

Leadership Reading List

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We will not be asked what we have read, but what we have done. - Thomas a Kempis
Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. – Jesus Christ

Leaders are readers... because leaders must be continual learners. There is much wisdom to be wrought from others' insights and experiences. Here are some of my favorite books and authors whose voices have shaped my thinking on how to live well, love well, and lead well. For years I have made it a practice to ask others whom I respect what they are reading, then pick up the best books and glean from them. You may find it helpful to set aside a small annual budget (8-12 books' worth) to invest in building your leadership library.

Learn how to read a book and make it yours – write in it, dog-ear key pages, note key quotes on the blank pages in the back so you can refer to them later. You don't have to read the whole book to benefit from it. Some people rarely read a book cover to cover. I usually begin by reading the author's introduction, the table of contents and the first chapter, then I hone in on key chapters of interest. Amazon's "Look Inside!" function often allows me to read the introduction and first chapter online, for free. If you Kindle as I do, learn how to quickly highlight quotes and download them later to your computer. There are a lot of excellent leadership blogs; pick 3 and locate them prominently in your feed reader. However you do it... READ... be informed... reflect... write... and teach. You'll be glad you did.

There are a few non-American authors in the list. Oswald Sanders and Tom Marshall were both Kiwis; Andrew Murray was Dutch and pastored in South Africa; Ajith Fernando is Sri Lankan; Amy Carmichael's biography focuses on Europe and India (though written by an American); Henri Nouwen was a Dutch Catholic who ministered in Canada; Oswald Chambers was from Aberdeen, Scotland. **My Utmost for His Highest** is a compilation of his wife Biddy's transcriptions from daily sermons he gave to troops while stationed in Egypt. Paul Johnson is British.

**** Books highly recommended for purchase and regular review. Buy it so you can write in it.**

*** Books with important concepts you should grasp; you don't necessarily need to purchase.**

**** (2010) Newly added to this year's list.**

Care of the Heart - Devotional

Psalms, Isaiah

****My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers**

This is also available as free download on the web. I always have it with me on my Palm and frequently use this in the early hours to focus my mind on one simple idea about God before proceeding in personal prayer and study. Great for those who lead at a distance and travel often.

****Power Through Prayer (or any of his books on prayer), E M Bounds**

**** (2010) Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership, Ruth Haley Barton.**

I love this one. Barton walks us through the life & leadership challenges of Moses. She specifically addresses the question: What would it look like to lead more consistently from my healthy, overflowing soul? Other topics include establishing habits of sacred rhythms, living within limits (after acknowledging that you have them), and some of the key signs that your soul is depleted. I have been handing this book out to fellow leaders and teams recently. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

****The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath, Mark Buchanan.**

If you're noticing that the harder you work, the less you accomplish, it may be time to read this book. Buchanan outlines the theology of Sabbath, God's view of time and rest, and offers practical liturgies to help us incorporate weekly rest into our hectic lives. Excellent foundation for longer sabbaticals.

A Godward Life (any of volumes 1-3), John Piper

Cry of the Soul, Trent Longman and Dan Allender (exposé of emotions in the Psalms)

Leading Self

Proverbs, 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, Galatians 5, Ephesians 4-6, Pastoral Epistles

****Less Is More Leadership**, H. Dale Burke.

The subtitle (How to Lead and Still Have a Life) says it all. Burke took over from Charles Swindoll as pastor of a 5,000 member church. This is not a book about church growth. It is a book about walking with Jesus, prioritizing, and spiritually leading people in a very chaotic environment. The chapter on Concentration and Focus has one of the best explanations I have seen on how leaders should spend their time. Highly recommended.

****Leadership and Self-Deception**, The Arbinger Institute.

"It is in the darkness of their eyes that men get lost," is the quote that opens this book. Ooh, this one will really challenge you to ask some hard questions about what you can't see in your own leadership. Maybe the reason I'm stuck doesn't have as much to do with other people changing as it does my own self-destructive tendencies.

****The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, Steven Covey

Covey's book has significantly shaped my leadership mentality and disciplines. I first read it in 1991 and his recommendations brought it all together for me. Success in effective living begins with Private Victory (Be Proactive, Begin with the end in mind, Put first things first) then moves on to Public Victory (Think Win-Win, Seek first to understand...then to be understood, Synergize), and finally back into personal effectiveness by Sharpening the Saw. These concepts are essential to weeding through all the fluff of the information age. This book also contains fantastic practical advice on living out one's priorities ("Exercise integrity at the moment of choice") and teamwork ("Defend those who are absent").

Now Discover Your Strengths, Marcus Buckingham

Main idea: Most organizations hold on tenaciously to two fallacies (1) That anyone in the organization can be trained to do any task, and (2) That the greatest room for potential growth for any individual is in his area of greatest weakness. This book turns these on their head by stating (and proving) the opposite is true: (1) That training across the organization ultimately needs to focus on specialty areas of diverse contribution, and (2) That the greatest room for potential growth for any individual is in his area of greatest strength. In other words, let's let Tiger Woods play golf and Pavorotti sing. This should resonate with Paul's advice on spiritual gifts....

***Your Leadership Grip (Workshop/Workbook, Churchsmart Resources)**, Paul Ford

Best tool I've seen or used in understanding spiritual gifts in combination with the role that a gifted person plays on a team. Explores three aspects: Team Style (and who I need on the team around me), Spiritual Gifts, and Primary Leadership Function.

***The One-Life Solution**, Henry Cloud.

Excellent discussion with practical questions related to the 24/7 boundary-less workplace in which we now operate. This is not about time management, it's about the heart issues and attitudes which hinder us from making healthy, mature decisions and communicating them with grace and truth to others.

Credibility, Kouzes and Posner. People follow those they trust.

***Margin**, Dr. Richard Swenson. On how and why to live life with emotional, physical and spiritual margin. A medical doctor explains the natural consequences of ignoring these principles.

Spiritual Life of a Leader

*****The Scriptures – (2010) ESV Study Bible (also available for Kindle or on iPhone through Laridian.com).** Read through them cover to cover regularly, I suggest once every two years. **There is no substitute.**

*****Spiritual Leadership*, Oswald Sanders (UPDATED in 2007, Moody Press)**

You probably already own this book, but I have found that rereading it periodically sheds crucial new insights into the current leadership challenges I face. Sanders wrote this while Consulting Director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship in the 1960's. This excellent compilation of messages to missionary leaders is perpetually relevant. Here are all the chapter titles: An Honorable Ambition, The Search For Leaders, The Master's Master Principle, Natural and Spiritual Leadership, Can You Become a Leader?, Insights on Leadership from Paul, ...from Peter, Qualities Essential to Leadership (1, 2), Above All Else, Prayer and Leadership, The Leader and Time, The Leader and Reading, Improving Leadership, The Cost of Leadership, The Responsibilities of Leadership, Tests of Leadership, The Art of Delegation, Replacing Leaders, Reproducing Leaders, Perils of Leadership, The Leader Nehemiah. Includes discussion guide.

****Jesus on Leadership*, Gene Wilkes**

*****A Work of Heart and Practicing Greatness*, Reggie McNeal (Jossey Bass).**

**** (2010) *LeadershipNext: Changing Leaders in a Changing World*, Eddie Gibbs.**

Fantastic insights into why you, as a leader, must change if you're going to be relevant in a post-industrial information-age. Gibbs wrote this as a 66-year old Anglican from the UK. Excellent perspectives for how older and younger leaders must lead differently in today's global, non-hierarchical relationally-networked environment. If I had a one-year sabbatical to write a contemporary leadership book (like Gibbs did), this is probably fairly close to what I would say.

***(2010) *Becoming a Resonant Leader*, McKee, Boyatzis, Johnston (Harvard Business).**

Based on the Goleman's Emotional Intelligence framework. I am currently working through this workbook. It's challenging, inspiring and occasionally disturbing (because it reveals my deeply ingrained behaviors that are counterproductive to my leadership effectiveness. If you feel stuck, check this out. Get the workbook, not the text.

*****Jesus-Driven Ministry*, Ajith Fernando (IVP).**

Solid examination of Jesus' foundational ministry principles from the gospel of Mark. Written by the 26-year veteran director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka. One of the rare books that gives pertinent examples from the author's personal life, failures, and pastoral ministry.

****Upside Down*, Stacy Rinehart (Navpress).**

Rinehart (who led the Co-Mission multinational effort in the former Soviet Union when it opened in the early 1990's) lays out an excellent, short (160 pages), digestible work on servant leadership. He explores the biblical roots and theological foundations of servant leadership vs. power leadership and also walks through 2000 years of church history while doing so.

****Spiritual Leadership*, Henry Blackaby. "Spiritual leadership is moving people onto God's agenda."**

***Axiom*, Bill Hybels (Zondervan).**

Hybels captured 76 powerful leadership proverbs. These are the little sayings that you find yourself constantly repeating in your head when you face pressure, strategic decisions, and relational challenges. Bill just wrote them down. Excellent distilled wisdom.

*****A Tale of Three Kings*, Gene Edwards (Tyndale)**

Meant to be read in one sitting, this dramatic interpretation of Saul, David and Absalom will bring you to tears and leave some painfully gnawing questions about personal brokenness and humility stuck in your mind.

*****In The Name of Jesus*, Henri Nouwen (Crossroad)**

Another short (81 pages) and profound work on Jesus' style of servant leadership. I have read and reread this book. Nouwen was a Harvard professor who left the university setting to live in obscurity ministering to mentally handicapped people. He highlights three movements Christian leaders must make in order to lead as Jesus led: from relevance to prayer, from popularity to ministry, from leading to being led. Buy it.

The Life You've Always Wanted, John Ortberg

Ortberg explains WHY we need spiritual disciplines and walks through refreshing approaches to disciplines of engagement and withdrawal. Good for the soul.

* *Ordering Your Private World*, Gordon MacDonald (this classic was revised in 2001)

If you are feeling stressed out and overloaded by the burdens of ministry, let MacDonald minister to your soul. He is one of my favorite authors, featured online each month at LeadershipJournal.net.

The Making of a Leader, Bobby Clinton

Clinton highlights six key stages of leader formation, from sovereign foundations, to the leader's call, to "afterglow." This book provides theological foundations to the Life Map exercise.

* *The Key to the Missionary Problem*, Andrew Murray

Murray boldly asked the Christian leaders in 1901: "How can the church be aroused to know and to do our Lord's will for the salvation of men?" This South African pastor unpacks fantastic thinking on world missions, issues in working with churches, the need for missions organizations, and the focus on college students as being crucial for raising the next generation. He truly believed that all the resources were present in the church to finish the task of world evangelization in his generation. Why then, he asks, with millions of Christians in the world, is the army fighting the hosts of darkness so small? Murray's answer was -- lack of heart. The enthusiasm for building the kingdom was lacking, he said, because there was so little enthusiasm for *the King*.

The Ascent of a Leader, Thrall and McNichol

Though "character" is a current buzzword in leadership circles, most books on the subject address only the "what" and the "why" of character. This book takes a deep and engaging look at the "how" of character development. This book guides leaders in all sectors through a conscious, proactive, step-by-step process for developing both personal character and the network of important relationships that enable character to win out despite setbacks, adversity and temptations.

Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: The Paradox of Personal Dysfunction, McIntosh & Rima (Baker)

I would subtitle this one "The effects of the flesh on spiritual leadership." Practical book on discovering compulsiveness, narcissism, paranoia, codependency, passive-aggressive behavior. Offers sound advice on dealing with these issues.

Why CEOs Fail, David L Dotlich & Peter Cairo (Jossey-Bass)

Another great "power of the flesh" book to warn us. This book highlights 11 destructive behaviors by executive leaders that most people in the organization will simply accept as normal due to a leader's position (arrogance, melodrama, volatility, excessive caution, habitual distrust, aloofness, mischievousness, eccentricity, passive resistance, perfectionism, eagerness to please).

The Power of a Praying... (Man, Woman, Husband, Wife, Parent...), Stormie Omartian (Harvest House). Simple, practical, biblical, topical.

Leading People, Organizational Leadership

Old Testament – Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, Nehemiah, Proverbs

New Testament – Gospels, Acts, 1-2 Timothy, Titus

**** (2010) *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*. Dan and Chip Heath.**

Another winner from the brothers who gave us *Made to Stick*. Discusses four key elements that must be addressed to ensure lasting personal or institutional change. They are (1) the Rider – intellect, (2) the Elephant – emotions, (3) the Path – making it as easy as possible to comply with desired new behaviors, and (4) the Herd – getting others involved in the process. Full of memorable, counter-intuitive stories and examples of overcoming obstacles to change.

*****The International Framework for Leadership Development*, Campus Crusade for Christ.**

While our framework doesn't include everything, this is an excellent summary whose concepts should be committed to memory. I have yet to see another comprehensive model for leadership growth that captures everything so well. Includes: Heart, Relationships, (DICE), Roles, Responsibilities and Results of the leader, 5 E's of development (Environment, Education, Exposure, Experience, Evaluation). Best of all – it's free.

*****Understanding Leadership*, Tom Marshall.** Fantastic book that fulfills its title.

**** (2010) *Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church*, James Plueddemann, IVP.**

Excellent overview of many issues that surround the declining influence of the Western approach to missions in an increasingly global world. Explores high-context and low-context cultures. Four parts: Multicultural Leadership in the Worldwide Church, Leadership and Culture, Contextualizing Leadership (Theology and Theory), and Global Leadership in Practice. The world is coming to you, are you prepared?

*****The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*, Kouzes and Pozner (Jossey Bass, 4th edition, 2007)**

Drawing on interviews and a questionnaire survey of more than 3000 leaders, the authors identify five fundamental practices of exemplary leadership: challenge the status quo; inspire a shared vision; enable others to act; model the way forward by setting an example; tap individuals' inner drives by linking rewards and performance. These are the commonly observed actions that the best leaders do to build into others' lives and thus grow healthy organizations with solid relationships. Even though this is a secular book, I find that it offers more practical advice in how to really lead people by touching their heart level motivations than much of the current Christian fluff out there today. The 4th edition illustrates many best practices from outside North America.

*****A Leader's Legacy*, Kouzes and Pozner (Jossey Bass)**

This recent book (2006) forms a great companion for the Leadership Challenge. 21 brief chapters that are honey for an organizational leader's soul. They deal with issues such as: how leaders serve and sacrifice, why leaders need loving critics, why leaders should want to be liked, why leaders can't take trust for granted, why it's not just the leader's vision, why failure is always an option, why it takes courage to "make a life", how to liberate the leader in everyone, and ultimately, how the legacy you leave is really simply the life you lead.

*****Leadership is an Art*, Max DePree (Dell).**

Hilarious, insightful, easy to read. Contains DePree's oft-quoted thesis: "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you." Max is a Christian who led Herman-Miller furniture for many years. His definition of the art of leadership is "liberating people to do what is required of them in the most effective and humane way possible."

*****The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church*, Reggie McNeal (Jossey-Bass).** A

provocative battlecry for Christian leaders to become more "missional" and less like country club execs. Asks how to move from church (organizational) growth to Kingdom growth, develop disciples instead of church members, and focus on spiritual formation rather than church programs (or parachurch events).

****Good to Great*, Jim Collins (Harper Business)**

Why do some companies make the leap from average to great? Collins' research team was shocked by the answer; you won't be – it begins with a "Level 5 Leader." Key concepts that the secular and Christian world have milked from this book include: Good is the Enemy of the Great, Level 5 Leadership, First Who...then What, Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith), The Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles), A Culture of Discipline, The Flywheel and the Doom Loop.

*****Courageous Leadership*, Bill Hybels (Zondervan).**

Excellent collection of articles this American pastor has written for Leadership Journal.

****Elders and Leaders, Gene Getz.**

Excellent and highly recommended biblical, historical (as in church history) and practical view of leadership, straight from the Word.

Leadership Journal (published quarterly). My favorite Christian magazine. I devour it. You can get articles automatically emailed to you by signing up at www.leadershipjournal.net.

**The Servant*, James Hunter (Prima)

If you are tired of the standard leadership books, try this short leadership fable. It's a story of a burned-out executive whose wife sends him to a week-long spiritual retreat at a monastery under threat of divorce if he doesn't go. The lessons he learns on servanthood, authority, and genuine love will stick with you.

Here I Am To Worship, Tim Hughes (Regal)

Do you ever lead God's people in public worship? If you do, this book is an excellent tool. It's short, packed with great quotes, and focused. Hughes, a songwriter and worship leader, exhorts us to "never lose the wonder of worshipping the Savior." Any leader will benefit from the first half of the book's content on developing a worshipping heart. The second half gives practical advice for building a worship team, song selection, team leadership, song writing, etc.

Transformational Leadership, Leighton Ford (IVP).

Scripture-based classic that moves us beyond the traditional forms of transactional leadership.

The Next Generation Leader, Andy Stanley (Multnomah, 2003)

This is a short (160 pages) and sweet discussion of five essentials for solid leaders of the future. Stanley discusses courage, clarity, competence, coachability, and character.

Effective Pastoring, Bill Lawrence (Word).

My good friend Bill Lawrence lays out his very practical theology in written form.

**The Three Keys to Empowerment*, Ken Blanchard

The three in summary: 1. Provide key information to everyone, 2. Provide clear boundaries, 3. Make the hierarchy teams rather than individuals. Explains situational coaching.

**Leading Change*, John P. Kotter (Harvard Business Press)

A fantastic book on how to make necessary change in an organization by overcoming the inertia of "doing things the way they've always been done." I constantly run through the 8 steps in my mind when I am thinking about ways to help all of us continue to align our people to new ideas or more effective field strategies. Google for the 8 steps.

**The Heart of Change*, John P. Kotter (Harvard Business Press)

The sequel to *Leading Change* gives real-life examples of companies and managers who acted on the eight steps of anchoring change in their culture. This summary will give you a good overview and stretch you to try some creative ways to help drive home your vision with your teams.

Two excellent source-books for those in higher organizational leadership roles:

**** (2010) *Leadership in Organizations*, Gary Yukl (Prentice Hall, 7th edition, 2010).**

Yukl picks up where Northouse (see below) leaves off, addressing the very practical issues of leading people in organizations. Includes: nature of leadership and managerial work, effective leadership, delegation & empowerment, dyadic relations & followership, power & influence, history of theories (similar to Northouse), charismatic & transformational leadership, leading change in organizations, teams & decision-making, strategic leadership by executives, ethics, servant/spiritual/authentic leadership, developing leadership skills. If you're new to organizational leadership or find your institution changing around you, this will help you find your way and put words to what you're experiencing. No, you're not crazy.

***(2010) *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Peter Northouse (Sage, 4th edition).**

Walks concisely through various leadership theories over the past two centuries (trait theory, skills, style, situational, contingency, path-goal, leader-member exchange, transactional/transformational, team leadership, women in leadership, culture and leadership, ethics). Includes case studies. If you are a student of leadership approaches, you would enjoy this readable walk through history.

Leading Teams

***The Gospel of John* – If leadership is about influencing people to accomplish a purpose, note the inescapable linkage between the most relational and most missional of gospels.**

Romans 12, Ephesians 4, Philippians 2, Colossians 3.

*****The Performance Factor*, Pat MacMillan**

CCC's new organizational structure relies on the six teamwork principles drawn from this excellent book. In all the books I've read on teamwork, I believe this book boils down the concepts to the irreducible minimum. In other words, if you don't have these six practices (Common Purpose, Crystal Clear Roles, Accepted Leadership, Effective Processes, Solid Relationships, Excellent Communication) in place and growing, your team will probably forever be frustrated or stuck. Pat is a former board member for CCC and does leadership consulting worldwide.

****The Wisdom of Teams*, Katzenbach and Wilson. Classic, recently updated.**

*****The Five Dysfunctions of A Team*, Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-Bass)**

Lencioni tells a leadership fable about a corporate executive team, then lays out five very practical "dysfunctions" (absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results), along with a questionnaire for readers to use in evaluating their own teams and specifics to help them understand and overcome these common shortcomings. Fun.

****Death By Meeting*, Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-Bass)**

If you find that everyone on your team is dreading the next meeting, this book will help you understand why. Humorous and all-too-honest look at why our meetings stink and how to get them back on track. Offers practical advice in running 4 different types of meetings based on the needs of the team.

Communicating

***Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), Parables
Sermons in Acts (by Peter, Stephen, Paul)***

*****Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, Don Sunukjian (Kregel).**

Fabulous new book on the process of preparing biblical sermons that stick. Its caused me to go back to the drawing board for message preparation.

**** (2010) *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High*, Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzler (McGraw Hill).**

If your leadership effectiveness involves working with people (which it does), chances are good this book will help you. Defines crucial conversation as "a discussion between two or more people where (1) stakes are high, (2) opinions vary, and (3) emotions run strong." Whether you are navigating a marriage or preparing to sign a MOU for a new partnership, this book will help you get on the other party's page, understand their story, make it safe to talk, and grow in self-awareness of your own emotional hot-buttons. I've been using it with my team this year.

****Made to Stick*, Chip and Dan Heath (Random House).**

Fun, memorable, great illustrations on speaking and writing in ways that help people remember what you're trying to say. Uses SUCCES as a framework (Simplicity, Unexpectedness, Connectedness, Credibility, Emotional, Stories).

****Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson.**

The standard for seminaries on classical preaching focused on one Big Idea.

****SALT Class on Biblical Communication (taught by Gary Purdy, Rick Hove, Gary Runn)**

The Empowered Communicator, Calvin Miller (B&H)

***Fierce Conversations**, Susan Scott (Viking)

“Our work, our relationships, and our lives succeed or fail gradually, then suddenly, one conversation at a time. While no single conversation is guaranteed to change everything, any single conversation can.”

Biographical Insights on Great Leaders

The Pentateuch, Joshua, Acts of the Apostles

Band of Brothers, (book or DVD series) – Stephen Ambrose

A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael, Elisabeth Elliot

“You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.”

The Heart of an Executive, Richard D. Phillips (on the life of David the King)

****Heroes**, Paul Johnson.

One of my favorite authors (*Modern Times, Intellectuals, A History of the American People*) offers brief snapshots of two dozen stirring examples of heroes from a wide spectrum. Includes vignettes on Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Henry V, Joan of Arc, Washington, the Duke of Wellington, Lincoln, Lee, Churchill, Marilyn Monroe, Reagan, Thatcher and Pope John Paul.

Robert E. Lee on Leadership, H. W. Crocker (Prima)

Lincoln on Leadership, Donald L Phillips (Warner Books)

Churchill on Leadership, Steven F. Hayward (Random House)

1776, David McCullough (Simon & Schuster). Covers a crucial 15-month period in American history under the amazingly human leadership of George Washington.

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership Tested By Time, James L. Garlow (Nelson)

This book follows up John Maxwell's *21 Laws* book with historical vignettes of great and awful leadership. Excellent source for practical illustrations.

My favorite leadership blogs and RSS feeds for pithy, practical wisdom:

- Ken Cochrum - www.onleadingwell.com
- Michael Hyatt (CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers) - <http://michaelhyatt.com/>
- Harvard Business Review - <http://blogs.hbr.org/>
- Leadership Journal.net - <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le>
- Russ Martin (young Canadian leader) - <http://www.doublederivative.ca/>