to fight him and King Triopas handed over his scepter to Achilles in submission. What a classic example of leadership!

King Agamemnon, on the other hand, couldn't achieve success without Achilles and he knew that. Agamemnon almost lost the battle due to his pride and as a result of him demeaning the very person he needed to help him. We see that happening a lot these days. People who fail to experience success in their endeavors because of their pride and demeaning nature.

Famous management consultant Peter F. Drucker once said, *"The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say 'I'. And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say 'I'. They don't think 'I'. They think 'we'; they think 'team'. They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don't sidestep it, but 'we' gets the credit.... This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done."*

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I've lived long enough now and have had my fair share of let downs and disappointments in life to have discovered that when God gives us a burden and a vision, it is our responsibility to carry out that vision and fulfill that burden even if we have to do it all by ourselves.

The Bible is full of examples of people who embraced leadership, even when it wasn't popular and even when they didn't always feel adequate. David slew Goliath; Moses confronted Pharaoh in Egypt; Noah built an ark; Nehemiah rebuilt the wall; Daniel faced the lions' den; and Jesus paid the ultimate price. God never equips us with a burden or a vision, without ever providing the means to carry it through to the end. If you ever find yourself pressing and getting frustrated because things aren't going your way, then you might be carrying out the wrong assignment or doing things for the wrong reasons.

You can never solely rely on others to do something that you have been called to do. Subsequently, you can't blame others because they didn't join in with you or support your cause. Each of us have a burden to carry and the vision God has placed inside of us must be carried out; with or without anyone else.

Leadership is often a lonely journey; no man will ever become a great leader if they don't have people following them.

Leaders lead! Leaders don't wait for approval; leaders don't wait for acceptance; leaders don't wait for praise. Leaders lead....period!

Jeffrey L. Boney serves as Associate Editor and is an award-winning journalist for the Houston Forward Times newspaper. Jeffrey is a Next Generation Project Fellow, dynamic, international speaker, experienced entrepreneur, business development strategist and Founder/CEO of the Texas Business Alliance. If you would like to request Jeffrey as a speaker, you can reach him at jboney1@texasbusinessalliance.org.