

Spiritual Leadership **by J. Oswald Sanders**

One of the most helpful books on Leadership I have read. Here are some of my notes.

Chapter 1: An Honourable Ambition

True greatness, true leadership, is found in giving yourself in service to others, not in coaxing or inducing others to serve you. We must aim to put more into life than we take out.

“The final estimate of men shows that history cares not an iota for the rank or title a man has borne, or the office he has held, but only the quality of his deeds and the character of his mind and heart.”

Chapter 2: The Search for Leaders

Give me a man of God – one man
One mighty prophet of the Lord,
And I will give you peace on earth,
Bought with a prayer and not a sword.
George Liddell

If the world is to hear the church’s voice today, leaders are needed who are authoritative, spiritual, and sacrificial. Authoritative, because people desire leaders who know where they are going and are confident of getting there. Spiritual, because without a strong relationship to God, even the most attractive and competent person cannot lead people to God. Sacrificial, because this follows the model of Jesus, who gave himself for the whole world and who calls us to follow in His steps.

Spiritual leaders are not elected, appointed, or created by synods or churchly assemblies. God alone makes them. One does not become a spiritual leader by merely filling an office, taking course work in the subject, or resolving in one’s own will to do this task. A person must qualify to be a spiritual leader.

Chapter 3: The Master’s Master Principle

The sovereignty of spiritual leadership
The suffering of spiritual leadership

The Spirit of Servanthood
Dependence
Approval
Modesty
Empathy

Optimism
Anointing

Chapter 4: Natural and Spiritual Leadership

Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead. Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and the character that inspires confidence.

Yet spiritual leadership transcends the power of personality and all other natural gifts. The personality of the spiritual leader influences others because it is irradiated, penetrated, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. All the leader gives control of his life to the Spirit, the Spirit's power flows through him to others.

We can lead others only as far along the road as we ourselves have travelled.

When we contrast natural and spiritual leadership, we see just how different they are

Natural

Self-confident
Know men
Makes own decisions
Ambitious
Creates methods
Enjoys command
Seeks personal reward
Independent

Spiritual

Confident in God
Also knows God
Seeks God's will
Humble
Follows God's example
Delights in obedience to God
Loves God and others
Depends on God

We leave an indelible influence on people, who come within our influence, even when we are not aware of it. Dr. John Geddie went to Aneityum in 1848 and worked there for twenty-four years. Written in his memory are these words:

When he landed, in 1848, there were no Christians.
When he left, in 1872, there were no heathen.

Spirituality is not easy to define, but you can tell when it is present. It is the fragrance of the garden of the Lord, the power to change the atmosphere around you, the influence that makes Christ real to others.

Spiritual goals can be achieved only by spiritual people who use spiritual methods. How our churches and mission agencies would change if leaders were Spirit-filled!

Chapter 5: Can You Become a Leader?

Have you ever broken a bad habit? To lead others, you must master your appetites. Do you keep self-control when things go wrong? The leader who loses control under adversity forfeits respect and influence. A leader must be calm in crisis and resilient in disappointment.

Do you think independently? A leader must use the best ideas of others to make decisions. A leader cannot wait for others to make up his or her mind.

Can you handle criticism? Can you profit from it? The humble person can learn from petty criticism, even malicious criticism.

Can you turn disappointment into creative new opportunity?

Do you readily gain the cooperation of others and win their respect and confidence?

Can you exert discipline without making a power play? True leadership is an internal quality of the spirit and needs no show of external force.

Are you a peacemaker? A leader must be able to reconcile with opponents and make peace where arguments have created hostilities.

Do people trust you with difficult and delicate situations?

Can you induce people to do happily some legitimate thing that they would not normally wish to do?

Can you accept opposition to your viewpoint or decision without taking offence? Leaders always face opposition.

Can you make and keep friends? Your circle of loyal friends is an index of your leadership potential.

Do you depend on the praise of others to keep you going? Can you hold steady in the face of disapproval and even temporary loss of confidence?

Are you at ease in the presence of strangers? Do you get nervous in the presence of your superior?

Are the people who report to you generally at ease? A leader should be sympathetic and friendly?

Are you interested in people? All types? All races? No prejudice?

Are you tactful? Can you anticipate how your words will affect a person?
Is your will strong and steady? Leaders cannot vacillate or cannot drift with the wind.
Can you forgive? Or do you nurse resentments and harbour ill feelings toward those who have injured you?
Are you reasonably optimistic? Pessimism and leadership do not mix.
Do you feel a master passion such as that of Paul, who said, "This one thing I do!"? Such a singleness of motive will focus your energies and powers on the desired objective.
Leaders need a strong focus.
Do you welcome responsibility?

Do other people's failures annoy or challenge you?
Do you "use" people, or cultivate people?
Do you direct people, or develop people?
Do you criticize, or encourage?
Do you shun or seek out the person with a special need or problem?

Adding leadership potential to our lives usually requires that we shake off negative elements that hold us back.

Chapter 6: Insights on Leadership from Paul

A natural leader by any measure, Paul became a great spiritual leader when his heart and mind were captured by Jesus Christ.

The character of the elder should command the respect of the unbeliever, inspire his confidence, and arouse his aspiration. Example is much more potent than precept.

The Christian leader who possesses a sound mind has control of every part of his personality, habits, and passions.

A well-ordered life is the fruit of a well-ordered mind.

While a leader is caring for church and mission, he must not neglect the family, which is his primary and personal responsibility. The discharge of one duty in God's kingdom does not excuse us from another. There is time for every legitimate duty. Paul implies that a person's ability to lead at home is a strong indicator of his readiness to lead in ministry.

Chapter 7: Insights on Leadership from Peter

First, Peter deals with a leader's motivation. The spiritual leader is to approach the work willingly, not by coercion.

When God calls us, we cannot refuse from a sense of inadequacy.

“I am not sure which of the two occupies the lower sphere, he who hungers for money or he who thirsts for applause,” wrote J.H. Jowett. “A preacher may dress and smooth his message to court the public cheers, and labourers in other spheres may bid for prominence, for imposing print, for grateful recognition. All this unfits us for our task. It destroys perception of the needs and perils of the sheep.”

Chapter 8: Essential Qualities of Leadership

God gave these leaders gifts and talents that fit the mission to which they were called. What raised these men above their fellows was the degree to which they developed those gifts through devotion and discipline.

Discipline:

Without this essential quality, all other gifts remain as dwarfs: they cannot grow. So discipline appears first on our list. Before we can conquer the world, we must first conquer the self.

A leader is a person who has learned to obey a discipline imposed from without, and has then taken on a more rigorous discipline from within. Those who rebel against authority and scorn self-discipline – who shirk the rigors and turn from the sacrifices – do not qualify to lead. Many who drop out of ministry are sufficiently gifted, but have large areas of life floating free from the Holy Spirit’s control. Lazy and disorganized people never rise to true leadership.

The young man of leadership calibre will work while others waste time, study while others snooze, pray while others daydream. Slothful habits are overcome, whether in thought or deed, or dress. The emerging leader eats right, stands tall, and prepares to wage a good warfare. He will without reluctance undertake the unpleasant task that others avoid or the hidden duty that others evade because it wins no public applause. As the Spirit fills his life, he learns not to shrink from difficult situations or retreat from hard-edged people. He will kindly and courageously administer rebuke when that is called for, or he will exercise the necessary discipline when the interests of the Lord’s work demand it. He will not procrastinate, but will prefer to dispatch with the hardest tasks first.

If a leader demonstrates strong self-discipline, others will sense that and usually cooperate with the expectations placed on them. Leadership requires openness to others. To neglect receiving kindness and help is to isolate oneself, to rob others of opportunity, and to deprive oneself of sustenance.

Vision:

For faith is vision. Vision involves foresight as well as insight. Responsible leadership always looks ahead to see how policies will affect future generations.

Vision includes optimism and hope. The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.

Leaders take lessons from the past, but never sacrifice the future for the sake of mere continuity. People of vision gauge decisions on the future; the story of the past cannot be rewritten.

A vision without a task makes a visionary.

A task without a vision is drudgery.

A vision with a task makes a missionary.

Wisdom:

If knowledge is the accumulation of facts, and intelligence the development of reason, wisdom is heavenly discernment. It is insight into the heart of things. Wisdom involves knowing God and the subtleties of the human heart. More than knowledge, it is the right application of knowledge in moral and spiritual matters, in handling dilemmas, in negotiating complex relationships.

That God “fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Colossians 1:9

Decision:

When all the facts are in, swift and clear decision is the mark of a true leader. A visionary may see, but a leader must decide. An impulsive person may be quick to declare a preference; but a leader must weigh evidence and make his decision on sound premises.

The spiritual leader will not procrastinate when faced with a decision, nor vacillate after making it.

A young man beginning his work with the Coast Guard was call with his crew to try a desperate rescue in a great storm. Frightened, rain and wind pounding his face, the man cried to his captain, “We will never get back!” The captain replied, “We don’t have to come back, but we must go out.”

Courage:

Leaders require courage of the highest order – always moral courage and often physical courage as well. Courage is that quality of mind which enables people to encounter danger or difficulty firmly, without fear or discouragement.

Facing the ruthless armies of Sennacherib, Hezekiah made his military preparations and then set out about strengthening the morale of his people. “Be strong and courageous,” he told them. “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him. . . .With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.” And then the Scriptures report that “the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said”. Here is leadership, active and strong.

Humility:

If I appear great in their eyes, the Lord is most graciously helping me to see how absolutely nothing I am without Him, and helping me to keep little in my own eyes. He does use me. But I am so concerned that He uses me and that it is not of me the work is done. The axe cannot boast of the trees it has cut down. It could do nothing but for the woodsman. He made it, he sharpened it and he used it. The moment he throws it aside; it becomes only old iron. O that I may never lose sight of this.

Integrity and Sincerity:

Chapter 9: More Essential Qualities of Leadership

Humour:

Our sense of humour is a gift from God which should be controlled as well as cultivated. Clean, wholesome humour will relax tension and relieve difficult situations. Leaders can use it to displace tension with a sense of the normal.

Anger:

Holy anger is the counterpart to love. But holy anger is open to abuse. Many who feel it allow anger to become their downfall. Bishop Butler teaches six conditions that make anger sinful:

When, to favour a resentment or feud, we imagine an injury done to us
When an injury done to us becomes, in our minds, greater than it really is
When, without real injury, we feel resentment on account of pain or inconvenience
When indignation rises too high, and overwhelms our ability to restrain
When we gratify resentments by causing pain or harm out of revenge
When we are so perplexed and angry at sin in our own lives that we readily project anger at the sin we find in others

Patience:

Patience meets its most difficult test in personal relationships. The person who is impatient with weakness will be defective in his leadership. When we lead by persuasion rather than command, patience is essential. Leaders rightly cultivate the art of persuasion that allows maximum individual decision making and ownership of a plan.

Friendship:

Tact and Diplomacy:

The root meaning of “tact” has to do with touching. The tactile sense is the ability to feel through touch. Concerning relationships, tact is the ability to deal with people sensitively, to avoid giving offence, to have a feel for the proper words or responses to a delicate situation.

Diplomacy is the ability to manage delicate situations, especially involving people from different cultures, and certainly from differing opinions. Leaders need to be able to reconcile opposing viewpoints without giving offence or compromising principle.

Inspirational Power

The power of inspiring others to service and sacrifice will mark God's leader.

Executive Ability:

It is true that subtle dangers lie in organization, for if it is overzealous it can be an unsatisfactory substitute for the working of the Holy Spirit. But lack of method and failure to organize have spelled doom for many promising ministries.

"It is a great truth that the Almighty and All-merciful is the All-methodical too."

Our duty is to reflect the orderliness of God in all we do for him. Evangelism is not a matter of organizing people into the kingdom, but neither is evangelistic work justified in ignoring careful planning. We depend on the Spirit leading converts to salvation, but we also plan and act on our plans for the sake of the gospel's reach.

The Therapy of Listening:

Leaders who want to show sensitivity should listen often and long, and talk short and seldom.

The Art of Letter Writing:

Clear language is important in our letters, but more important is the right spirit. Letters are an unsatisfactory medium of communication. They cannot smile when they are saying something difficult, and therefore additional care should be taken to see that they are warm in tone.

Chapter 10: Above All Else

Spiritual leadership requires Spirit-filled people. Other qualities are important; to be Spirit-filled is indispensable.

These officers were to be known for integrity and judgement, but pre-eminently for their spirituality.

Selecting leaders apart from spiritual qualifications leads always to unspiritual administration. A.T. Pierson compared such a situation to a large corporation that wants to oust its CEO. Slowly, in the board and among the directors and vice-presidents, people are placed who are opposed to the chief's methods and spirit. They quietly antagonize his measures, obstruct his plans, thwart his policy. Where the chief once enjoyed co-operation and support, he now meets inertia and indifference, until at last he reigns from sheer inability to carry out policy. In the same way, appointing leaders with a secular or materialistic outlook prevents the Holy Spirit from making spiritual progress in that place.

These early leaders of the church were sensitive to the leading of the Spirit. Because they had surrendered their own wills to the Spirit's control, they were delighted to obey his promptings and leadings.

To be filled with the Spirit means simply that the Christian voluntarily surrenders life and will to the Spirit. Through faith, the believer's personality is filled, mastered and controlled by the Spirit. The meaning of 'filled' is not 'to pour into a passive container' but to 'take possession of the mind'.

To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit. The Christian leader's mind, emotions, will, and physical strength all become available for the Spirit to guide and use. Under the Spirit's control, natural gifts of leadership are lifted to their highest power, sanctified for holy purpose. Through the work of the now ungrieved and unhindered Spirit, all the fruits of the Spirit start to grow in the leader's life. His witness is more winsome, service more steady, and testimony more powerful. All real Christian service is but the expression of the Spirit's power through believers yielded to Him. If we pretend to be filled, or hold back on our willingness to let the Spirit control us, we create the kind of trouble A.W. Tozer warns against:

No one whose senses have been exercised to know good or evil can but grieve over the sight of zealous souls seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit while they are living in a state of moral carelessness and borderline sin. Whoever would be indwelt by the Spirit must judge his life for many hidden iniquities. He must expel from his heart everything that is out of accord with the character of God as revealed by the Holy Scriptures.... There can be no tolerance of evil, no laughing off the things that God hates.

The filling of the Spirit is essential for spiritual leadership. And each of us is as full of the Spirit as we really want to be.

Spiritual Gifts:

The coming of spiritual gifts in the life of the Christians does not eliminate natural gifts, but enhances and stimulates them. New birth in Christ does not change natural qualities, but when they are placed under the control of the Holy Spirit, they are raised to new effectiveness. Hidden abilities are often released. The one called by God to spiritual leadership can be confident that the Holy Spirit has given him or her all necessary gift for the service at hand.

Chapter 11: Prayer and Leadership

The spiritual leader should outpace the rest of the church, above all, in prayer.

"When I go to prayer," confessed an eminent Christian, "I find my heart so loath to go to God and when it is with Him, so loath to stay." Then self-discipline has a role. "When you feel most indisposed to pray, yield not to it," he counselled, "but strive and endeavour to pray, even when you think you cannot."

True prayer is a strenuous spiritual exercise that demands the utmost mental discipline and concentration.

Praying in the Spirit – that phrase means that we pray along the same lines, about the same things, in the same name, as the Holy Spirit. True prayer rises in the spirit of the Christian from the Spirit who indwells us.

Spiritual leaders should know the experience of praying in the Spirit as part of their daily walk. Do we ever try to live independently of the Spirit? Do we fail to see full answers to prayer? We can read all day about prayer, and experience little of its power, and so stunt our service.

Jesus was not so much concerned over wicked people and their deeds as with the forces of evil that caused those people to sin. As Jesus dealt with sin's cause rather than effect, so the spiritual leader should adopt the same method in prayer.

Hudson Taylor is well known for his expression, "It is possible to move men, through God, by prayer alone."

It is one thing to believe such power is available, but another thing to practice it. People are difficult to move; it is much easier to pry for things or provisions than to deal with the stubbornness of the human heart.

To move people, the leader must be able to move God, for God has made it clear that He moves people in response to prayer. If a scheming Jacob was given "power" with God and with men," then surely any leader who follows God's prayer principles can enjoy the same power. Prevailing prayer that moves people is the outcome of a correct relationship with God.

Chapter 12: The Leader and Time

The way we employ the surplus hours after provision has been made for work, meals, and sleep will determine if we develop into mediocre or powerful pole. Leisure is a glorious opportunity and a subtle danger. Each moment of the day is a gift from God that deserves care, for by any measures, our time is short and the work is great.

Hours and days will surely pass, but we can direct them purposefully and productively. Philosopher William James affirmed that the best use of one's life is to spend it for something that will outlast it. Life's value is not its duration, but its donation – not how long we live, but how fully and how well.

A leader will seldom say, "I don't have the time." Such an excuse is usually the refuge of a small-minded and inefficient person. Each of us has the time to do the whole will of God for our lives. Our problem is not too little time, but making better use of the time we have.

In the face of this sobering reality, the leader must carefully select priorities. He or she must thoughtfully weigh the value of different opportunities and responsibilities. The

leader cannot spend time on secondary matters while essential obligations scream for attention. A day needs careful planning. The person who wants to excel must select and reject, then concentrate on the most important items.

The secret of Jesus' serenity lay in His assurance that He was working according to the Fathers' plan for His life – a plan that embraced every hour and made provision for every contingency. Through communion in prayer with His Father, Jesus received each day both the words He would say and the works He would do. "The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."

Conscious of time, Jesus spent His time doing things that mattered. No time was wasted on things not vital. The strength of moral character is conserved by refusing the unimportant.

Often the pressure a spiritual leader feels comes from assuming tasks that God has not assigned; for such tasks the leader cannot expect God to supply the extra strength required.

A leader needs a balanced approach to time lest it become his bondage and downfall. Without a grip on time, the leader works under unnecessary strain. Even when the leader has done the utmost to fulfill daily obligations, vast areas of work always remain. Every call for help is not necessarily a call from God, for it is impossible to respond to every need. If the leader sincerely plans his day in prayer, then executes the plan with all energy and eagerness, that is enough. The rest he should trust to our loving and competent heavenly Father.

Procrastination, the thief of time, is one of the devil's most potent weapons for defrauding us of eternal heritage. The habit of 'putting off' is fatal to spiritual leadership. Its power resides in our natural reluctance to come to grips with important decisions. Making decisions, and acting on them, always requires moral energy. But the passing of time never makes action easier; quite the opposite. Most decisions are more difficult a day later, and you may also lose an advantage by such a delay. The nettle will never be easier to grasp than now.

'Do it now' is a motto that has led many people to worldly success, and it is equally relevant in spiritual matters. A helpful method for overcoming procrastination is to set deadlines, and never miss or postpone even one.

Chapter 13: The Leader and Reading

Reading maketh a full man; speaking, a ready man, writing, an exact man. Francis Bacon.

Spiritual leaders of every generation will have a consuming passion to know the Word of God through diligent study and the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

The leader who intends to grow spiritually and intellectually will be reading constantly.

A.W. Tower said:

Why does today's Christian find the reading of great books always beyond him? Certainly intellectual powers do not wane from one generation to another. We are as smart as our father, and any thought they could entertain we can entertain if we are sufficiently interested to make the effort. The major cause of decline in the quality of current Christian literature is not intellect but spiritual. To enjoy a great religious book requires a degree of consecration to God and detachment from the world that few modern Christians have. The early Christian Fathers, the Mystics, the Puritans, are not hard to understand, but they inhabit the highlands where the air is crisp and rarefied, and none but the God-enamoured can come.... One reason why people are unable to understand great Christian classics is that they are trying to understand without any intention of obeying them.

The spiritual leader should choose books for their spiritual benefit. Spiritual leaders should also read for intellectual growth. The leader should read to cultivate his preaching and writing style. The leader should read, too to acquire new information, to keep current with the time, to be well informed in his or her own field of expertise. The leader should read to have fellowship with great minds.

Samuel Brengle said this about poetry:

I like the poets whose writings reveal great moral character and passion – such as Tennyson's and some of Browning's. The work of others have light, but I prefer flame to just light. Shakespeare? A mind as clear as a sunbeam – but passionless, light without heat. Shelley? Keats? There's a sense in which they were perfect poets, but they don't move me. Beautiful – but wordmongers. There's an infinite difference between the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty. One leads to the highest, loftiest, most Godlike character; the other often – too often – leads to an orgy of sensation.

Muriel Ormrod counselled:

And let us not comment on nor criticize writers of whom we have heard only second-hand, or third-hand, without troubling to read their works for ourselves.... Don't be afraid of new ideas – and don't be carried away with them either.

Chapter 14: Improving Leadership

Every Christian is obligated to be the best he can be for God. Not every Christian is called to major leadership in the church, but every Christian is a leader, for we all influence others. All of us should strive to improve our leadership potential. The first step toward improvement is to recognize weaknesses, make corrections, and cultivate strengths. We may be reluctant to grasp the nettle of a difficult situation and deal courageously with it. Or we may procrastinate, hoping that problems will vanish with time. The mediocre leader postpones difficult decisions, conversation, and letters. Delay solves nothing, and usually makes problems worse.

First, “exert yourself to lead” (Romans 12:8). Barclay translates this phrase, “If called upon to supply leadership, do it with zeal.” Here is the summons to dive wholeheartedly into leadership, to serve with energy, to leave no room for sloth. Are we doing it?

Our second present-tense verb in Romans 12 comes from verse 11: “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.”

The all-important thing to do is it:
Improve the character of the work
Deepen the piety, devotion and success of the workers
Remove stones of stumbling, if possible
Oil the wheels where they stick
Amend whatever is defective
Supplement, as far as may be, what is lacking.

Administration;

Spiritual tone – to deepen the piety, devotion, and success of the worker. The tone of the church or mission will be a reflection of its leaders. Water rises to the level of its source. The spiritual health of the leadership group should be a top concern among higher echelon leadership.

Group morale:

**Personal relationships’
Problem solving;**

Creative planning;

One more way to improve leadership potential: resist the idea of “leadership from the rear.” True leadership is always from the top down, never from the bottom up. It was leadership from the rear that led Israel back into the wilderness.

Chapter 15: The Cost of Leadership

To aspire to leadership in God’s kingdom requires us to be willing to play a price higher than others are willing to pay. The toll of true leadership is heavy, and the more effective the leadership the higher it goes.

Self-Sacrifice:

This part of the cost must be paid daily. A cross stands in the path of spiritual leadership, and the leader must take it up. No cross – no leadership.

Loneliness:

Nietzsche believed that life always gets harder toward the summit – the cold gets colder, the wind stronger, the burden of responsibilities heavier.

Fatigue:

“The world is run by tired men.” Perhaps an overstatement, but there is a grain of reality here. The demands of leadership wear down robust person. But Christians know where to find renewal. “Therefore do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (2 Cor 4:16). Even Jesus grew weary in ministry and had to rest (John 4:6). Jesus felt depleted in power, inner resources drained, when the needy woman touched His clothing (Mark 5:30). No lasting good can be accomplished without this expenditure of nervous energy and personal power.

The spirit of the welfare state does not produce leaders. If a Christian is not willing to rise early and work late, to expend greater effort in diligent study and faithful work, that person will not change a generation. Fatigue is the price of leadership. Mediocrity is the result of never getting tired.

Criticism:

“There is nothing else that so kills the efficiency, capability and initiative of a leader a destructive criticism.... It tends to hamper and undercut the efficiency of man’s thinking process. It chips away at his self-respect and undermines his confidence in his ability to cope with his responsibilities.”

“It does not matter what happens to us, but our reaction to what happens to us is of vital importance.” I think you must expect more and more criticism, for which increasing responsibility this is inevitable.

But link indifference to human opinion with a weak spiritual life, and the result is disaster.

“Often the crowd does not recognize a leader until he has gone, and then they build a monument for him with the stone they threw at him in life.”

Pressure and Perplexity:

We naively think that the more we grow as Christians, the easier it will be to discern the will of God. But the opposite is often the case. God treats the mature leaders as a mature adult, leaving more and more to his or her spiritual discernment and giving fewer bits of tangible guidance than in earlier years. The resulting perplexity adds inevitably to a leader’s pressure.

Chapter 16: The Responsibilities of Leadership

The Son of God became the servant of God in order to do the mission of God. The true leader is concerned primarily with the welfare of others, not with his own comfort or prestige.

Discipline is yet another responsibility of the leader. The fundamental ingredient in all discipline is love.

Approaching a disciplinary situation, the leader must remember five guidelines:
first conduct a thorough and impartial inquiry
then consider the overall benefit to the work and to the individual
do all in the spirit of love and in the most considerate manner
always keep the spiritual restoration of the offender in view
pray it through

Providing guidance is the third area of responsibility.

It is not easy to guide people, even mature Christians, who have strong opinions of their own. The leader cannot assert his will recklessly.

A leader must initiate.

The leader must either initiate plans for progress or recognize the worthy plans of others. He must remain in front, giving guidance and direction to those behind. He does not wait for things to happen, but makes them happen. He is a self-starter, always on the lookout for improved methods, eager to test new ideas.

To take responsibility willingly is the mark of a leader.

Chapter 17: Tests of Leadership

To everyone entrusted with spiritual authority, searching tests are bound to come.

The bracing lesson is that God delights to lead people, and then, in response to their trust, to show them power that matches every impossible situation.

Failure:

How a leader handles failure will set much of the agenda for the future. Most Bible characters met with failure and survived. Even when the failure was immense, those who found leadership again refused to lie in the dust and bemoan their tragedy. In fact, their failure and repentance led to a greater conception of God's grace. They came to know the God of the second chance, and sometimes the third and fourth.

Successful leaders have learned that no failure need be final whether his own failure or someone else's. No one is perfect, and we cannot be right all the time.

Jealousy:

The lesson for the leader is plain. The person who fills a role appointed by God need not worry about vindicating his or her work when rivals become jealous or treacherous. Such a leader is safe in the hands of a heavenly Protector.

God will defend the leaders he has chosen. He will honour, protect and vindicate them. Leaders need not worry about defending their rights or their office.

Chapter 18: The Art of Delegation

The degree to which a leader is able to delegate work is a measure of his success. A one-person office can never grow larger than the load one person can carry.

Failing to delegate, the leader is caught in a morass of secondary detail; it overburdens him and diverts his attention from primary tasks. People under him do not achieve their own potential. In some cases, insisting on doing a job oneself is a result of simple conceit.

Once a leader delegates, he would show utmost confidence in the people he has entrusted.

One of my greatest resources these ten years in Poland is the sense of his backing. My greatest pride is his belief in me. Surely one of my greatest motives is to be worthy of his support and to measure up to his expectations of me.

It is a big mistake to assume more duties than we can discharge. There is no virtue in doing more than our fair share of the work. We do well to recognize our limitations.

Writing about the leader of a large missionary society, a member of his staff commented: "He had a great gift of leadership in that he never interfered with those who worked under him. Everyone was left to do hi own work." Another member wrote, "He knew what people could do, and saw that they did it, leaving them to make the best of their opportunities, and investigating only if things went wrong."

Chapter 19: Replacing Leaders

The true test of a person's leadership is the health of the organization when the leader is gone. A work inspired by God and built on spiritual principles will survive the shock of leadership change and may even prosper as a result.

God is always at work, though we cannot see it, preparing people he has chosen for leadership. God's greatest gifts are always men. His greatest endowment to the church was the gift of twelve men trained for leadership.

Only after his removal are the character and achievements of a leader fully revealed.

The most gifted leader has liabilities and limitations that become apparent when a successor comes along to advance the work.

A shift in leadership also provides occasion for God to show His versatility in adjusting means to ends. His resources in any work He initiates are inexhaustible. If a man who possesses great gifts will not place them at the disposal of God, He is not defeated. He will take a man of lesser gifts that are fully available to Him and will supplement those gifts with His own mighty power. Paul implied this when he wrote to the Corinthians.

God is surely eager to use the powers of naturally gifted people, but few of them are as willing as was Paul to place those gifts without reservation at God's disposal. When such people learn to rely not on their own power and wisdom but to depend on God, there is no limit to their usefulness in God's service.

Chapter 20: Reproducing Leaders

Bishop Stephen Neill:

If we set out to produce a race of leaders, what we shall succeed in doing is probably to produce a race of restless, ambitious and discontented intellectuals. To tell a man he is called to be a leader is the best way of ensuring his spiritual ruin, since in the Christian world ambition is more deadly than any other sin and if yielded to, makes a man unprofitable, rather than the intellectual, quality of those indigenous Christians who are called to bear responsibility in the younger churches.

Leadership training cannot be done on a mass scale. It requires patient, careful instruction and prayerful, personal guidance over a considerable time. "Disciples are not manufactured wholesale. They are produced one by one, because someone has taken the pains to discipline, to instruct and enlighten, to nurture and train one that is younger.

Chapter 21: Perils of Leadership

The perils of spiritual leadership are especially subtle, more so than for other callings. The leader is not immune from temptations of the flesh, but the greater dangers are in the realm of spirit, for the enemy Satan never fails to exploit the advantage in any area of weakness.

Pride:

- The test of precedence
- The test of sincerity
- The test of criticism

Egotism:

One of the repulsive manifestations of pride, egotism is the practice of thinking and speaking of oneself, of magnifying one's attainments and relating everything to the self rather than to God and God's people. The leader who has long enjoyed the admiration of many followers stands in peril of this danger.

Jealousy:

This near relative of pride describes the person who is suspicious of rivals.

Popularity:

Personality cults have often developed around great spiritual leaders. Followers are awe-struck at a leader's virtues, and show such fawning deference that the leader seems no longer merely human. Worse yet, sometimes the leader comes to enjoy his pedestal.

Infallibility:

Indispensability:

Sometimes sincere and well-meaning followers encourage the notion of indispensability, which feeds a leader's ego and makes him, even less objective about performance in the office. And we do become less objective about our work as we get older.

Elation and Depression:

Prophet or Leader?

Dixon maximises the differences between leader and prophet; in reality, however, the roles overlap. But situations develop in which a leader must choose between a spiritual ministry and a leadership that would prevent the highest exercise of that ministry. Herein lies the peril.

The thousands who have heard Dr. Torrey know the man and his message. He loves the Bible, believing it to be the infallible Word of God, preaching it with the fervour of red-hot conviction. He never compromises. *He has chosen to be a prophet of God rather than a mere leader of men* and that is the secret of his power with God and men.

Disqualification:

Chapter 22: The Leader Nehemiah

His Character:

Nehemiah was a vigorous administrator, a calm crisis manager, a fearless initiator, a courageous decision-maker, and a preserving leader. He was resolute in the face of threats and vigilant against treachery – a leader who won and held the full confidence of his followers.

Nehemiah faced up to opposition without forcing a violent confrontation. He took insults, innuendo, intimidation, and treachery. He would through it with his head high and his eyes wide open, with much prayer (4:9). When he could, he simply ignored the adversary. Always he took precautions (4:16). Never did he allow opposition to deflect his energy from the central task. Always he kept faith in God (4:20). The test of spiritual leadership is the achievement of its objective. In Nehemiah's case, the record is clear:

“So the wall was completed” (6:15)

