

THE REAL MOSES MODEL

To understand how we're called to lead we must look to the Word of God and specifically the words of Christ. It's here that our duties become clear and it's here that we learn the do's and don'ts of leadership.

It says in [Matthew 23:1-12](#) *“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for*

one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”

In the light of the concept of the so-called Moses model (a phrase sometimes used to describe the Calvary Chapel leadership structure), it's probably a good time to clarify what we mean by that terminology ... or perhaps what we should mean by it.

In order to make such a clarification, it's important to detail what the “Moses model” should never mean. After that, it is important to note what it can and should mean.

In [Matthew 23:1-12](#) Jesus exposed the version of the Moses model embraced by the scribes and Pharisees. Clearly, their way was entirely unacceptable to Jesus, and must be wholly unacceptable to any leader in any church. A pastor who follows the Pharisaic pattern should either repent or resign.

Note that these men:

- Put themselves in Moses' seat. In other words, they elected themselves as judge and jury over God's people. They acted on their own, apart from Scripture, and without reference to the direction of God Himself.
- Lived differently from their teaching. They said the right things, but lived the wrong way. Their example was a very bad one.
- Demanded much from others but were unwilling to do anything themselves. They were bosses, not servants. They led by pushing and driving people, not by example.
- Did everything to be noticed by people. They were consumed by their lust for human approval. They thought themselves as super spiritual, and wanted others to see them that way. They loved to be referred to as rabbis and fathers. They were very fond of titles.
- Distanced themselves from people. Rather than serving the people, they were the ones being served. They were not humble; they promoted and exalted themselves at every opportunity.

I've seen these kinds of leaders in action. Yes, there may have even been times when I've been one of those leaders. We must always take time to evaluate how we're living and how we're leading.

Fast forward to the New Covenant. Under the New Covenant, Jesus was the greatest example of a faithful servant and He specifically directed the

leaders He chose to follow His example ([Matthew 20:25–28](#)). Therefore when there is talk about the correct model for ministry and leadership, one must always start with Jesus. The true version of any Moses model should be melded with what many have called the Jesus model. Under the Jesus model, the only surviving and applicable parts of the Old Covenant Moses model are found in the heart of Jethro's counsel:

“Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.” ([Exodus 18:19–23](#)).

Looking closely at the original Moses model, we see that Moses was to be:

- An intercessor for the people.
- A teacher of God's Word, giving to them the whole counsel of God.
- A wise discerner of men, able to recognize giftedness and character. This would be essential for the purpose of putting others into leadership.
- One who delegates responsibility and authority according to one's ability.

One way to measure what model a pastor is operating under is to closely watch his style of leadership. A Pharisaical pastor will reside at the top, and with everyone else as underlings. They exist to do his bidding. A balanced pastor will have clear roles and authority. Each leader leads, and every leader serves. It's all for one, and one for all. The leader exists to help and bless those working in his area of responsibility, for the purpose of glorifying Jesus Christ.

To summarize: pastors and leaders should strive to emulate Jesus' style of leadership, which was a servant-leader model. As they do so, they should

add into the mix the principles Moses followed, principles he learned from his father-in-law.

If this is what a pastor means when he says he subscribes to the Moses model, he's gotten it right ... but only to the degree he has put Jesus' teachings and example of leadership in the #1 position.