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The Opening

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JESUS CHRIST, OUR MODEL FOR LEADERSHIP

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*“...My food is to do the will of him who sent me and
to accomplish his work,” John 4:34.*

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THERE IS A need to return to the priority of Christ in today’s
Christian leadership. We are to lead with Him in mind, heart,
and direction. There is often an intense conversation about
adhering to the doctrine of Christ, which is good; however,
such adherence involves following Him through the appli-
cation of the tenets, concepts, and perspectives provided in
Scripture. Our practice is grounded in the life and leadership
of a real person, Jesus Christ, involving more than a relation-
ship with the information about Him. Sure, we need sound
knowledge regarding our Savior; however, we must also walk

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1 with Him in heart, mind, and spirit. The disciples had a
2 literal and physical experience with Christ, and it changed
3 the course of their lives. So, it is with us as we draw closer
4 to Him by faith and devoutly serve to continue the mission
5 that He began over two thousand years ago. The good news
6 is that we have the nature of God, by the agency of the Holy
7 Spirit, to help us live and lead on behalf of Christ. We do
8 so through the means of studying His life and leadership,
9 whereby the Holy Spirit causes the teachings and counsels of
10 Christ to come alive in us. It would have been great to have
11 been with the twelve disciples and Christ during their mis-
12 sionary journey, but His words and presence are generated
13 in us to effect change in our era just the same. He is no less
14 with us today than He was with them during their time of
15 leading. He is the same Jesus today that He was then.

16 With the widespread misuse of power today, there is a
17 growing concern about where to place trust and security.
18 As a result, people have opted to navigate themselves and
19 search for their own set of directions. Unfortunately, cor-
20 ruption in the form of self-interest, disregard, and insensi-
21 tivity is occurring at every level of authority, from civil to
22 corporate, and even among spiritual or Christian leadership.
23 Having the power or ability to influence and direct others
24 is no light matter. It's serious. Whether you are a parent, ex-
25 ecutive, police officer, or pastor, someone is looking to you.
26 The question is, what kind of moral shape are you in? What
27 is your routine and conditioning to stay honest, sincere, and
28 authentic to the oath? Sadly, most leaders are morally out of

shape and have stopped exercising their values, principles, 1
and integrity on a daily basis. 2

However, not all leaders are corrupt or destructive; 3
some are simply out of shape ethically and need to get back 4
into the routines that made them morally strong, sturdy, 5
and robust in Christ. We all know a little something about 6
this because we have experienced what it means to be out 7
of shape morally. Identifying compromises and infractions 8
to integrity is often overlooked due to the busyness of lead- 9
ing, and before long, we find ourselves sidelined because 10
we have ignored the warning signs. You know, tempera- 11
ment challenges, outbursts of anger, condescending atti- 12
tudes, entitlement, the list goes on; all the signs pointing to 13
the fact that we are morally out of shape and in need of the 14
Lord's touch and mending. 15

Maintaining moral integrity is essential because our 16
behavior, either godly or ungodly, will significantly im- 17
pact those who look to us for direction, guidance, and care. 18
Leading does not have to be filled with concession to the flesh 19
and impure motives or agendas; it can be as God intended, 20
as all authority is ordained by Him (Rom 13:1-7), and after 21
this passage, we see that today there is a severe abuse of pow- 22
er that is separate from God's purpose. However, that does 23
not mean we should take matters into our own hands and 24
do as we please to correct the failing conditions in leader- 25
ship. Although specific actions are inexcusable from those in 26
power, we must remain in place with God and not become 27
ungodly in the process. 28

1 Through a spiritual lens, we must consider what leader-
2 ship should look like from a biblical perspective. The speci-
3 fications are outlined, with a notable example being that of
4 Jesus Christ. Those who lead in today's church must study
5 the leadership of Christ with an attitude of following Him.
6 He is what Scripture refers to as the Chief-Shepherd (1 Pet.
7 5:1-4). In a world of uncertainty and untrust when it comes
8 to leadership, we have a High-Priest who is faithful, accu-
9 rate, and without flaw, which can be tough shoes to walk
10 in; fortunately, we have the Holy Spirit as our Helper if we
11 submit to His leading (John 14:15-17, 16:13-15). Jesus refers
12 to Him as the Helper, Comforter, and Spirit of Truth.

13 Regardless of your ministry context, leading others is
14 challenging work. It often comes with unrealistic expecta-
15 tions, unfair criticisms, and undeserved labels. Then there
16 are moments of uncertainty and doubt that all leaders pro-
17 cess at times due to the enormity of their roles and responsi-
18 bilities. "Am I able, capable, and qualified are questions that
19 can occasionally roam through our minds." Other questions
20 could also arise, especially after traversing through the trails
21 of leadership, such as: "Am I cut out for this?" "Is this some-
22 thing that I want to do, and is this what the Lord wants?"
23 It's no secret that leading is difficult, and it has its peaks
24 and valleys. Eventually, all leaders reach a point in their role
25 where they must assess their effectiveness and determine
26 what is needed to move forward. This is where reflection
27 and introspection become necessary as we take time to con-
28 sider our motives for leading and identify areas in our lives

that require immediate attention. Nothing can be more devastating to our leadership roles than ignoring the warning signs to slow down, evaluate ourselves, and consider how we are leading.

If you have grabbed this book, prayerfully, you want to journey to the next level in your leadership. However, the contents are not about how to be a better or more efficient leader; the focus is on you, the person. Sure, concepts and perspectives on Christ-centered leadership will be offered. But the goal here is to evaluate ourselves, our leadership roles, and seek to move them closer to the image and person of Jesus Christ. Whether you are leading a congregation, a small group, or a department in your church, or some other spiritual capacity, anchoring in Christ is the goal. The truth is, people are looking to you, and that can be a bit unnerving because the last thing you want to do is “drop the ball or fail,” and sometimes, just knowing the magnitude of the role can cause us to shrink a little.

God is fully aware of your hesitancy and skepticism regarding leading others, especially when you notice gray areas or inconsistencies in your life. Just know that if God were looking for unblemished leaders, every area or department of the ministry would be vacant. The truth is, when it comes to flawless leaders, there are none. “Oh, wait a second,” there is One (Jesus Christ), and if so, then how about adopting and following His blueprint for leadership? He remained true to the Father’s Will not only out of a sense of duty or service, but from an eternal relationship. Too often, we view leading