

## A Leader to Follow

The local church, Christian organizations, families, and many other contexts need spiritual leaders who are worthy of following. Spiritual leaders are critical! What does this kind of leader look like? What does he or she do? In this study we look at Paul's final words to the Ephesian elders. Paul believes this will be the last time he will see them and so he is seeking to encourage and prepare them for the days ahead. A big part of how he does this is reminding them of his life and ministry. The model of Paul's life and ministry demonstrates that he was a leader to follow.

**Opening Discussion:** Who is a leader who has made a difference in your life? What is one reason why?

### Read Acts 20:17-27; 33-35

1. How does Paul describe the life and ministry he modeled before the Ephesians? What do we learn about his character? What do we learn about how he ministered among them?
2. What does Paul communicate about what he understands about his future? Why do you think he is willing to go to Jerusalem if it means possible suffering and imprisonment?
3. What do you think Paul is saying in 20:24?

Brian said:

None of us has the same calling Paul had, and yet we too have been entrusted with the Gospel. We too have people around us who don't know God. And Jesus has called us to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). As we think about what it takes to be used by God in these situations, what do we care about most? Our comfort? Staying safe? Or do we care more about being faithful to Jesus so that people hear the message of the gospel? Paul was willing to suffer for the gospel. Are we? Am I? Do we have a theology of suffering for the gospel?

4. Are you willing to suffer discomfort for the Gospel? Explain.

5. How does Paul paint the picture that he never sought personal gain through his ministry?

Brian said:

We all have a sphere of influence. We all have people in our lives that are impacted by the character of our lives and our ministry. And so at a personal level, what aspects of Paul's model do you need to grow in? Humility? Boldness? Willingness to suffer? Following the Spirit? Valuing the gospel more than comfort and safety? Ask God to develop you in that area.

6. What is one aspect of Paul's model that you would like to ask God to develop and deepen in you?

7. What commands does Paul give to the elders (vv. 28-32)?

8. As they assume full responsibility for the church in Ephesus, what kinds of priorities does Paul give to them?

9. Though most of us will not be elders in a local church, what principles of leadership can we glean for ourselves in areas where we are entrusted with some kind of spiritual leadership (e.g., in church, groups, family, etc.) from the priorities that Paul gives the Ephesians elders?