

Week I

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:15–17

People often see leadership based on an “It’s all about me” approach. In all kinds of organizations and institutions, the rewards of money, recognition, and power increase as an individual moves up the hierarchy. Self-promotion (pride) and self-protection (fear) dominate today’s leadership style. Many leaders act as if the sheep are there only for the benefit of the shepherd. In personal relationships, leadership based on mutual respect, loving care, self-sacrifice, and openness is often undermined when pride, fear, and indifference replace intimacy with isolation. That’s the bad news.

The good news is that there is a better way. This alternative approach to leadership is driven by four basic beliefs that have become central to our ministry:

- Leadership happens anytime we influence the thinking, behavior, or development of another person.
- Jesus is the greatest leadership role model of all time.
- Servant leadership is the only approach to leadership that Jesus validates

for His followers.

- Effective leadership begins on the inside, with our hearts.

As you explore these four beliefs, we hope you will gain an entirely different perspective on leadership. May you come to see leadership as a journey that begins with your own transformation and progresses to your leading another person, then to leading a small number of people, and finally to leading an organization. May you also see that leadership is the alignment of four essential domains: the heart, the head, the hands, and the habits.

Let's get started!

1

ARE YOU A LEADER?

Jesus called [his disciples] together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”

Mark 10:42–44

In our Lead Like Jesus workshops, we often ask, “How many of you think of yourselves as a leader?” We are amazed that only about 20 to 25 percent of the people raise their hands, even though our audiences are always predominantly made up of managers and supervisors at every level of a business, an educational institution, a government agency, or a faith-based organization. The reason most people don’t raise their hands is they assume that leadership has to do with a workplace position or title. Many people feel they are not high up enough on the organizational chart to say that they are leaders.

We always follow up our first question by asking people to think about the person who has had the most significant impact on their lives, the person who has played a major role in who they are today as human beings. Then we ask, “How many of you named a manager or a supervisor you’ve worked for over the years?” Hardly a hand goes up. Then we ask, “How many of you identified your father, your mother, a grandmother or grandfather, aunt, uncle, or friend?” Almost every hand in the room goes up. Why is that? Because in reality, every human being is a leader in some part of his or her life—because *leadership is an influence process*. We believe that *anytime you seek to influence the thinking, behavior, or development of someone in your personal or professional life, you are taking on the role of a leader*.

As a result, the only way to avoid leadership is to isolate yourself from the outside world.

Leadership can be as intimate as speaking words of guidance and encouragement to a loved one or as formal as passing instructions along extended lines of communication in an organization. Leadership can be nurturing character and self-worth in children and promoting greater intimacy and fulfillment in personal relationships, or it can involve distributing resources in an organization to reach a specific goal or accomplish a given task.

Thus, there are two types of leadership: life role leadership and organizational leadership.

As a spouse, parent, family member, friend, or citizen, you have multiple life role leadership opportunities every day. What leadership role could be more important than these? Consider some examples:

- a husband and wife who seek mutual agreement on day-to-day finances
- a mother who teaches her toddler how to eat with a spoon
- a son who provides aging parents with advice and guidance about living arrangements
- a person who risks alienation when confronting a friend about a moral failure
- a citizen who helps find housing for the homeless

Different from life role leadership, organizational leadership usually comes with an official position or title that empowers you to serve the perceived needs of an organization. Again, examples might help:

- a corporate executive who rejects offers of insider information that would give his company a competitive edge
- a middle school teacher who excites curiosity in her students
- a rehabilitation nurse who patiently handles a stroke victim's anger
- a pastor who comforts a grieving member of his church
- a high school football coach who focuses more on molding his players' character than on winning games

A key difference between life role leadership and organizational leadership involves the permanence of the relationships involved. Life role leaders function

in enduring relationships as parents, spouses, siblings, friends, and citizens; duty and obligation cannot be easily relinquished or discarded.

Organizational leaders, on the other hand, operate for a season in an environment of temporary relationships and fairly constant change. People can come and go very quickly for all sorts of reasons. This lack of stability in organizations often breeds a degree of reserve and qualified commitment evident in competitive office politics.

Most of the significant leadership that shapes our lives does not come from leaders with titles on an organizational chart; it comes from leaders in life role relationships. It is instructive to note that in the early church, a candidate's life role leadership was a prerequisite for assuming organizational leadership. In 1 Timothy 3:1–7 we read this:

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

One person who exemplified servant leadership in Jesus' life was His mother, Mary: "I am the Lord's servant. . . . May your word to me be fulfilled" (Luke 1:38). She passed on to her Son a legacy of obedience, submission, faith, and service. Mary epitomized the essence of a servant heart. In her life role as a mother, she was positioned to have strategic influence on the life and spirit of her Child. The relationship between mother and Son—between a soul already tested and found willing and a Soul to be nurtured, between a spiritual teacher and a Student—was part of God's plan to prepare Jesus for leadership.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Take a moment to think about the people who have most influenced your thinking, your behavior, and your life path. As you recall their names and faces, you will realize that leadership titles and positions of organizational authority are only part of the leadership landscape—and usually not the most significant part.

THE GREATEST LEADERSHIP ROLE MODEL OF ALL TIME

“Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

The reality is, all of us are leaders. So, as you lead, who is your role model? We feel the greatest leadership role model of all time is Jesus.

When we tell people this, we get a lot of raised eyebrows. People want to ask what evidence we have—and we’re glad when they do.

A few years ago at a Lead Like Jesus teleconference broadcast from Atlanta, Georgia, Ken asked his cohost, the well-known pastor and author John Ortberg, “Why would you travel all the way across the country from your home church in Menlo Park, California, to teach people that Jesus is the greatest leadership role model of all time?”

Ortberg, a gifted storyteller, smiled at the audience and said, “Let’s assume for a moment that two thousand years ago you were a gambler. I know a number of you don’t like gambling, but bear with me for a moment. Let me ask you, who would you have bet your money on to last: the Roman Empire and the Roman army, or a little Jewish rabbi with twelve inexperienced followers?” Everyone smiled as John went on to say, “Isn’t it interesting that all these years later we are still naming kids Matthew, James, Sarah, and Mary, and we call our dogs Nero and Caesar? I rest my case.”

While John got a big laugh, his point was well taken. Clearly, Jesus’ leadership was effective: His church exists today; the Roman Empire doesn’t. Put differently, the important thing about leadership is not what happens when

the leader is present, but what happens when the leader is *not* there. As a parent, it's not too difficult to get your children to do what you want them to do when you're hovering over them. But what do they do when you're not there? A business leader deals with the same issue. You can't micromanage your people's every move, much less their every thought or idea. So great business leaders today empower their people to bring their brains to work and make good decisions on their own. When given this opportunity, those people tend to be fully engaged in their work.

Initial proof that Jesus is the greatest leadership role model of all time came to Ken when he was asked to be on Robert Schuller's *Hour of Power* after *The One Minute Manager* was released in the early 1980s. Ken recalls that when Reverend Schuller interviewed him, he asked, "Do you know who the greatest One Minute Manager of all time was?"

Ken gave him a blank stare.

Then Schuller said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

"Really?" said Ken, never having thought of Jesus as a great leadership role model.

"Absolutely," said Reverend Schuller. "After all, He was very clear about goals. Isn't that your first secret—One Minute Goal Setting?"

"Yes," Ken responded.

Schuller then smiled and said, "You and Tom Peters didn't invent management by wandering around. Jesus did. He wandered from one village to another. If He caught someone doing something right, He would praise or heal that person. Isn't that your second secret—One Minute Praising?"

"Yes," said Ken.

"Finally," said Schuller, "if people stepped out of line, Jesus wasn't afraid to redirect their efforts. After all, He threw the money lenders out of the temple. Isn't that what your One Minute Reprimand is all about?"

Ken laughed, realizing Schuller had a point.

This reality was reinforced when Ken learned that Bill Hybels, founding pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, was teaching the leaders on his staff Situational Leadership®,¹ a concept Ken had first developed in the late 1960s with Paul Hersey. When Ken asked Bill why he chose Situational Leadership, Bill was quick to say that Jesus was the greatest situational leader of all time, using "different strokes for different folks" depending on the situation. When, for instance, Jesus first took on His disciples as "fishers of men"

(Matthew 4:19 ESV) and sent them out, He provided some specific instructions about where to stay, what to wear, and what to do. But the disciples grew and matured over time: soon they weren't enthusiastic beginners who needed specific direction, and Jesus changed His style accordingly. At the end of His ministry on earth, Jesus was able to issue to His disciples this general directive: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

As Ken and Phil began to study the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—as well as the book of Acts, they became fascinated with how Jesus transformed twelve ordinary and unlikely people into the first generation of leaders of a movement that continues to affect the course of world history some two thousand years later. In fact, Ken and Phil soon realized that every idea and truth about leadership they had ever taught or written came from the Bible and was evident in how Jesus led His disciples.

Followers of Jesus have more in Jesus than just a spiritual leader; we have a practical model of effective leadership for all organizations, for all people, for all situations.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Have you ever thought of Jesus as a great leadership role model? If not, why not?

JESUS THE SERVANT

“Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.”

Matthew 12:18

Having accepted that Jesus is the greatest leadership role model of all time, consider now some specifics about His leadership approach. The best description of Jesus’ leadership is found in Matthew 20. John and James’s mother had gone to Jesus and essentially asked if, in heaven, one of her sons could sit at His left hand and the other one at His right hand. She obviously thought leadership was all about the hierarchy. After Jesus told her that her request was not for Him to grant, He approached the other ten disciples, who were miffed because this mother had asked for those places of honor before they themselves did!

Jesus called [his disciples] together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. *Not so with you*. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:25–28)

We added the emphasis on *Not so with you* in that verse. Why? Because Jesus’ call to servant leadership is clear and unequivocal. His words leave no room for plan B. He placed no restrictions or limitations of time, place, or situation that would allow us to exempt ourselves from heeding His command. For followers of Jesus, servant leadership is not an option; servant leadership is a

mandate. Our servant leadership is to be a living statement of who we are in Jesus, an identity evident in how we treat one another and how we demonstrate the love of Jesus to the whole world. If this kind of leadership sounds like serious business with profound implications, it is.

The exciting part of leading like Jesus is that He never sends us into any situation alone or with a plan that is flawed or sure to fail. Jeremiah 29:11–14 tells us:

“I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD.

Whatever subject He addressed—and in Matthew 20 it is leadership—Jesus spoke about what is right and effective. We can trust that His Word is an expression of His unconditional and sacrificial love poured out for our eternal well-being. As followers of Jesus, then, we can trust Him and His instructions to us regardless of our circumstances. We can also freely ask Him to give us wisdom in all things, including our leadership roles. James 1:2–8 reminds us that Jesus wants to be intimately involved in all aspects of our lives:

When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives my brothers, *don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends!* Realise that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence. And *if, in the process, any of you does not know how to meet any particular problem he has only to ask God—who gives generously to all men without making them feel foolish or guilty—and he may be quite sure that the necessary wisdom will be given him.* But he must ask in sincere faith without secret doubts as to whether he really wants God's help or not. The man who trusts God, but with inward reservations, is like a wave of the sea, carried forward by the wind one moment and driven back the next. That sort of man cannot hope to receive anything from God, and the life of a man of divided loyalty will reveal instability at every turn. (PHILLIPS)

A friend of ours once had a counselor who kept reminding him, “Your intelligence has gotten you into this.” You see, in a variety of situations our friend thought he was smart enough to figure it out on his own, but he wasn’t. Furthermore, he was trying to gain the approval of various audiences, including some that had conflicting views of what he ought to be doing and how he ought to be living his life. As a result he ended up pleasing no one. He had yet to learn that he had but One as his audience, and that One is God.

In addition to being the only audience that matters, God is also the director of our lives. God will guide us to do exactly the right thing—if we let Him. Our hope is that you will let Him direct you, guide you, and teach you to lead.

IS JESUS A RELEVANT ROLE MODEL FOR US TODAY?

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Hebrews 13:8

A common barrier to embracing Jesus as a leadership role model is skepticism about the relevance of His teaching to specific twenty-first-century leadership situations. In many ways, we are in the same kind of situation that Peter was when Jesus asked him to take some highly unusual and unorthodox steps as he conducted his fishing business. Here was the situation as described in Luke 5:1–11:

One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon [Peter], its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

"Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again." And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees

before Jesus and said, “Oh, Lord, please leave me—I’m too much of a sinner to be around you.” For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.

Jesus replied to Simon, “Don’t be afraid! From now on you’ll be fishing for people!” And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus. (NLT)

What do you think was going through Peter’s mind when he replied, “Master, we have been fishing all night and we haven’t caught a thing”? It sounds as if Peter might have been thinking something along these lines: *I’ve listened to Jesus address the crowds and speak with great power and wisdom. I really respect His knowledge of God’s Word and His skill as a teacher. But now He has asked me to do something that goes totally against my own knowledge and instincts about how to run my fishing business. Jesus doesn’t know fishing; I know fish and fishing. That’s my business, and what Jesus asks is not practical. Besides, doing what He says will probably be a waste of time and energy—and my workers are going to wonder if I have lost my mind!*

However, Peter’s skepticism did not prevent him from taking the step of faith—the step of obedience—because the instructions had come from Jesus. Because Peter exercised his faith in this way, he experienced miraculous results, but he was overwhelmed by the gap he perceived between himself and what Jesus would require of him.

Jesus sought to calm Peter’s doubts and fears, and then He invited Peter to come and be transformed for a higher purpose. And Jesus is issuing the same call to us. Jesus knows fish, and He also knows your business, whether it is in the service of an organization or in a life role.

So consider applying the same criteria to Jesus’ knowledge, experience, and success that you would to the hiring of a business consultant. Take a few minutes to think about Jesus’ earthly ministry. Would you hire Jesus as your leadership consultant for your life role leadership or organizational leadership positions? Reflect on the following leadership challenges you might be facing and then ask yourself, “Does Jesus have any practical knowledge or relevant experience dealing with leadership issues like these that I face every day?”

- working or living with and caring for imperfect people
- training, developing, and delegating

- being under constant scrutiny by competitors
- continually having your commitment and integrity tested
- handling opposition, criticism, and rejection
- facing conflicting demands from friends and foes
- being tempted by instant gratification, recognition, and misuse of power
- facing serious personnel issues, including turnover and betrayal
- communicating effectively in a multicultural environment
- challenging the status quo and established hierarchy to bring about change
- trying to communicate a radically new vision of the future
- calling attention to poor leadership, even at great personal risk
- putting career or relationships on the line to serve a higher purpose

Chances are, you answered *yes* about every situation. Why? Because Jesus absolutely did face every situation you face. The book of Hebrews says this of Jesus:

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. . . . We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (2:18; 4:15–16)

In addition to His leadership experience, Jesus knew from years of personal experience the challenges of daily life and work. Although Jesus was God, He was not ashamed to do a man’s work. He spent the first thirty years of His life on earth as a working man: He was a carpenter in Nazareth. Jesus knows the difficulty of making ends meet. He knows the frustration of ill-mannered clients who won’t pay their bills. He knows the pressure of meeting deadlines and pleasing customers. He knows the challenges of living in an ordinary home and being part of a big family. He knows the problems that beset us in the everyday world.¹

Now think about how Jesus would do your job differently than the way you are doing it. As the following scriptures suggest, Jesus wants to do His work in you and through you.

- “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).
- “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).
- “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).

PAUSE AND REFLECT

If you are skeptical about adopting Jesus as your leadership role model, write down your reasons. What about Jesus is causing you to doubt leading as He leads? And what about *you* is causing you to hold back?

A TRANSFORMATIONAL JOURNEY THAT BEGINS ON THE INSIDE

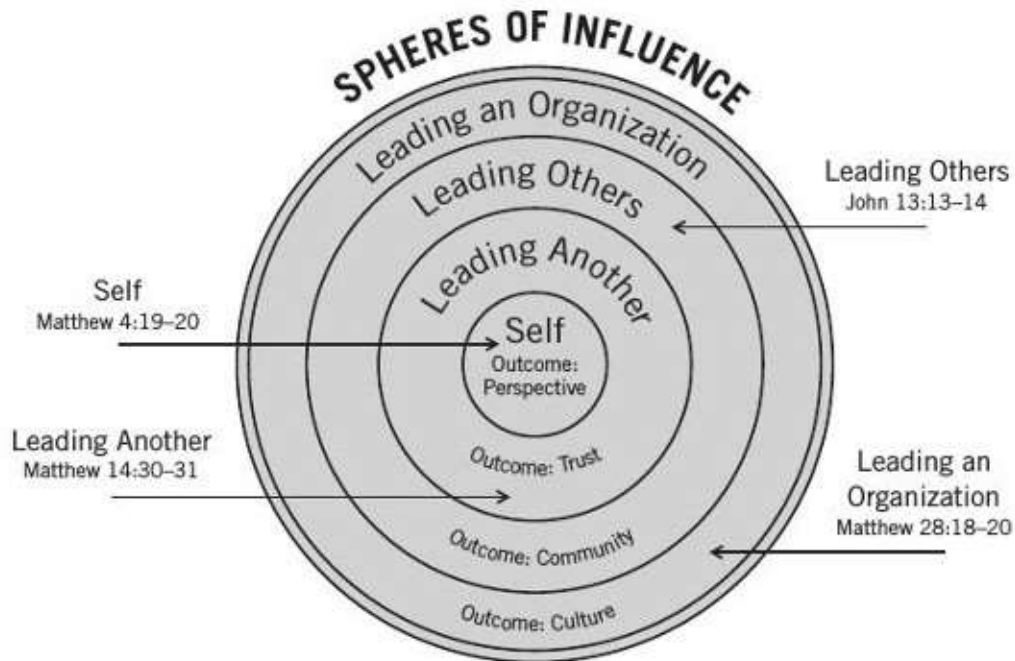
“Live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.”

Colossians 1:10

So you have recognized the ways you are a leader: leadership happens anytime we influence the thinking, behavior, or development of another person. And, aware of Jesus’ rich life experience in general and His expert leadership experience in particular, you are willing to follow Him as your leadership role model. The early disciples needed to make that same decision when Jesus extended to them this invitation: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19 ESV). Jesus’ simple statement here clearly communicated right at the start that following Him would mean becoming a different person. As they followed Jesus, He would transform them: Jesus would nurture, grow, and refine them. In other words, *leading like Jesus is a transformational journey*. This transformational journey begins with the willingness to do whatever Jesus commands, with a heart surrendered to doing His will, and with the commitment to lead the way He leads.

Transformation happens—for good or bad, to one degree or another—as we interact with people. Your sovereign God will of course oversee that transformation for your good and His glory, and people you lead will be tools He uses in that transformational process. So let’s look at who we are leading. As the diagram below illustrates, examining yourself is the first step: this exercise is at the core of leading like Jesus in all of your spheres of influence. You can’t lead like Jesus until you accept the fact that only Jesus can lead you. Jesus attested to this truth when He said in John 5:19: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do

nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” Think about it: we hear this principle of starting with self every time we hear a safety demonstration on an airplane. The flight attendant tells us to put on our own oxygen masks before we place a mask on someone else. This principle applies in leadership too. Let’s look carefully at our spheres of influence.



SELF

We believe that leaders who desire to lead like Jesus must first examine themselves by answering these two questions:

1. Whose am I?
2. Who am I?

Your answer to *Whose am I?* defines the ultimate authority and primary audience for your life. Your ultimate authority and most important audience is the one you trust and look to above all else. Your decision about *whose you are* changes everything. If you choose to follow Jesus, you are no longer your own.

You are not living to please yourself or other people. Instead, Jesus is the only authority and only audience for every life decision you make.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Jesus is the perfect example of living for God and for Him alone. After Jesus was baptized but before He began His season of leadership on earth, He was led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. There, the evil one tempted Jesus to turn from God's will and instead give in to self-gratification (turning stones into bread), public recognition (jumping off the temple), and the misuse of His power (ruling over all the kingdoms of the world). Each time, Jesus stood strong: He demonstrated submission to His Father and complete commitment to His Father's way. Jesus knew *whose He was*: "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God" (John 13:3). Jesus came from love and knew He would return to love, so He was secure in whose He was.

Knowing whose you are can help you stand strong in your ministry and is foundational to leading like Jesus. Knowing you belong to God gives you the incredible freedom of completely trusting your life to Him. Will you trust God with your life?

The answer to *Who am I?*—the second question that prompts healthy self-examination—defines your identity and life purpose. We are told in Ephesians 2:10 that we are "God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works." You were born with a God-given purpose and plan for your life, and you were created perfectly to fulfill that purpose. Your core identity is rooted in the forgiving, saving, and redeeming work Jesus did on your behalf when He hung on the cross. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, we learn that "God made [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Scripture is full of descriptors of your identity: "dearly loved" (Colossians 3:12), forgiven (Romans 4:7), chosen (John 15:19), "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9), the apple of God's eye (Psalm 17:8), "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14),

heirs with Jesus (Romans 8:17), friends (John 15:14), and many more. Jesus clearly showed His commitment to His life purpose in Luke 19:10 when He said, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

PAUSE AND REFLECT

In what ways would your leadership be different if you truly believed that you are the person God says you are?

Choosing God as your ultimate authority and audience as well as choosing to believe your identity as described in Scripture results in a transformation of your perspective. Your answers to *Whose am I?* and *Who am I?* will change how you see everything, and you will lead others from that new point of view.

LEADING ANOTHER

After leaving the wilderness—after standing on God’s Word and resisting Satan’s temptations—Jesus called into service those He would lead for the next three years, and He poured His life into training His disciples. Your first test of leading like Jesus will be leading another person. This person may be someone you work with every day, or it may be your child. The desired outcome is a relationship built on trust. Remember in Matthew 14 when Peter jumped out of the boat and began walking on water to join Jesus?

But when [Peter] saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted.

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?” (vv. 30–31 NLT)

Jesus spent three years building a culture of trust with His disciples, including Peter. So when this bold and impulsive follower started to drown, he called out to Jesus for help.

In our life role relationships, trust is the stream by which vulnerability, caring, commitment, and grace flow between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, friends and fellow citizens. Trust is extended first by loving hearts committed to serve and support one another, and trust grows with promises kept, encouragement and appreciation expressed, support and acceptance offered, repentance and apologies received, and reconciliation and restoration established. Yet the stream of trust has a fragile ecological balance: once it is polluted, it will take time and effort to restore it.

The always present power to restore intimacy and broken trust is love. Without love we *are* nothing and we *gain* nothing. Read the following words from the apostle Paul, and ponder the cleansing and healing properties of love:

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (1 Corinthians 13:1–7)

PAUSE AND REFLECT

- List three ways you nurture trust as you lead.
- List two things you do that put at risk people's trust in your leadership.
- Think of a time when you lost trust in someone who was leading you. How did you feel? How long did you feel that way? When did you forgive the person—and why?

LEADING OTHERS

The ability to develop and sustain the trust of the people you lead produces community. Jesus modeled this perfectly in John 13:13–14:

“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.”

Jesus created a community by empowering His followers to serve and then trusting them to do exactly that. Effective leaders realize they are to be good stewards of the energy and efforts of those they lead; they honor the power of diversity and acknowledge the power of teamwork. As the saying goes, “None of us is as smart as all of us.” Jesus sent out His disciples to minister in teams of two (Mark 6:7). In doing so, Jesus empowered them to act on His behalf in support of one another as they accomplished the work He had trained them to do.

Without trust, these relationships cannot be developed, and community will never happen. Individuals in a group will not empower one another to accomplish an assigned task if they do not trust each other. A leader’s failure to empower others is one of the key reasons some teams are ineffective.

Family leadership can be really challenging, especially when the leader’s efforts and aspirations to serve the best interests of others directly conflict with the leader’s own priorities and immediate demands. For example, a father could be running late for work but must stop to make the most of a teachable moment when he hears his daughter ridicule her little brother. The most rewarding results of family leadership are apt to be the subtle fashioning of loving relationships and the slow development of personal character.

Finally, to be good stewards of the efforts of those committed to work with them, effective leaders must honor the power of diversity and acknowledge the power of teamwork.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

How do you think the people you lead at work and at home would

describe your leadership in the following situations?

- a time of crisis
- a time of failure
- a time of victory
- a time of plenty
- a time of want

Do you think you would like what you would hear? What weaknesses do you think might be identified—and what might you do to strengthen those traits?

LEADING AN ORGANIZATION

The quality of a leader's influence on a broader organizational level depends on the transformed perspective, trust, and community attained in the leader's first three spheres of influence (self, one person, a small group). Leading like Jesus in an organization creates a new culture that affects all relationships and every result. When people know the leader cares about them and wants to help them grow, a new culture of trust and community develops, resulting in both high performance and great human satisfaction.

By valuing both relationships and results, Jesus created a culture for an effective organization. In His own life, He aligned Himself with the purpose His Father had for Him. Then, in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, Jesus clearly identified the purpose He had for His followers and their organizations. He equipped His disciples for their work in the first three spheres of influence, and then He sent His Holy Spirit to guide them at the organizational leadership level, a process we see in the book of Acts.

When Jesus called the disciples, He said: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19 ESV). And at the end of His ministry, He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:18–19).

Jesus passed the baton to us. Wherever we live or work, whether we are

influencing at home, at church, or in an organization, our paramount task as leaders is to create a culture that reflects Jesus' core value: love. This kind of love shepherds people and organizations from where they are to where God would have them go—and that process usually is not easy!

Leading like Jesus requires leaders to be shepherds and servants, who value each person as an integral part of the organization. These leaders adopt as their core values the principles and practices of Jesus and incorporate those in the organization's training, policies, and systems. When a challenge comes, leaders examine their self-leadership before investigating possible organizational weaknesses.

Joni and Friends, a Christian ministry for people with disabilities and their families, is a perfect example of an organization whose culture has been changed by people who lead like Jesus. Company leaders had no idea what kind of long-term impact this way of leading would have on the organization. What started out as the leadership team's onetime opportunity to learn to lead like Jesus has become an ongoing approach to business that now involves all levels of the organization. Today, Joni and Friends incorporates the concepts of leading like Jesus into every aspect of its operations, including the interview process, new employee training and orientation, and even its conflict resolution policy.

"Leading like Jesus is the cornerstone of our culture," explains Doug Mazza, president and COO of Joni and Friends. "It affects everything we do."

The impact of Lead Like Jesus transformed the organization's culture. "New employees come on board at Joni and Friends, and they are stunned," explains Joni Eareckson Tada, founder and CEO. "They're amazed that we offer Jesus-centered leadership training. It's so unique for any place of business. In every situation, we want our employees to Exalt God Only, and I think leading like Jesus has really helped us infuse that in our culture."

A word of warning: we often think outside the home when we think of an organization. Frankly, no organization is as important as your home. Our life role relationships are based on loyalty and commitment for a lifetime. We can fall into the trap of relying too much on both the resilience of these relationships and our ability to regain lost ground, lost intimacy, and lost love. Life role relationships require daily renewal and nurture; we never know when or how they will end. People in a culture that leads like Jesus will keep their "I love you's" up to date.

Now that we have introduced how to lead in your spheres of influence, let's proceed to the second aspect of leading like Jesus, which provides the

framework for the rest of this book: to learn about the four domains of leadership and live out what we learn.

THE FOUR DOMAINS OF LEADING LIKE JESUS

My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:2–3

The first aspect of leading like Jesus is understanding that such leadership is a transformational journey. The second aspect of leading like Jesus involves aligning our *hearts*, *heads*, *hands*, and *habits*. When these four leadership domains are aligned, our perspective is changed, we gain people's trust, communities develop, and the organization's culture is transformed. When these areas are out of alignment, our work is unfocused, relationships are broken, communities dissolve, and the organization's culture is unhealthy and unproductive. The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts all offer rich examples of how Jesus functioned in each of these four domains with all of them in alignment.

HEART

Leadership is first a spiritual matter of the *heart*. Whenever you have an opportunity to influence other people's thinking and behavior, you first need to decide whether to act out of self-interest or to benefit those you are leading. Simply put, the heart question is this: Are you a serving leader or a *self-serving* leader?

Whether He was teaching with words (calling His disciples to serve in Matthew 20:25–28) or with actions (washing the disciples’ feet in John 13:3–5), Jesus clearly and consistently modeled leadership as service. Identifying the subtleties of our hearts and the veils of justification we place over self-serving motives requires brutal honesty. As John Ortberg wrote in *The Life You’ve Always Wanted*, “The capacity of the human for duplicity is staggering.”¹

HEAD

The journey to leading like Jesus starts in the *heart* as you consider your motivation. This intent then travels to the internal domain of the *head*, where you examine your beliefs and theories about leading and motivating people. All great leaders have a specific leadership philosophy that defines how they see not only their roles but also their relationships to those they seek to influence. Throughout His season of earthly leadership, Jesus taught and emphasized His point of view. As Jesus said in Mark 10:45, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many” (NLT).

HANDS

You show what is in your *heart* and *head* in what you do with your *hands*: your motivations and beliefs about leadership affect your actions. If you have a serving heart, you will help others reach their greatest potential by establishing clear goals, observing their performance, and following up by praising progress and redirecting any inappropriate behavior.

Jesus poured Himself into His disciples for three years so that when He left His earthly ministry and returned to heaven, they would be fully able to carry out His vision. The principles of establishing clear goals and measuring performance are common concepts for all types of organizations—and are just as relevant and effective in life role leadership relationships. In a family, these principles apply to everything from establishing values and defining guidelines for behavior to describing for a preoccupied teenager what a clean room looks like.

HABITS

Your *habits* are those activities you do in order to stay on track with God and others. Jesus modeled two types of habits for us: Being Habits and Doing Habits. As a leader committed to leading like Jesus, you must make time to replenish your energy and refocus your perspective. Jesus did this through His five Being Habits: solitude, prayer, study of God’s Word, the application of Scripture to real life, and supportive relationships—all of which are rooted in and fueled by accepting and abiding in God’s love. Jesus expressed obedience to His Father and shared the Father’s love for His disciples through His Doing Habits of grace, forgiveness, encouragement, and community.

Since the Being Habits reinforce the good intentions and character of your heart, they will come after the section titled “The Heart of a Great Leader” in this book. Since the Doing Habits reinforce the *hands* aspect of leading like Jesus, they will be described following the section titled “The Hands of a Great Leader.” As leaders desiring to lead like Jesus, we are encouraged to engage in both the Being Habits and the Doing Habits.

ARE YOU WILLING TO LEAD LIKE JESUS?

If you understand that leading like Jesus is a transformational journey and if you learn to lead like Jesus in your *heart, head, hands, and habits*, your leadership will be radically transformed and its impact magnified. We confidently make this claim not because of any brilliance on our part, but because of the One who is at the center of this effort: Jesus.