

The Leadership Lessons of Jesus: A Timeless Model for Today's Leaders by Bob Briner & Ray Pritchard (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1997) (34 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Speaking the Truth

The relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist demonstrates that truth is always the first and most important element of the spokesperson's message and that a quality spokesperson continues to speak the truth even in tough times when the truth may be unpopular. [Page 6]

2. Essentials in Ministry

Martin Luther said there are three things necessary to create a successful minister of God: prayer, meditation, and temptation. [Page 12]

3. Bold Recruitment

When you feel called to lead, and when you discover someone you really want and need to be involved in your endeavor, don't be coy. Follow the example of Jesus and ask them to join you. People want to be asked and feel needed. Even when they say no--and some will--they will feel good about themselves and about you simply because you asked. [Page 20]

4. The Power of a Personal Invitation

Real leaders rise to the challenge of personally inviting to the team those persons necessary for the greatest success. No other invitations have the power and appeal of the one-on-one method. Jesus asked people to follow Him, and so should you. [Page 20]

5. The Importance of Leadership and Management

A leader knows the difference between leadership and management, and values both. He is ready to respond in positive ways to the unexpected, consistently analyzing situations and responding with boldness as he is led by the Holy Spirit. [Page 42]

6. Looking Beneath the Surface

In choosing Matthew, a despised tax collector, Jesus certainly went against conventional wisdom, looking far beneath the surface of Matthew's unpopular profession to teach us quite an important leadership lesson: a wise leader builds his or her team very carefully. Choices are made not on appearance and appeal but on deeply, prayerfully considered values. [Page 48]

7. Strength in Diversity

By choosing Matthew, Jesus showed that a leader should consider diversity when building his team--all kinds of diversity, particularly diversity of talent, temperament, and experience. A less thoughtful leader puts together a homogeneous team of look-alikes who may also think alike because of their similar backgrounds and experiences--a

much weaker team than one built with diversity in mind. We often think that diversity weakens a team when, in fact, the opposite is true. Men like Matthew and Peter (a tax collector and a fisherman, respectively) should have been at each other's throats-- imagine a longshoreman having to work with an IRS agent. But Jesus saw something in these men and wasn't afraid to choose them both for the same team. [Page 48-49]

8. Consistent Leadership

Never fall into the trap of thinking that because something is inherently better it will automatically succeed. Competent, compelling leadership must be exercised to ensure that even the best things endure. [Page 56]

9. Constant Values - Changing Methods

According to author Tom Peters, innovative companies do two things very well: (1) they remain true to their core values, and (2) they continue to evolve and change their methods of doing business. [Page 56]

10. Open to Change

"We have always done it this way" is not a validating concept for a leader; a quality leader instead asks "Why?" and "Can we do it better?" When convinced a new way is better, a leader immediately begins to establish a new tradition, one better than the old. A leader believes in the old saying, "He has the right to criticize who has the heart to help." Simply blasting an old tradition is not leadership. [Page 58]

11. Expect Opposition

A wise leader understands that no matter how pure the motive or how effective the action, there will always be those who oppose his or her leadership. A leader should not be surprised or debilitated by opposition because it will come. [Page 60]

12. Unwarranted Criticism

Not all are called to be leaders. In fact, this is a good test of leadership: can you handle unwarranted criticism? Many can cope with rational criticism, but only a select few can both understand and effectively deal with the kind of criticism that has no logical basis. [Page 61]

13. Relationships with Other Believers

... a very special, close relationship with a small group of followers in an absolute essential for the effective leader. [Page 64]

14. Speaking to Large Groups

There are certainly occasions when a leader needs to address the crowds. The effective leader works to develop skills, sensitivity, and comfort with crowds and small groups. While some are more naturally gifted in one setting than in others, it is possible to

improve in both areas. If you aspire to be a leader (or perhaps a better leader), assess your strengths and weaknesses in each area and work to improve. [Page 65]

15. Attention to Details

A friend once asked Michelangelo why he had labored so long over the intricate details of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, details so tiny no one would ever notice. “After all,” the friend said, “who will know whether it is perfect or not?” “I will,” the artist replied. [Page 67]

16. The Call to Leadership

There is no tragedy in failing to become a leader if we face up to the possibility of leadership squarely, honestly, and in an attitude of submission to God’s will. If we prayerfully examine opportunities to lead and are then obedient, we will be successful as either a leader or a follower. Tragedies occur when we fail to take on leadership responsibilities that we are clearly called to fulfill, or when we pursue or demand leadership responsibilities without objectively and prayerfully examining our ability to lead. When either of these occur, people are hurt, resources are wasted, and good opportunities for growth are retarded. Are you willing to pay the high price of leadership? Examine yourself--see if you really can or want to be a leader. Ask God to guide you. [Page 81]

17. Unity

Unity rarely just happens. It has to be sought and taught. In my basketball experience, the leadership that produced most of the team’s unity came from a player rather than from the coach; the titular leader is not always the one who instills unity in his or her team. Conversely, unity can be easily destroyed by almost anyone. A wise leader does all he or she can to build with those who contribute to unity while eliminating the cause of disunity from the team. When Jesus said that a house divided against itself cannot stand, He spoke a truth applicable to every kind of human endeavor. Unity is essential. Don’t be afraid to eliminate the source of disunity from your enterprise--it’s your responsibility as a leader. [Page 86]

18. Not Everyone Appreciates Good Leadership

Winston Churchill was perhaps the greatest leader of the twentieth century. His magnificent, courageous leadership of the British people during the darkest days of World War 2 inspired freedom-loving people everywhere. Yet, in the first election after his leadership helped to secure victory over the Nazis, he was immediately voted out of office! This is an example of what leaders often face. Universal appreciation doesn’t always follow great leadership. [Page 88]

19. A Vision

Good leaders have a vision; better leaders share a vision; the best leaders invite others to join them in spreading this vision. In this way, the best leaders create a sense of intimacy

with hundreds, thousands, and even millions of followers, which explains why some feel that they know great world leaders even though they have never met. Shared vision binds leaders and followers together in a way that little else can. [Page 91]

20. Good Seed Produces Good Fruit in God's Time

Leaders who can't handle rejection, defeat, or delay don't last. Leaders who have to win everything every time are short-lived with limited success. Leaders must believe that if they sow good seed, some will fall on good soil. Some will produce good things. Even though they may not see good results immediately or even in their lifetime. Jesus teaches us that good seed will produce good fruit. We can't be discouraged by a lack of response, but we must trust God to bring about the harvest in His own time and His own way. [Page 93]

21. Staying on Course

It's always important to emphasize the "up side" in communicating with followers. While keeping expectations real and preparing for the tough times is important, it is vital to show followers the potential fruit of staying the course, of being faithful to the mission. [Page 98]

22. Good Stewards of Our Resources

Jesus repeatedly teaches that it is not how much we have that counts, but what we do with what we have. Leaders must help followers understand this principle and hold them accountable to it. [Page 104]

23. Faithfulness

We may not understand how God's plan works, but we can know that He is faithful. We can know that if we lead faithfully He will bless our leadership efforts. We may not always "win" as the world measures winning, but as we plant good seed, a good harvest will result. Leaders are called to faithfulness more than they are called to success. [Page 106]

24. Making Contact

When Tom Peters writes about "management by walking around," his writing is based on this understanding. Leaders need to be aware of the effect they have on those they lead. Successful leaders, from great football coaches to great generals, understand this and make their "little" contacts really count. [Page 108]

25. God Uses Small Things

The Bible often celebrates small things. It was little David, not the giant Goliath. It was Gideon's small band, not the enemy hordes. It was the widow's mite, not the Pharisee's largesse. It was the cup of cold water in His name, not the grandstand play. Sometimes it's better to "think small." [Page 109]

26. The Expense of Leadership

Leadership is expensive. As a leader, there is always a price to pay. Page [124]

27. Giving of Self

...a leader does not, *cannot*, help others without giving of himself or herself. Leadership is costly. [Page 125]

28. Planning for the Future

Christian leaders have a particular responsibility to plan for succession and the future of their enterprise. If they are to be good stewards of the leadership responsibility God has given them, they must do their best to prepare their own well-trained, experienced Peter, James, and John to smoothly and seamlessly assume command when they move on. [Page 127-128]

29. Vision and Common Sense

The ideal leader combines vision with the kind of common sense that makes his vision a reality. [Page 130]

30. Gleaning Expertise from Others

In this fallen world, the wisest, most successful leaders analyze their strengths and weaknesses and act accordingly. If you are a big thinker with the ability to visualize, make sure you surround yourself with people blessed with practical talent. If your leadership style is more practical, be sure to assemble a “brain trust” to complete some of the long-range planning and dreaming. It is not necessary for you to have it all, only

31. You Cannot Please Everyone

Leadership brings out both the best and the worst in people. Wise leaders understand this, accepting it as a natural part of leadership, and try to emphasize the best and minimize the worst.

Recognize that your motives will always be questioned by some and that, even when you are performing at your very best, creating the most good for the most people, some will “take offense.” Unfortunately, those offended will often be people closest to you or those you have known the longest. [Page 132]

32. The Benefit of Leaving Home

I have seen a lot of leadership talent wasted due to a refusal to leave home. Although it is good to have a strong appreciation and affection for home, returning periodically to visit as Jesus did, maximized leadership usually occurs away from home. Those who insist on staying at home often fail to fulfill their leadership potential.

Peter, James and John did not become leaders by lingering in Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, but by traveling to Jerusalem. “Come follow me” almost always means following

away from home for maximum leadership effect, although there is nothing wrong with returning home if that is where the Lord has called you to be. For most of us, however, leaving home is part of God's plan for our leadership. [Page 134]

Balance

33. Some leaders hold their authority too closely, strangling on the demands of the mundane and the minutiae of daily life. Some delegate too broadly, dissipating the potential effects of their authority. [Page 136]

Making Decisions

34. In wherever the enterprise--a home, Sunday school class, church, or business--work hard as you lead to understand the extent of your authority, and then exercise it. Be the person to stop an appropriate part of "the buck." A leader, by definition, is a "buck stopper," one who makes decisions and accepts the responsibility for them. [Page 136]