Introduction

Leadership has certainly become a buzz word in today’s Christian community. Googling “Christian leadership” will provide over 9 million hits. Searching for “Christian leadership books” on Amazon yields over 6,000 results.

Interestingly, neither the Greek of the New Testament nor the Hebrew of the Old Testament has a word that is translated “leadership” in English. The word “leadership” occurs only once in the entire NAS and ESV, only 4x in the NIV, and not at all in the KJV. This does not mean that leadership is unimportant in the Bible. But it does mean we have to take a different approach, and it could mean that our modern Western focus on leadership is skewed.

The Old Testament has its own unique way of teaching about leadership. It does so primarily through language and story. The Hebrew word generally used to refer to what we call the Pentateuch, is Torah. This word, torah, is translated “law” in the NT. Hearing the word “law” might give you the image of a judge, a gavel pounding, and a verdict of guilty or innocent with resulting punishment or release. This is a faulty picture of the Pentateuch. The word torah comes from the root word in Hebrew instruction, with the “sense of stretching out the finger, or the hand, to point out a route.” The Old Testament teaches us. Tuck this word away. We’ll come back to it later.

We have become a culture that identifies ourselves by our work or our position. We often have the mistaken idea that there are leaders and there are followers, shepherds and sheep, pastors and congregants. We may think that a leader is someone “who holds a position of authority and responsibility.” There is both truth and a lie in that idea.

Bill Thrall and fellow authors state, “All of us lead in some respect: as a big sister, a boss, an adviser for a friend, or a role model for our children. And all of us choose whom we will follow. We all participate in the shaping of our own future and produce some degree of inspiration or discouragement in the lives of others.” Hersey and Blanchard write that “leadership occurs anytime one attempts to influence the behavior of an individual or group, regardless of the reason

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1 The word “leadership” does not occur in the KJV, occurs only once in the NASB, ESV translations; and 4x in NIV.
... clearly none of us can avoid leadership altogether. We all influence others.”⁵ Most simply put, leadership is about influence.

**Godly leadership is being a conduit of God’s influence in your world.**

Tonight we’ll explore the foundations of godly leadership in two parts. Part 1 will cover some groundwork from creation language and narrative (Gen 1-4). Part II will look at three key images that the OT uses to teach us about leadership.

So, let’s begin by spending some time looking at the creation account. When we understand how something is made and why it’s made, it’s easier to know what it’s supposed to look like, and what needs fixing when it’s broken.

**Part I: Genesis 1-4: Why are we here and what’s that supposed to look like**

As Genesis 1 unfolds, we see God creating an environment. From comparisons with ancient Near Eastern literature, the first chapter of Genesis can be compared with accounts of building a Tabernacle or a Temple. The heavens and the earth were created as a physical place where God reigns in unrivaled majesty, displaying His order and His goodness. The crowning work of creation occurs in Gen 1:26-28.⁶

Then God said, "Let Us make man (‘adam) in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ God created man (‘adam) in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth. (Gen. 1:26-28)

We need to look at a little Hebrew in this passage. Most English translations do not distinguish between the two different Hebrew words for “man” used in Gen 1 and in Gen 2. The word translated “man” in Gen 1:26-2:21, is the Hebrew word ‘adam. This word is used only two ways in the Old Testament: either corporately to mean human beings, the gender neutral mankind, or else it is used as the proper name, Adam, the husband of Eve. I do not understand the mystery of God’s surgical procedure in Genesis 2:21-22, how the wife was taken from the human being that was originally one ’adamm, and then the ’adam minus the wife became one male-gendered man, the proper name Adam. But we can take note that the proper name Adam does not begin until Gen 2: 22, after God morphed the one human being into two as husband and wife. In Gen 2:22 a new Hebrew word is introduced, which the English also translates as “man” at the introduction of the woman. But the Hebrew word for human being used from Gen 1:26 – 2:21 and the word man introduced in Gen 2:22 are not related, as we shall see.

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⁶ New American Standard version used unless indicated otherwise. Most English translations do not distinguish between the two different Hebrew words for “man” as humanity composed of male and female, and “man” as husband, solely male-man.”
Much has been written about the *imago dei*, the “image of God.” Archaeology and literature from the ancient Near East discovered within the last hundred years has helped give us an understanding of what this would have likely meant to the Hebrew audience. An *image*, or statue, of a ruling authority over a land bore the weight of the one it represented. 7 To bear the *image of God* is to bear His authority. Notice that Genesis is meticulous to emphasize the fact that all human beings, male and female, were created for the purpose of representing God with His authority, under His authority on the earth. That was our purpose. That still is our purpose in Christ.

What makes us unique as humanity is not that we were created male and female; because all animals and even plants have gender. What makes us unique is that we were created in the image of God, created with the purpose of reigning over the physical universe as God’s representatives, His royal servants, stewards over this physical universe. This expectation as well as this imprint was created in each one of us. The task at hand is how to do it, and how to do it well.

Let’s get back to our text, and take note of something that is *not* said here. Humanity, as male and female, was to rule and subdue the entire terrestrial world except one thing: each other. 8 Neither the right nor the responsibility was granted to humans by God at creation to rule over each other.

The first point from the creation account is: **We all were created with the responsibility to represent God’s authority in the world.**

In order to represent God, we have to know Him. To know Him, we have to be walking in close relationship with Him: waiting on Him as a servant; following Him as sheep to their Shepherd, communicating with Him as a wise child who asks questions, listens to and obeys their Father and Mother.

**Genesis 2** provides us with details about our expected responsibilities and relationships on this earth. In Gen 2:7, we are told that the LORD God formed humanity, ‘*adam*, from the dust of the
ground. The Hebrew word for ground is ‘adamah. Humanity, the ‘adam (a masculine singular noun) was formed from the dust of the ground, the ‘adamah (a Hebrew feminine singular noun).9

The language beautifully describes the interdependency between all of life for nurture and provision. We were made to receive our sustenance from the earth that we were commanded to superintend. There is an ordered cycle in creation: humanity as earth’s caretaker, earth as God’s provision for us, but God always as Creator and Lord.

Adam was declared by the LORD to need a helper along side, or opposite him (Gen 2:18). If you study the nearly one hundred uses of the word “helper” in the Hebrew, it is used almost exclusively of one of the following: predominately to God as our helper, secondarily as military help, and thirdly, as part of proper name referring to the Lord as helper. In creation, a suitable god-like helper could not be found by forming another ‘adam from the ‘adamah, nor by any animals, which were also formed from the ‘adamah (Gen 2:19).

In Genesis 2:21-24, God took from Adam’s side and constructed a “woman”, in the Hebrew “yishah” (feminine singular noun) because she was built from side of the “yish,” the second word for “man” (masculine singular noun). These two new words, Woman and Man are used for the first time in Gen 2:22-23. The statement then follows, “For this cause a man (yish) shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave (stick, adhere) to his wife (yishah) and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). In Hebrew, this word for man, yish, is the same word for husband; and the word, yishah, is the same word for wife. The important point made by repetition in 2:22 and 23 of the yishah being taken out of the yish is made clear in verse 24: as the husband and wife were one flesh in adam, they are to continue as one flesh as husband and wife.

Paul resonates this imagery in 1 Cor 11:8-12:10

For man did not come from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for man. For this reason a woman should have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. In any case, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman. But all things come from God.

The oneness they had before the wife (yishah) was constructed from the side of the husband (yish) is to continue, united as one ‘adam: one flesh, in submission to God.

You may have noticed that I used the words “construct” and “built” when referring to the woman being constructed from the side of the man. That is the Hebrew choice of words. Although the word “side” can be translated “rib” in 2:21-22, almost every other use of this Hebrew word refers to the sides of the Ark of the Covenant, the sides of the Tabernacle, or the sides or chambers of the Temple. 11 The man and woman, husband and wife, are the opposite sides of the Tabernacle of God’s dwelling presence.

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9 In 2:19 we can also note an interrelatedness in that the animals were also formed from the ‘adamah, the ground.
10 NET Bible translation
11 The Hebrew root word tzelah צֵלָה occurs about forty times in the Old Testament.
This provides an early image that Paul recalls in Eph 5:22-32, of the marriage relationship as the illustration of the church.\textsuperscript{12} We can recognize Paul’s exposition of this also in 1 Cor 11:3, for using the metaphor of head and body between the Father and the Son, Christ and the church, and the husband and the wife. In the human body, the head cannot exist without the body. This is not true of Christ and the church, since God has no needs and certainly can live without the church. So, we see an imperfect metaphor here. But continuing on with the metaphor, in the human body, the head is part of the body, and neither can exist without the other. The nerve center of the head flows down through the spine, and the blood supply from the heart flows up into the head. The body holds up the head, and the body expresses the ideas and actions of the head.

Let me repeat this last line again: the body holds up the head, and the body expresses the ideas and actions of the head. Here we can hear Christ’s words: everything the Father says, I say; and everything the Father does, I do – we are One (John 14:9-14). The Father gave authority to the Son. After His death, resurrection and ascension, the Son shares all of His rightfully, legally earned authority with the church as His Spirit-indwelt representative. How does the husband share his authority with the wife? Is the pastor the head of the church? These are questions with which we must grapple. The understanding of headship is the crux of rightly discerning the relationship between husband and wife. To interject concepts of human hierarchy and authority in the interpretation of Gen 2 is to add an element that is foreign to the language of the chapter and misses the spirit of the text.

In Genesis 2 there is no power language, except possibly in the word “helper.” Rather, what the language graphically illustrates is the interdependence between ground and humanity and between husband and wife. Humanity (ʼadam, ms) is formed from the ground (ʼadāmah, fs). Woman (yishāh, fs) is constructed from the man (yish, ms).\textsuperscript{13}

Another element of chapter 2 is important to the images we will explore in Part II. In verse 15, humanity was given the mandate to, literally, “serve and protect, or keep” the delightful garden. The words employed here are priestly terminology in the Bible. As the priests were to serve in the Tabernacle, humanity was to serve in the earth that God created to be the place of His dwelling presence (Isa 66:1), which Revelation 21-22 tells us it will be once again.

**In Genesis 3,** we see how relationships were twisted after the Fall. The serpent is clearly to be understood as representative of the adversary of God and humanity.\textsuperscript{14} The serpent promised the man and woman that they would be like God. They were already like God, created in His image. But caving to the appeal of self-determination, the desire to know what was bad as well as good, they forfeited harmony for conflict.

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\textsuperscript{12}It is interesting that the husband is told to cleave to his wife, using the same word that Ruth would later speak when she “cleaves” to Naomi and follows her (Ruth 1:14).

\textsuperscript{13}Although some complementarian camps make much of the naming of the woman as grounds for male authority over the woman, there is error in the grammatical arguments. And although some egalitarians make nothing of the first husband being given the proper name Adam and the woman being built from his wounded side, the New Testament does make something of it. There are flaws with both sides of the arguments, as a recent dissertation clearly concluded as well.\textsuperscript{13} But that is beyond the purpose of this discussion.]

Let me dispel a common misconception. After the Fall, God did not curse either Adam or Eve. Only the serpent was cursed, and the ground was cursed because of Adam’s transgression. Adam and Eve were told the consequences of their choice, but the blessing of God remained, and was repeated in Gen 5 and 9 and elsewhere in the Bible.

Rather than humanity nurturing the ground and the ground providing abundant nourishment, now the ground would fail Adam, producing thorns and thistles instead. Adam would sweat and fight with the ground to produce for himself until he worked himself back into the ground. Rather than Eve desiring God and harmoniously helping at the side of her husband, now she would desire her husband and he, rather than receiving nurture from her, would try to control her. She would produce the fruit of their relationship, the fruit of her womb, in labor, toil and pain. He would produce the fruit of the ground in labor, toil and pain. In the Hebrew, the words used to describe both of their labor pains are the same.

Scott Rodin states well that, “After the fall, we defined dominion as domination, rule over as abuse of and subdue as exploit.” (let me repeat that) ... In the beginning, it was not so.

The second point we can learn from the creation-fall account is: The collapse of godly leadership comes from desiring anything or anyone else above God.

Proceeding to Gen 4:7, we find the one kind of governance that God expected of humanity after the Fall. God said to Cain, “...sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” The one human God commanded us to rule over, is our self.

As Paul writes, “... do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires” (Rom 6:12).

In Bill Hybel’s book, Leadership Challenge, he spends a chapter addressing the question, “Who’s your toughest leadership question?” and answers it “YOU.” He continues to say that unless you are “squared away internally” you have “nothing to offer your team.”

As godly leaders, we are stewards, never owners. We live under one government with one ruler. We cannot serve two masters. The moment we become stressed over our inability to control a circumstance, an outcome or a person, we have become divided: we have placed self in charge as owner, rather than as steward. The moment we become anxious, grabbing, grasping to maintain control, we take our eyes, our trust off God onto our own ability to change something or someone.

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16 English Standard Version quoted. In Gen 3:16b and 4:7b, the sentence structure and the Hebrew words for desire and for rule/master are the same. Since the wife took her eyes off God and sought her own desires, instead of desiring God she will desire her husband more than God. The result is that her husband will seek to master her. What she makes her god will rule her. And in Gen 4, Cain refused to acknowledge God as his provider, the source of the produce of his hands. He wanted to take credit for his own works. Self-serving and sin took on a life of their own. What he makes his god would try to rule over him.
17 New International Version quoted.
The third point we can make from the creation-fall account is: **We are expected to take responsibility for our own behavior. The only human we are expected to control, and the only human we have the God given responsibility to control, is our self.**

Before the Fall, we were not in conflict with our self. After the Fall, God commanded us to take charge of our self. After the Resurrection, we have the Holy Spirit as our Helper.

Through Christ and the power of the Spirit, we are being transformed into His image.

Let’s review the principles from Gen 1-4.

Gen 1-2 tells us our God given purpose: **We all were created with the responsibility to represent God’s authority in the world.**

Gen 3 tells us that seeking our own authority produces conflict: **The collapse of godly leadership comes from desiring anything or anyone else above God.**

Gen 4 commands us to take responsibility for our own behavior: **The only human we are expected to control, and the only human we have the God given responsibility to control, is our self.**

**Part 2:** Three Key Images of Godly Leadership: Shepherd, Servant and Father-Mother.  

When you think of the word “leader” what would you consider titles of highest honor? Perhaps King, Emperor, CEO, President, Senior Pastor?

Through the eyes of the Old Testament, we get a very different picture of the titles that God considers to be the most important.

This may come as a surprise to you, but the most honored titles of leadership in the Old Testament are: Father-Mother, Servant and Shepherd. Each of these has a key role as protectors of God’s covenant and keepers of God’s Word. The importance of these images is found in the New Testament as well. All three apply to us today in understanding godly leadership in the family-church-community-nation and in the world.

Other Old Testament titles you may have thought of are Prophet, Priest, Judge and King. These designations are supporting roles. For the sake of time these will not be discussed.

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19 These were “written for our example” 1 Cor 10:6, 11; Jam 5:10; for our “instruction” Rom 15:4.
20 The roles of prophet, priest and judge are the other special designations given in the OT. These appointments were all made by God in order for the people to serve Him, the tabernacle and the community of God’s people. There is no authority without appointment by God and service to God. There was no authoritative word except the words spoken by God through His appointed servants. Any time these servants of the Lord failed to speak God’s word, they did not speak with authority and their office was not valid.
Shepherd

The Shepherd is exemplified in the OT by David. In a recent book, *Shepherds After My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, Timothy Laniak demonstrated that in the ancient world of Old Testament times: kings, gods of other nations, and the God of Israel were spoken of as shepherds. “A king not only calls himself a shepherd but he represents himself as the source of green pastures and safe fold.”  

The metaphor for shepherd also applies to leadership because of the diverse and “broad competencies” required “with capacities for scouting, defense and negotiation. ... A good shepherd (Laniak says) is one who does what is required by each circumstance, in each context ... (who) looks after the needs of his vulnerable flock...”

This gives us better understanding of Lord as our Shepherd (Psa 23), and Jesus’ description of Himself as “the good shepherd” (John 10:9-14). A leader is resourceful, competent, caring: one who looks after the needs of those less able, less mature, more powerless, weaker, and in need.

It is an imperfect metaphor, however. A Shepherd of God’s flock does not fatten the sheep to eventually eat them, but cares for the sheep in order to be Shepherds. The way to distinguish a shepherd from a wolf, is that the wolf mauls and devours the sheep. There will be a blood trail. The shepherd drives out predators: protecting, nurturing and guiding the flock until they too learn from the shepherd how to shepherd others.

Servant

The next title may be the highest honor given in the OT: the “servant of the LORD.” This epitaph was given to the great leader Moses at the close of his life, in Deut 34:5, “Moses, the servant of the LORD. Throughout the book of Joshua and elsewhere, it remains his honorific title. Joshua finally earns this high honor as well at the conclusion of his life, in Josh 24:29, “Joshua, son of Nun, servant of the LORD” (also Jug 2:8). Other OT figures include: “my servant Job (Job 1:8; 42:7, 8). David and Daniel are given this title as well (Psa 18:1; 36:1; Dan 6:20). The prophet Isaiah elevates the title of servant of the LORD, as the true leader and savior of God’s people in key passages known as the Servant Songs,” some of which are quoted in the NT in reference to Jesus the Messiah (Isa 42:1-19, quoted in Matt 12:18 of Christ; 49:1-7; 50:4-10; 52:13-53:12).

The NT likewise bears witness to Servant of the Lord as the highest honor. Jesus sets the primary example when He says, "For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who..."
serves” (Luke 22:27; Phil 2:7). He instructs us not to rule over each other or exercise authority as non-believers do, but rather, “the one who is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matt 23:11; Matt 20:26), and “but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant” (Luke 22:26). Paul, James, Peter, Jude and John all identified themselves as leaders by the title, “servant, slave, or bond-servant” of Christ Jesus.27

Father-Mother

The final paired images from the OT may be the most misunderstood and misapplied in Western culture, especially the concept of “mother,” which will be my final focus.

Possibly the greatest damage from the various camps debating the role of man and woman has been to either downplay of the image of a mother, or to restrict it. Both have minimized the importance and missed full potential of the biblical model and application. There is a need today to regain the biblical concept of mother. Although the understanding of mother starts in and stems from the home, it extends to the church, the community and the world. (Isa 54:1-5) This term encompasses all mature women. This is a term of leadership.

The language of family is used in both the Old Testament to describe the various structures within society and the nation. The language of family is used in the NT as well to describe the church. Jesus called his disciples “mother, brothers and sisters.”28 Paul instructs Timothy not to rebuke an older man (Greek: elder, masculine singular, presbutérō,) but rather appeal to him as a father, the younger men as brothers, the older women (Greek, elders, feminine plural, presbutéras) as mothers, the younger women as sisters, in all purity (1 Tim 5:1-2). Timothy had been taught the Scriptures from his mother Eunice and his grandmother, Lois (2 Tim 1:5, 3:14-16). Paul teaches us that the mature women should be treated as mothers.

When I entered seminary eleven years ago, I did not know there was “issue” with women. I had been in either secular education or the business world for twenty years before that, and people were expected to behave, at least in the open, with basic civility. I have become increasingly grieved when I hear a man especially in the church or in seminary speak rudely, dismissively or disrespectfully to a woman. And I wonder or say when I can, “Would you speak that way to your mother?!”

We need a fresh understanding of the Jewish mother from the OT, and realize that this was the understanding of the writers in the NT.

Proverbs 1:8 states, “Hear, my son, your father's instruction And do not forsake your mother's teaching;” The translation “mother’s teaching” here is “the torah of your mother.” The fathers should be instructing the sons and daughters to listen to the torah, the teaching of the mothers, the wise, godly women in all realms of society. Do not forsake or ignore the teaching of the mothers.

28 depending on your translation
27 Rom 1:1; 2 Cor 4:5; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1; Col 1:7; 4:7; 2 Tim 2:24; Tit 1:1; Jam 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1; Jud 1:1; Rev 1:1.
28”But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, ‘Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother” (NAS, Matt 12:48-50).
Abraham is rightly called the father of our faith, as the New Testament attests (Rom 4:12, 16; Jam 2:21). But we often miss that there was to be no covenant promise without Sarah. God seems to have expected them to understand that they were chosen as a couple, as one. Abraham proved that he failed to comprehend this when, at least twice, he was willing to forfeit his wife to a foreign harem to save his own life (Gen 12:10-20 and 20:1-18), and consented to try to bear his heir through Hagar (Gen 16:1-16). When God affirmed His covenant with Abraham the third time in Gen 17, He made it clear that the covenant seed would only come through Sarah (17:4-8, 15-21).

Isaiah 51:1-3a”  "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, Who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn And to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father And to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; When he was but one I called him, Then I blessed him and multiplied him."

Sarah, like Abraham, is given the testimony of believing God, and one whose faith we are to follow. Also like Abraham, she did not do it perfectly! But when Abraham failed to protect her, handing her over as a concubine, the NT gives witness that she put her faith in God and not in her husband, and refused to be “frightened by any fear” (1 Pet 3:3-6). When the Lord told Sarah she would bear a child in her old age, although she first laughed out loud, Hebrews states that by faith she “received ability (lit. “power”) to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised...” (Gen 17:16; Heb 11:11-12). Sarah is respected as a matriarch of Israel. Her burial plot is the first official piece of property owned by the Jewish people, purchased by Abraham in Canaan near Hebron. In the formation of the nation of Israel, the choice of the mother continued to be critical to the fulfillment of the covenant. Rebekah, Leah and Rachel are venerated as matriarchs, mothers in Israel who protected the seed of the covenant. Much more could be said here.

29 The covenant with Abraham is often referred to as an unconditional covenant. However, in Gen 22:18 and in 26:5, the text states that the covenant with Abraham was confirmed because Abraham set the example as the father of faith to his son, and to all his seed after him, because he believed God more than what made sense to him, more than what he could see, and beyond what was humanly possible. Because Abraham believed God, he followed and obeyed God. He was made righteous before God by faith (Rom 4:13-22, Gal 3:6ff).

30 And the Lord protected Sarah’s honor (Gen 12:17; 20:16-18).
31 God told Abraham, literally in the Hebrew, to obey her regarding casting out Hagar and Ishmael. The Hebrew in Gen 21:12 is literally “all that Sarah says to you obey her voice, for in Isaac your seed will be named.” God did also protect Hagar and Ishmael.
32 The field and cave of Machpelah facing Mamre, which is Hebron were purchased by Abraham (Gen 23:1-20)
33 The second matriarch, Rebekah, Isaac’s wife, was told by God during her pregnancy that her second twin, would receive the blessing of first inheritance. She too spoke her mind and protected the seed of God’s promise. Although we consider her methods of securing the blessing for Jacob over Esau as morally questionable, neither the words of her husband nor the narrator reprimand her actions. Although the account of Rebekah’s death is not provided, Gen 49:31 does record that Rebekah and Isaac were buried together in the same cave as Abraham and Sarah. The third and fourth matriarchs, Leah and Rachel, are also respected in the tradition. Although the text is painfully blunt about the stories surrounding their lives and the lives of their family, we see two powerful and vocal personalities, actively involved in the rearing and training of their sons, and Leah’s daughter. Their names are recorded in the blessing given Naomi regarding Ruth at the announcement of her engagement to Boaz, “May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of
The book of Exodus tells us that Moses lived because of the valor of five women: the midwives who feared God rather than obey the command of Pharaoh, his mother, and his big sister, Miriam who took risks to save him and had to courage to approach the princess, gaining the ability to raise him for a time and get paid for it, and the Pharaoh’s daughter, who defied her father’s command.

The prophetess Miriam is named along with Moses and Aaron in Micah 6:4, as the ones sent before the nation of Israel to lead them out of Egypt.

Deborah, the prophetess and judge in Israel, sent, summoned, arose and went with Barak, commander of Israel’s armies, to draw out into battle Sisera, commander of the army of Jabin, king of Canaan. In the song commemorating their victory, is written, “The peasantry ceased, they ceased in Israel, until I, Deborah, arose, Until I arose, a mother in Israel ...” (Jud 5:7).

The fourth Prime Minister of the modern State of Israel, Golda Meier, was also called “a mother in Israel,” or sometimes a grandmother in Israel. Mother is a title of honored leadership.

Time fails to speak of Tamar (who secured the line of Judah), Rahab (mother of Boaz), Naomi, Ruth (great grandmother of David), Hannah (mother of Samuel), mothers of kings and ordinarily uncommon women of valor, who took risks of their own lives and status to protect loved ones and raise up a godly inheritance.

We find courageous and wise mothers, Jewish and foreign women, who stood up to kings, pharaohs, military commanders, enemy rulers, priests and husbands speaking with wisdom, faith, and lots of chutzpah, jumping into history. These are the stories of our mothers of faith.

We also find stories of ungodly women who were horrible mothers, who led their sons into blasphemies and abominations, leading the entire nation astray and into ruin.

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34 Exodus 1:15 names the midwives, Shiphrah and Puah; Exo 6:20 names the mother of Moses, Jochebed, whose name means the LORD is glorified;
35 Miriam references in Ex 15:20 and in Micah 6:4. There is never any mention of Miriam being married or having her own children. Miriam was well respected until pride swelled up in her and Aaron against Moses. Her transgression was that she spoke against God, and God himself defended Moses.
36 Josh 2:1-21; Matt 1:5
37 Naomi and Ruth also arose during the time of the Judges. Ruth clung to Naomi, took her as her mother and the God of Israel as her God. Ruth demonstrated the chutzpah, to take matters into her own hands to protect her new mother, to ask permission of a wealthy landowner to work behind his men rather than just at the edges of the field, to carry home thirty pounds of grain to Naomi, and then at Naomi’s suggestion, to go beyond that suggestion and make a proposal to Boaz to take Naomi’s family through her under his wings. The blessing given to Ruth at the announcement of her marriage to Boaz gives testimony to the importance of the matriarchs, “May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel...” (Ruth 4:11). Ruth became a mother in Israel, and the great-grandmother of David.
38 The names of the queen mothers of the land of Judah began to be recorded 2 Kings 12 through 24 (11x), beginning with Joash through Jehoiachin, each one followed by whether that king did right or evil in the eyes of the LORD.
39 Prov 31:10.
The role of a mother in a family, a congregation, a community or a nation is a powerful role. Let’s take it seriously. It is no wonder that Proverbs uses the image of a woman as a metaphor for either Wisdom or Folly.

In the Torah, or, Pentateuch, both mother and father are to be venerated with honor and respect.

- Exo 20:12– the first commandment with a promise, “honor your father and your mother that your days may be prolonged,” and Deut 5:16 adds, “that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.”
- Exo 21:15, 17 (Lev 20:9) – anyone who hits or curses his father or mother shall be put to death.
- Lev 19:3 – “every one of you must reverence (fear) his mother and his father, and shall keep My Sabbaths, for I am the LORD your God.”
- Deut 21:18-21 – punishment of death for the son who rebels against, refuses to obey father or mother.
- Deut 14:21; 22:6-7—honoring a mother was extended even to the food source: they are not to cook a kid goat in the milk of its mother; not to take from a nest both the young or the eggs and the mother bird, “Deuteronomy 22:7 you shall certainly let the mother go, but the young you may take for yourself, in order that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days.
- Deut 27:16 – “Cursed is the one who dishonors his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.” The Hebrew word used here and earlier for “curse” come from a root that implies curse by belittling, taking lightly, making small.

Both the father and the mother were to be treated with the same dignity and respect. No distinctions are made in the Torah in the honor expected to be given to the mother as well as father.

Proverbs holds the same standard, and expounds on this further:40

- Prov 1:8 – “Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching (lit. the torah of your mother).”
- Prov 6:20 – “My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching (lit. the torah of your mother).
- Prov 15:20 – “A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother. (JPS has "humiliates his mother." Is 53:3 - Servant was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

40 The following Proverbs quoted from the English Standard Version
• Prov 10:1 – “The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.”

• Prov 19:26 – “He who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who brings shame and reproach.”

• Prov 20:20 – “If one curses (belittles, treats/calls as insignificant) his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.”

• Prov 23:22 – “Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.”

• Prov 23:25 – “Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice.”

• Prov 29:15 – “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.”

• Prov 30:17 – “The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures. (to obey - see Gen 49:10, obedience of a ruler - from Shiloh - the obedience of the people from קלה.)

• Prov 31:1 – “The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him:

• Prov 31:10-31 – The Hebrew acrostic on the “Woman of Valor” as referred to in the Jewish tradition: business woman, estate manager, philanthropist, courageous in hardship, glory of her husband (husband is known among the leaders of the city), seamstress, merchant, supplier, optimist, teacher of covenant fidelity, mother, wife, daughter, God-fearing, productive, praised by the leaders.

Is it any wonder that so many homes, churches and communities have sons and daughters of all ages whose lives are in shambles? Let the mothers arise and be the godly influence they are called to be by God!

To sum up Part II:

Mothers and Fathers are to bear children, spiritually as well as naturally, and train them up in the ways of the Lord. These designations apply to all mature believers.

The Servant is to wait on the Lord, listening to His every word and command, carrying out the will of the Master, and not serving any other purpose or person.

The Shepherd creatively and sacrificially nurtures and protects the sheep, laying his or her life down for the sheep, leading them to become shepherds themselves.
To review Part I:

We are expected to take responsibility for our own behavior. The only human we are expected to control, and the only human we have the God given responsibility to control, is our self.

The collapse of godly leadership comes from desiring anything or anyone else above God.

We all were created with the responsibility to represent God’s authority in the world.

In order to represent God we have to know Him. To know Him, we have to be walking in close relationship with Him: waiting on Him as a servant; following Him as sheep to their Shepherd, communicating with Him as a wise child who asks questions, listens to and obeys their Father and Mother.

Worldly leadership is all about what you bring to the table: your persuasiveness, your abilities, your charisma. Godly leadership is all about bringing God to the table: His Word, His power, His Spirit. In worldly leadership, authority resides in the position of the person. In godly leadership, authority rests in God. We are to be the prophetic voice crying in the wilderness, the voice of Wisdom calling in the streets, the donkey Jesus rides in on, the shepherd of His flock, the servant of the Lord and His people, mothers and fathers that train up His children.

Let us remember who God created each of us to be, in His image, as godly leaders representing Him well as shepherds, servants, mothers or fathers, a conduit of God’s influence in the world,
BIBLIOGRAPHY


