

The Book on Leadership: The Power of a Godly Influence



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Introduction p iv, v

According to Christ, then, the truest kind of leadership demands service, sacrifice, and selflessness. A proud and self-promoting person is not a good leader by Christ's standard, regardless of how much clout he or she might wield. Leaders who look to Christ as their Leader and their supreme model of leadership will have servants' hearts. They will exemplify sacrifice

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There's a crucial reason for this: Leadership for the Christian always has a spiritual dimension. The duty of leading people carries with it certain spiritual obligations. That is as true for the Christian president of a secular company as it is for the stay-at-home mom whose sphere of leadership might extend no further than her own children. All Christians in every kind of leadership are called to be spiritual leaders

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true leader inspires followers. Someone who has no followers can hardly be called a leader.

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To put it simply, leadership is influence. The ideal leader is someone whose life and character motivate people to follow. The best kind of leadership derives its authority first from the force of a righteous example, and not merely from the power of prestige, personality, or position

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leadership is not about style or technique as much as it is about character.

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It is a serious mistake for Christians in positions of leadership to be more concerned with what is currently popular in the corporate world than with what our Lord taught about leadership

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What we learn from the apostle Paul is the same thing Jesus taught: that character—not style, not technique, not methodology, but character—is the true biblical test of great leadership. Entrepreneurship is wonderful, but the most skilled entrepreneur in the world without character is no true leader. Strategic planning is important, but if you don't have leaders whom people will follow, your strategic plan will fail. The clarity of a well-drafted purpose statement is crucial, but the true spiritual leader must go beyond merely clarifying people's focus. The real leader is an example to follow. And the best example to follow, as Paul knew, is the one who follows Christ.

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Clearly, then, all Christians are called to influence others and teach them the truth about Christ. Therefore, no matter what your status, position, giftedness, or occupation, you are called to be a leader at some level

Introduction *p xii*

My prayer is that you will aspire to the kind of leadership the apostle Paul exemplified: bold, uncompromising, faithful, spiritual leadership that inspires people with a hunger to be imitators of Christ

Chapter 1. Earning Trust *p 4*

How to solve the crisis, however, seems to be a puzzle to most, even to some of the most powerful men in the academic world.

Chapter 1. Earning Trust *p 4*

Could it be that people don't see how the leadership crisis stems from a loss of integrity? I don't think so. In fact, the titles on that book table included several volumes that highlighted the need for character, decency, honor, and ethics. People certainly seem to have at least a vague notion that character issues lie at the heart of the leadership crisis.

Chapter 1. Earning Trust *p 5*

Yet in Acts 27, we see him taking charge of a situation in a hostile secular environment when other men—powerful men—proved unable to lead.

Paul at Liberty *p 12*

A leader is not someone who is consumed with his own success and his own best interests. A true leader is someone who demonstrates to everyone around him that their interests are what most occupy his heart

Paul at Liberty *p 13*

Here's how you can easily recognize genuine leaders: They are the ones surrounded by gifted, capable, diligent, effective people who are devoted to their leader. That devotion reflects trust. And trust stems from the selfless way the godly leader uses his own energies and his own abilities in a sacrificial, selfless way. If you can show people you truly have their best interests at heart, they'll follow you.

A Wise Master Builder *p 27*

often tell young pastors that the fastest way to lose people's trust is not by preaching a bad sermon. People will forgive that. The fastest way to lose credibility as a leader is to make a foolish decision that leads people down a blind alley or off the end of a pier. Too many young men in ministry make impetuous and ill-considered decisions. They lead without looking where they are going. They don't count the cost. They aren't cautious enough

"I Told You So..." *p 34*

1 Thimo-

othy 2:13).
Notice: When we say good leaders speak with authority, we're not merely saying that they speak with an authoritative attitude. Pomposity and arrogance aren't the same as authority. Paul's amazing aplomb was utterly devoid of anything like egotism or insolence. It did not reflect a feeling of superiority or a sense of self-importance and conceit. Rather, the amazing authority with which Paul spoke was an unshakable authority derived from his absolute certainty that God's Word was true and His promises were trustworthy

"I Believe God" p 40

You cannot be an effective leader and be pessimistic. People who are cynical and gloomy debilitate everyone they speak to. They're like bloodsucking leeches. They make people pale, weak, and passive

Chapter 4. Taking Charge p 44, 45

True leadership is tested and proved in crises. The real leader is the one who can handle the stress. He is the one who can solve the problems, bear the burdens, find the solutions, and win the victories when everyone else is merely flustered, confounded, and perplexed

Chapter 4. Taking Charge p 46

This underscores the truth that leadership is not something automatically conferred by title or by rank. Again, leadership is influence. It is a matter of ability, not position. And as we read Luke's account of this shipwreck, it is quite an amazing picture to see all these powerful men, accustomed to giving orders and outranking others, suddenly looking to Paul, the prisoner, who had earned the right to lead.

A Thwarted Escape Attempt in the Dark pp 49–50

This epitomizes leadership at its supreme level, where people literally entrust their very lives to someone. It is a life-and-death risk that happens all the time in military combat, police work, and other dangerous duties.

A Thwarted Escape Attempt in the Dark p 50

Verse 22 of Acts 27 ("There will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship") and verse 31 ("Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved") strike the perfect balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

A Thwarted Escape Attempt in the Dark p 51

But when it comes to matters of principle—moral and ethical foundations, biblical absolutes, the axioms of God's Word, God's clear commands, and the truthfulness of God Himself—it is never right to compromise. The true leader understands that and knows where to hold the line.

A Thwarted Escape Attempt in the Dark p 52

For the spiritual leader, the absolutes are established by the Word of God. A leader who applies all the other principles of leadership can perhaps achieve a measure of pragmatic effectiveness. But this principle will test your true mettle as a leader. No one can be a truly effective spiritual leader unless he understands the essential truth of Scripture and refuses to compromise its absolute authority. This principle applies, I am convinced, not just to pastors and church leaders, but to Christians in any walk of life who desire to be good leaders.

All Hands Safe at Last p 57

Paul's triumph was the triumph of great leadership. Tested in the crucible of crisis, he stepped up and showed how a true leader acts. He was decisive. He was determined. He was clear thinking and levelheaded. He took control when things were otherwise out of control. And God honored his efforts with amazing success. He didn't compromise the absolutes, nor was he distracted from his objective by the obstacles.

And he led by example.

How Paul Brought the Gospel to Corinth *p 65*

Therefore, Luke says, Paul remained in Corinth “a good while” (Acts 18:18), pastoring the church he founded. Only in Ephesus did Paul serve more time as pastor. The Corinthian church was therefore uniquely Pauline, especially and personally indebted to the great apostle for his leadership. They knew him well and had every reason to trust him, revere his influence, and remain loyal to him and his teaching.

Problems in the Corinthian Church *p 66*

However, the division in the church reflected a serious leadership vacuum that had arisen in Corinth. After Paul’s departure, Apollos had capably led that church for a season (Acts 18:27–28; 19:1). But Apollos had also moved on to other mission fields, and sometime after that is when the factions arose.

The Faithfulness of a True Leader *p 70*

Loyalty is essential to leadership. The wise leader cultivates loyalty by being loyal—loyal to the Lord, loyal to the truth, and loyal to the people he leads. Nothing is more destructive of leadership than the leader who compromises his own loyalty.

The Faithfulness of a True Leader *p 70*

Leadership is all about motivating people to follow. Therefore everything in leadership hinges on the leader’s relationship to his people. It is possible to motivate people simply by sheer force, but that is not real leadership; it’s dictatorship. And it never really achieves the goals of leadership. That can be accomplished only by a loving loyalty.

The Faithfulness of a True Leader *pp 70–71*

I tell graduates of The Master’s College that they can be successful in any profession they choose if they do a few things consistently: Be on time, keep quiet and work hard, do what the boss tells you, have a positive attitude, and most important, be fiercely loyal to the people you work for and with.

Consolation Abounding in Christ *p 73*

Leaders must give their people room to fail. People need encouragement rather than scorn when they struggle. They respond to the one they serve when he has sincere empathy in their anguish and disappointment. People need to be built up when they fail, not further flattened. The wise leader doesn’t ever need to run roughshod over people. Leadership is ultimately about people, not just sterile objectives and strategies that can be written on paper.

Chapter 6. Paul Defends His Sincerity *p 78*

In this vital but often-overlooked passage of Scripture, we see highlighted three keys to Paul’s sincerity. First, he always operated with a clear conscience. Second, he always sought to show himself reliable in words and action. And third, as the Corinthians themselves were well aware, his dealings with them were never self-serving or heavy-handed, but always driven by a genuine, tender affection for them.

Integrity That Maintains a Clear Conscience *p 80*

In other words, the person who dishonors and then ignores his own conscience is by

definition not a person of integrity. A tarnished conscience therefore undermines the most basic requirement of all leadership.

Tenderness That is Expressed in Clear Communication *p 86*

That is the price of leadership. It is a costly, lonely, and often thankless calling.

Jonathan Edwards ministered faithfully in Northampton for twenty-four years. He pastored his people through the remarkable revival of the Great Awakening (which Edwards's own preaching and writing had in no small way helped to ignite). Then his church dismissed him by an overwhelming vote, because he taught that only those who have made a credible profession of faith in Christ ought to partake of the Lord's Table.

At the end of his life, Charles Spurgeon, possibly the most effective Baptist preacher who ever lived, was censured by the Baptist Union in England because he opposed the encroachment of modernism in that organization.

But the leader must nonetheless remain gentle, compassionate, empathetic, and humble. If he becomes resentful, repressive, or ruthless in his treatment of his people, he will lose his effectiveness as a leader.

His Humility *pp 101–102*

When he came to the end of his human resources, that was when the power of God flowed through him. God, and God alone, was Paul's only true source of sufficiency. People are not effective in leadership merely because they're naturally talented communicators, because they have creative minds, because they have a flair for persuading people, or because of any other natural talents. In fact, if your own abilities are all you depend on as a leader, your own limitations will be your downfall. From a spiritual perspective, human ingenuity and human cleverness tend to corrupt more than they help.

Chapter 8. A Leader Made of Clay *p 109*

All leaders are at best clay pots. Some may be better-looking pots than others. But no true leader can boast of having attained his position merely because of superior talents, physical attributes, communication skills, or whatever. If God did not use homely, ordinary clay pots, there wouldn't be any spiritual leaders at all, because there aren't any people who aren't beset with blemishes and human weaknesses

Clay Pots are Sturdy *pp 117–118*

But even though he was constantly assaulted, scraped and scoured, pressured, put in the flames, and otherwise abused, none of that could destroy him. He had a kind of invincible resilience, because the power of God was at work in him.

Chapter 9. The Leader's Warfare *p 125*

Other strong affections as well—including joy, gladness, sorrow, compassion, fear, and love—are equally essential in leadership. The person who is cold, unfeeling, aloof, or apathetic can never be a truly effective leader.

His Militancy *p 141*

One of the fundamental qualifications for spiritual leadership is a knowledge of the truth, an ability to recognize lies, and skill in using the truth to refute the lies. A

leader is discerning.

Chapter 10. How Not to Be Disqualified *p 143, 144, 145*

We begin, however, by looking at a common pitfall that can easily disqualify a person from leadership even after he has made a good start. This is the one snare that has probably caused the downfall of more leaders than any other hazard: a lack of personal discipline.

Chapter 10. How Not to Be Disqualified *p 146*

Self-control is absolutely vital to lasting success in any endeavor of life. Many people do attain a degree of prominence on the strength of sheer natural talent alone. But the real, influential leaders are the ones who devote themselves to personal discipline and make the most of their gifts. Those who utterly lack self-control will invariably fail, and they forfeit the example of integrity so essential to the best kind of true leadership.

Chapter 10. How Not to Be Disqualified *p 148*

Samson's strength was overcome because of his own lack of self-control. Solomon's wisdom was compromised by his lust. And if David, a man after God's own heart, could succumb to the lust of the eyes and commit adultery and murder, no leader ever ought to feel immune from personal failure. Paul certainly did not.

As a matter of fact, that was Paul's one great concern about his own role as a leader. He did not want to disqualify himself from the race. Therefore he disciplined himself, restrained his fleshly desires, and brought his own body into subjection, so that the time would never come, after having preached to others, when he himself would be disqualified. He kept his eye on the prize (Philippians 3:13–14). He exercised himself unto godliness (1 Timothy 4:7). And he ran the race with endurance (Hebrews 12:1).

Competing for the Prize *p 150*

Earthly accolades are fleeting and transitory. And yet athletes are willing to make amazing, long-term, hard-core sacrifices in order to achieve the prize.

Paul said if the worldly athlete is willing to discipline himself to win a pine wreath, what price would you pay to attain "an imperishable crown" (v. 25)—one that is "incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away" (1 Peter 1:4)?

Competing for the Prize *p 152*

I've observed over the years that all gifted leaders seem to have an innate drive to win. Those who lack the winning instinct don't make very effective leaders.

But if we are going to win this race, it will come at a price, or we will be disqualified

Training for the Contest *pp 152–153*

Genuine success always comes at a high price. Every athlete knows this. That is why athletes regulate their sleep, what they eat, and how they exercise. It's not a part-time effort. For those who want to excel, it is a constant, nonstop responsibility.

Discipline has to become a passion. It isn't merely a question of doing whatever is mandatory and avoiding whatever is prohibited. It involves voluntary self-denial. An athlete has every right to eat a full eight-course dinner just before he runs the 100-yard dash. That's his privilege. But it's not smart. And if he doesn't sacrifice that right,

he's not going to win.

Training for the Contest *p 155*

This is a key component of true godliness: Give your private life to God. Devote yourself especially in your leisure time to the task of cultivating humility, repentance, holiness, and the fear of God.

Training for the Contest *p 155*

As the familiar nursery rhyme reminds us, whole kingdoms have been lost for the want of a horseshoe nail. Conversely, in my experience, those who are faithful in small things are the same people who are disciplined in more important matters too

Training for the Contest *p 157*

have never known an effective leader who was lazy or idle. Leaders must be industrious and diligent. This goes hand in hand with many of the principles we have highlighted so far. It is a necessary prerequisite to the initiative, the enthusiasm, the decisiveness, and the resilience required in leadership

Finishing the Race *p 160*

There is no shortage of Christian leaders who have done precisely that. They seem to start well, and some even show signs of excellence for a time. But they don't finish well. They let their own flesh get in the way, and they are disqualified, even after they have preached to others. Some bail out because they prefer a life of ease to the trials of leadership. Others are set on the bench by divine Providence. More than a few are publicly disgraced after embarrassing the cause of Christ in reprehensible ways. They are nearly always disqualified because of their own lack of discipline.

Chapter 11. Who is Fit to Lead? *p 161*

What the pastor and elders are to be is the model for all Christians. And the principles that are true of leaders in the church are also good principles for every Christian in any position of leadership to apply

Chapter 11. Who is Fit to Lead? *p 163*

Sadly, this has become quite commonplace, because many in the church have responded to the leadership crisis by lowering expectations of their leaders

Plurality *p 170*

One-man leadership and autocratic rule are the hallmarks of cults and false religions. Although well-suited for men like Diotrephes, who loved to have the preeminence (3 John 9), it is not the proper model for a biblical church.

It is fitting, therefore, that when the apostles first appointed subordinate leaders in the Jerusalem church, they appointed a team of seven.

Priority *p 170*

It is simply not wise leadership to try to manage everything with hands-on oversight. Leaders who take that approach invariably frustrate their people by micromanaging, and they sabotage their own effectiveness by getting bogged down in details. A few things demand your hands-on attention, but good leadership demands that you delegate the rest. There is no other way to get all the work done and keep your attention on your priorities

Priority *p 174*

My advice is to start each day with a specific time of prayer. Don't let interruptions or appointments distract you from your first business. Go to the Lord when your mind is fresh. Prayer is hard enough work without putting it off until your mind is fatigued. Don't squander your brightest hours doing less-important things

The Team He Built *p 189*

Most great men owe their leadership skills to the influence of a mentor. They learn from someone whose heart they desire to emulate. For Timothy it was Paul. And Timothy was Paul's number one son in the faith. Mutually they had bound their lives together by God's wonderful grace and had found strength in one another.