

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

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Other great resources on fransciacca.com

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- **“*The Road to Shalom*” podcast** – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- **“*What’s Wrong With the World?*”** – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- **“*Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage*”** – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.

FOLKS Like Us

REHOBOAM

“How Do You Lead: Power or Authority?”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,
for a journey with God in the modern era.

Fran Sciacca

“Folks Like Us” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca
Birmingham, AL

REHOBAM

“How Do You Lead: Power or Authority?”

ABIDING PRINCIPLE – One of the most obvious indicators of how we’re progressing in our spiritual transformation is our treatment of others—especially of those who are subordinate to us.

“A Christian man is the most free, lord of all, and subject to none; he is also the most dutiful servant to all and subject to everyone” — Martin Luther

Before powerful rulers die, a frenzied power struggle often occurs among those who fancy themselves to be the next in line. Intrigue and conspiracy marked the inner workings of the royal family of King David until Solomon was declared by his father to be his lawful successor. Solomon's own passing, though not marked by the same chaos, signaled the end of a united kingdom. His son Rehoboam, in his first significant decision as successor-king, stands forever in the pages of Scripture as an example of how *not* to lead. Though well within the circumference of the sovereignty of God, a single decision he made was responsible for the division of the nation of Israel into two separate kingdoms. And the consequences of Rehoboam's rejection of wise counselors have persisted for nearly three thousand years! His life story, though brief, is rich with insight for any wanting to be more like Jesus and less like Adam. And though we won't likely ever be a national leader, all of us are leading someone—perhaps as parents, or at a job, or maybe just because of our age. Someone is taking his or her lead from our lives.

KEY SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 11:40-12:24

STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. Solomon is often eulogized as a man of great wisdom, wealth, and influence. Few however, are aware of some of the means he employed to expand his elaborate "portfolio." Explain how he built his resume from the following 1 Kings passages. What did Solomon do as a leader?

4:7

5:1-14

6:37-38

7:1-9

Read 1 Samuel 8:7-20 (a prophecy) and 1 Kings 12:1-4. Explain how these passages either support or contradict the portrait above.

2. Would you consider the request made by Jeroboam's messenger to Solomon's son reasonable (1 Kings 12:4)? Explain your answer.
3. In this story, the new king and novice leader makes some unwise choices. Read 1 Kings 12:1-24 again. Make a list of decisions Rehoboam made that were wise and sound, and a list of decisions that proved to be unwise and foolish.

Evidence of Wise Leadership

Evidence of Unwise Leadership

4. How do you explain the counsel that Rehoboam's childhood friends gave him in verses 8-11? (Note: The words translated "grown up with him" mean that they rose to power with him. They were also children of nobility.)
5. Someone has differentiated between power and authority this way: *Power* is the ability to get people to do what you ask because they are afraid of the consequences if they don't. *Authority* is the ability to get people to do what you ask because they respect you and believe the request is reasonable. Using this principle as a guide, and the story of Rehoboam as a case study, answer the following questions. (You may need to refer to 1 Kings 12:3-16).

State which leadership model (power or authority) you think takes the greater amount of time and effort, and explain why.

How do you think a new leader can lead by authority if he is relatively unfamiliar with the people he is leading?

Why do you think the elders counseled Rehoboam to "be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, [so] they will always be [his] servants"?

How was their counsel actually an opportunity for Rehoboam to establish the means to lead by authority? (Think carefully!)

Which model—power or authority—is preferred by leaders? (Think of yourself leading, and of other leaders.) Explain your answer.

Which of the two models requires a higher standard of integrity? Explain.

6. Read Isaiah 55:1-56:7 and Hosea 11:1-9. Which model of leadership does God exhibit here? Explain your answer.

7. God has the right to lead us by power, and often people relate to Him that way. Yet He prefers to lead by authority. Why do you think it is easier to lead when the power model is exercised?

Why do we find it easier to *follow* when we are being led by the authority model?

8. Review your responses in this section and write a brief summary of what you've discovered about leadership from this study in terms of both leaders and followers.

Leaders –

Followers –

LOOKING BACK...

Leaders have followers. They may be appointed by popular choice, or rise to power through deceit and a desire to control. But they cannot successfully lead unless those under them are willing to follow. There is a difference between leading and herding people, even though there is a movement or progress visible with both methods. Leading by intimidation and threat of punishment is easier, takes less time, and does not demand integrity. It also kindles the natural rebellion that resides deep in the hearts of those required to obey. People led by this method spend their time searching for an escape route, or the end of the leader's reign. God does not lead His people this way. He may lovingly discipline us for disobedience, but He always longs for us to follow Him out of a heart of trust and love, never fear of future pain.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

9. Read Mark 10:31-45; this summarizes everything that you discovered in the first section of this study. What does Jesus say about the two models of leadership and the person who wants to follow Him?

What does He say about His own life and this issue?

10. If sanctification is the ongoing process of being conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ, why do we need to take this issue of leadership style seriously?
11. Each of the following passages contains a principle about servant leadership Jesus taught His disciples. Explain each principle and then finish the sentence as personally as possible.

John 13:1-17

In light of this truth I need to . . .

John 21:1-12

In light of this truth I need to . . .

1 Corinthians 11:1

In light of this truth I need to .

Galatians 5:22-23

In light of this truth I need to . . .

Ephesians 6:7-9

In light of this truth I need to . . .

1 Thessalonians 2:6-12

In light of this truth I need to . . .

2 Timothy 2:24-26

In light of this truth I need to . . .

In light of this truth I need to . . .

12. Not all "leadership" is planned and formal, and most of us are leading more frequently than we realize. Any relationship in which someone looks to you for direction, instruction, or boundaries is one in which you have a leadership role. (The person looking to you might even be a peer.) Make a list of all the relationships in your life right now in which you play a leadership role.
13. Using this study as a guide, review your list from the previous question to determine whether you are leading by power or authority in each of the relationships you listed. Mark a relationship with a "P" if you think you are leading that person through the principle of *power* (fear of punishment or consequences); mark a relationship with an "A" for *authority* if you are seeking to lead that person by living as a servant.
14. Look at the relationships on your list you marked with an "A." Would you say your leadership style is the product of biblical convictions about how God wants you to lead, or the result of your personal feelings about the person you are leading? Explain your answer.
15. Answer the same question for the relationships on your list you marked with a "P."
16. Explain what you have learned from this chapter about yourself that shows up in the way you relate to those you lead.
17. Commit to make two biblical changes in the way you lead with relationships currently in your life. Share your discovery and intent with a trusted friend. Ask your friend to pray for the Holy Spirit's enabling power as you seek to implement the necessary changes.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- Two methods of leadership—Matthew 20:25-28
- Jesus' model of leadership—Mark 10:4