

***Knocking Over the Leadership Ladder***, by Paul R. Ford, Tulip Books, Hartsville, TN, 2007 (68 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. "We have a climbing disease. Bigger is better, more is better, higher is better."  
[Page 12]

## **CHAPTER 1. Christian Leadership Versus the Equipping Releaser**

### **2. Visionary Leader**

3. You may not understand leadership but you feel you should be moving up.  
"Everyone wants to be a visionary leader, a leader who has influence over others in some tangible way." [Page 18]

### **4. Caution of management strategy**

"We must be careful not to buy in to the ways of business and organizational management strategies simply because they appear to work." [Page 21]

### **5. Climbing the leadership ladder**

"The leadership gift and the visionary leader concept became the in vogue way of climbing the leadership ladder for the evangelical pastor." [Page 24]

### **6. God's way**

Of ten pastors, two or three may be able to look out the window and see God's vision but the other seven have a problem and they feel guilty. Glorifying one gift causes internal tyranny. But God has designed another way. [Page 25]

### **7. Not everyone's a leader**

The myth that anyone can be a leader is so strong that people with supporting gifts are devalued. Those who feel unduly driven to become leaders can become trapped in unhealthy situations. [Page 28]

### **8. "Equipping releasers"**

The biblical reality is that God has prepared some to be "equipping releasers" of others. See Ephesians 4:12. [Page 29]

### **9. Equipping spiritual gifts**

"Historically, the leadership gift was a subset of the larger group of equipping gifts that God has given so that the whole body of players can be prepared, mentored, or trained for their God-designed role. However, the equipping gifts have become a subset of leadership." "Let's move the leadership gift back into its proper place, as one of the valuable equipping spiritual gifts that are used powerfully for kingdom-building purposes." [Page 30]

**10. Empowering before leading**

"Christians must not seek the position or the gift of leadership; rather they must seek to empower others to discover and fulfill their places in the body." [Page 30]

**CHAPTER 2. Build ME versus Build Community**

**11. Narcissism**

"It is difficult to find the communion of the Holy Spirit when the spotlight is on the self." "Narcissism, exaggerated self-concern says, 'It's all about me!'" [Page 35]

**12. Self Entitlement**

Entitlement says "I deserve it." We feel we deserve what we have, what we want and what we need. [Page 37]

**13. Unhappy Evangelicals**

Evangelicals look and act much like our unhappy culture. [Page 39]

**14. Relational cultures becoming infected**

Further, we are beginning to infect previously relational cultures around the world. [Page 40]

**15. Relationships**

God's ultimate strategy is relationships. [Page 42]

**16. Relationships over position/results**

"God's design is for relationships to have priority over position or results." [Page 43]

**17. "I" in the way of "we"**

But it is hard to live "we" when our culture thinks and lives. "I." [Page 44]

**18. Strengths and weaknesses help each other**

God has designed us with strengths to offer others and areas where we need others. One of the most important qualities of community is the freedom to admit our weaknesses and need for each other. [Page 45]

**19. Individualism vs. Community**

Individualism encourages me to exhibit my strengths and hide my weaknesses. Community encourages me to share my strengths and acknowledge I need you because of my weaknesses. [Page 46]

20. **“Me” vs. “Us”**

"It's not about me; It's about us." [Page 48]

**CHAPTER 3. Build Me Up and Put You Down**

21. **American dream**

"If the American dream is based on anything, it is on the idea that anybody can make it to the top." [Page 52]

22. **Ladder mentality**

"The ladder mentality gives me the opportunity to climb to my heart's content." [Page 52]

23. **Climbing impacts working relationships**

"When people are climbing, this has a dramatic impact on how they work together in a given ministry." [Page 53]

24. **Battling significance issues**

Christians battle with significance issues such as beauty, education, possessions, wealth, popularity, influence, work position, power, relationships with people of significance, status, success, and travel. [Pages 54, 55]

25. **Only relationships in the kingdom**

"There is no ladder to climb in the kingdom, only relationships in which to be faithful." [Page 55]

26. **Stewardship of relationships**

"Life is really about the stewardship of relationships as God provides." [Page 56]

27. **The need to control people and things**

"Every culture battles with the issue of leaders wanting to climb to the top and control people and things." [Page 57]

28. **Humility**

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." (I Peter: 5:5b-6) "If there is any lifting up to be done, God will be the architect of that. He does not need our help!" [Page 59]

29. **Good stewards of grace**

"Peter challenges us to be good stewards of God's grace: 'Each one should use whatever gift he [or she] has received to serve others.'" (I Peter 4:10) [Page 59]

**30. Promote relationships over leadership**

"More and more evangelical leadership spends its energies promoting leadership- or vision-driven organization rather than healthy, multiplying relationships."  
[Page 69]

**CHAPTER 4. The Body of Christ and Biblical Leadership**

**31. Grace vs. strategic organization**

God's economy of grace can be represented by a life-giving, growing organism rather than a highly structured organization with strategic plans. [Page 72]

**32. Organization of people vs. Fellowship**

"We are not just an organization of people that happens to be Christian. Fellowship is truly a spiritual depth of unity and love that is created by the Holy Spirit." [Page 76]

**33. Content WITH relationship**

Among the Russians, the Kazakhs, and the Tamil-speaking Indians, I discovered I had no position or power or value without relationship. "The content had to be wrapped in relational clothing or it would not be received." [Pages 78, 79]

**34. The ladder vs. the process of relationship**

"The ladder so often encourages us to seek the end result or the higher position or the greater wealth. However, God appears to be much more interested in the process of relationships along the way--whatever the goal or end result." [Page 79]

**35. God is the composer**

"Each of us can try to decide what parts of the body we want to be, but attempting such will simply not work. God is the composer and arranger of this organic masterpiece, and he intentionally designed the body just like he wanted it to be." [Page 82]

**36. Body of Christ = no ladders**

"The body of Christ is also the great leveler. There really are no ladders in the body of Christ." [Page 82]

**37. Jesus exemplified community**

"By living with 12 men, God in human flesh made a clear statement about how community develops." [Page 84, quoting Ralph Neighbor]

**38. God more interested in our awareness of Him**

Perhaps God does not need as much organizational and strategic help as we have thought over the past years. Most likely he is particularly interested in our becoming more aware of his strategies through his organic design. [Page 87]

**CHAPTER 4. Leadership Re-Engineered: Being a Good Steward**

**39. How does leader fit in the body of Jesus?**

If we are the organic, living body of Jesus in the world, how does the leader fit in?" [Page 91]

**40. New Testament leader**

"There is no broad overview of the leader or leadership idea in the New Testament." The gift of leadership is one among a number of gifts. [Page 92]

**41. Wrong description of leader**

Leader is not described as a primary word related to directing and managing ministry. [Page 93]

**42. Right description of leader**

The Scripture talks of overseers and stewards, or "relationship managers," of God's household. [Page 93]

**43. Faithfulness produces kingdom fulfillment**

"If I am faithful relationally with those whom God brings to me, and use my gifts as well, he will fulfill his kingdom purposes through that course of action. God will then extend the process outwardly into oikos, household relationships, in ways that I could never plan." [Page 99]

**44. Good stewardship with gifts and relationships**

"I seek to be a steward of who I am through my spiritual gifts, while at the same time being a good steward of the relationships he gives me along the way. If I am faithful to be who I am, where I am, he will fulfill his purpose and give clarity to each step. Such is the functioning of his economy of grace." [Page 100]

**45. New Testament leadership**

The nature of leadership in the New Testament is that of equipping or preparing the saints for the work of the ministry according to Ephesians 4:11-16. [Page 100]

**46. Equip, prepare, establish or strengthen**

"Jesus, the gift-giver, gives certain believers gifts that are to 'equip, prepare, establish or strengthen' Christians for service to the Lord and to fellow humankind." [Page 101]

**47. Biblical priority**

"The biblical priority is that the saints be prepared for ministry, not simply led."  
[Page 101]

**48. Leaders are stewards, equippers and servants**

There are three crucial concepts here: [Page 1] Christian leaders are "stewards of God's grace-driven, of powerful spiritual gifts and of their households of relationships." [Page 2] Leaders are "equippers of body life gifting and relational unity." [Page 3] Leaders are "true ministers, servants who serve by the very nature of the word and the very model of Jesus." [Page 106]

**CHAPTER 6. Leadership Re-Engineered: Stewarding Our Lives**

**49. Modeling right relationship exceeds capacity**

"The model of right relationship appears to be much more important than the capacity to lead large groups or preach with great illustrations." [Page 111]

**50. Focus training on relational stewardship**

By comparison to leadership qualifications in Timothy and Titus, we are wrongly focused on skill set training rather than relational stewardship training. [page 111]

**51. Mending broken relationships is key**

"Mending broken relationships is key to the whole fabric of the body of Christ and central in our witness to a lost world." [Page 114]

**52. Broken relationships wreaking havoc**

The disease of broken relationships is wreaking havoc among Christians. "Self-serving Christians will leave relationships and churches at the drop of a hat for any number of personal reasons. The result is weeping in heaven as the brokenness dominates." [Page 115]

**53. Reconciliation—essential stewardship**

"Reconciling our relationships with God and with one another is an essential stewardship responsibility for every spiritual leader – for every Christian." [Page 118]

**54. Humble self examination**

Paraphrasing Paul, "Don't build yourself up in inappropriate ways, but rather make a serious, clear-headed examination of who you are." [Page 120]

**55. Spiritual gifts**

"Spiritual gifts are not simply those activities in which we do well. Spiritual gifts are where God powerfully shows up in our actions by the power of the Holy Spirit." [Page 123] 'If we minister in his power there will be no question about who gets the glory!"

**56. Spiritual gifts that support**

A person's spiritual gifts may be only supporting gifts, only equipping gifts, or a combination of both. "The joy comes in powerful serving and supporting, not in any effort to move up or try to become more important by the world's standards for success." [Page 125]

**57. We've lost sight of God in the process**

"In our desire to help God enlarge his church, we have focused on the tasks of ministry, tied this to cultural ladder-climbing, and lost sight of the who in the body of Christ while we chase down the how and the where. The organization has overtaken the organism, and consequently, the living body of Christ has had some unexpected constraints placed upon it." [Page 132]

**CHAPTER 7. Organic and Healthy Body Life**

**58. Organizational models hindering**

"We simply cannot reach the world as the living body of Christ with current Christian organizational models." [Page 137]

**59. Relationship with Christ and the body**

"The wisdom and power flow primarily through our relationship with Christ and our organic or natural interconnectedness within the body -- relationships!" [Page 138]

**60. New wineskins**

The applications Jesus modeled, the new wineskins:

- #1. The Stewardship of Relationships and Spiritual Gifts.
- #2. The Body of Christ as Organism -- Not Just Organization. [Page 142]
- #3. Practical Steps from "I" to "We." [Page 147]
  - From independence to interdependence.
  - From self-interest to service.
  - Living in accountable community
- #4. The Body Life Design Team. [Page 149]
  - Don't confuse significance with role.
  - Choose team unity & community.

**CHAPTER 8. God's Economy in Body Life Leadership**

**61. Paul re. leadership ladder**

"Paul, in all his dominance and directness as an apostle, did not refer to leadership as the issue." "There is no leadership ladder in God's economy." [Page 156]

**62. Leadership—group effort**

Leadership "is actually a series of functions to be fulfilled by a group of people." The tasks of leadership are fulfilled most powerfully by a number of gifted players, not one." [Page 157]

**63. 5 leadership functions**

Ford identifies five leadership functions (and has found no one who is powerful in all five):

- a. Values Keeper
- b. Team Builder
- c. Active Listener
- d. Vision Sharer
- e. Equipping Releaser [Page 162]

Wineskin

#5. Be Watchful Through the Stewardship 3-Step: 1. The Stewardship of Who I Am, 2) The stewardship of Who We Are, and 3) The Stewardship of the Groups of We: Whole Church Body Life [Page 166]

#6. Moving Toward Functional Leadership Language. (171) Use ministry language that signifies what we want to be about ministry-wise as stewards. We are all equippers and/or supporters of the saints. [Page 173]

**64. Leadership—group shared process**

"God's plan for leadership is that it be a shared process fulfilled by a group of gifted equippers who bring the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit to every situation and need." [Page 174]

**CHAPTER 9. God's Economy in Body Life Evangelism**

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#7. Listening to Those Whom God Brought to Discern More Clearly What God Intends. (Watching and listening for God's heart in the body of believers) [Page 181] "God's plan includes literally thousands of burdens and passions so that together the body of Christ can reach the world.



Such is God's economy." [Page 182]

### **63. Submission and servanthood = essential prerequisites**

"If you ask people who or what is on their hearts, and they think you really want to know, they will tell you. The problem is that most Christian leaders in every type of ministry simply do not ask!" [Page 183] This doesn't mean you endorse anyone to do anything. Some are not prepared. "Submission and an attitude of servanthood are essential prerequisites for releasing people to their ministry passions." [Page 184]

### **64. Individual pieces to big picture vision**

"God gives big picture vision to key leadership. God gives individual pieces of the big vision to all the players." And the two interact. [Page 185]

#8. Watching and Listening as Overseers.

### **65. Watch and listen**

Call your board members watchers and encourage them to watch and listen for God working among the people. [Page 189]

### **66. Good steward of spiritual gifts**

"The key to effective evangelism is choosing to be a good steward of God's power in me--my spiritual gifts--in the context of relationships in which God places me." [Page 191]

#9. Evangelism -- Be Who You Are Where You Are.

### **67. Authenticity, truth, integrity**

"People are looking for authenticity and truth revealed in real people and genuine relationships, where the message and the messengers have the same integrity." [Page 191]

### **68. Serving unbelievers with spiritual gifts**

"With unbelievers, in fact, using our gifts becomes our most supernatural means of serving and loving them." [Page 192]