

## Blame and Credit

Good leaders take a little more than their share of the blame and a little less than their share of the credit.

That was clear in this Civil War story about Abraham Lincoln.

After the battle of Gettysburg, General Robert E. Lee and his Confederate forces were withdrawing to Virginia, and Lincoln felt that they were vulnerable. Eager to get the agony of the war over with, President Lincoln sent word to General George Meade to attack.

With his message, Lincoln also sent a personal note. "The order I enclose is not on record," said the note. "If you succeed, you need not publish it. Then, if you succeed, you will have all the credit of the movement. If not, I'll take the responsibility."

That's the kind of philosophy that earns the respect of those who look to the leader for principle and direction.

Success in any field – athletics, education, the media, church, business and certainly in long-term care – is more about the performance of the team than it is about the one who leads the team.

Lincoln not only understood the wisdom of this approach, but his entire life became the example of it. And that is why he is listed as one of our greatest presidents.

--Beecher Hunter