

Rock Solid Top Ten Books

April 2012 – March Madness is now in the books and for all of us whose brackets blew up in the first round, we now wake up to the reality of April Sadness! Such is life. (BTW, congrats Wildcats, you took the Superdome by storm and showcased an impressive performance on college basketball’s biggest stage).

So what comes on the heels of the ‘sweet sixteen’, the ‘elite eight’, and the ‘final four’? You guessed it! The ‘top ten’!

For those who know me well it will come as no news flash that I’m a fan (make that raving fan) of leadership. I’m also an advocate. But most of all, I’m a student. And as a student of leadership, much of my thinking has been schooled as I reflect on the written word of those who have taken the time and discipline to put their learnings and wisdoms to pen.

The bracing lesson is that God delights to lead people, and then, in response to their trust, to show them over that matches every impossible situation.

— J. Oswald Sanders

So in that spirit, I’d like to call out my ‘top ten’—ten books that have influenced both my thinking and practicing of leadership. I’ve grabbed a quote from each of the books and want to set them before you as an appetizer that I trust will prompt you to wave down the waiter to order the entire dish.

- From this it is clear that a whole new type of leadership is asked for in the Church of tomorrow, a leadership which is not modeled on the power games of the world, but on the servant-leader, Jesus, who came to give his life for the salvation of many.
 - —Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*
- Spiritual leaders are not elected, appointed, or created by synods or churchly assemblies. God alone makes them. One does not become a spiritual leader by merely filling an office, taking course work in the subject, or resolving in one’s own will to do this task. A person must qualify to be a spiritual leader.
 - —J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*
- Great spiritual leaders bless people. Depending on their sphere of influence, the blessing may extend to those in their organization, their spiritual tribe, a region, an entire nation, the whole human race—whoever populates their leadership constellation. Great spiritual leaders are not just given to great issues; they are given to people. In the end, this capacity to bless is the deciding category that elevates them to greatness in spiritual leadership. The spiritual enterprise is about enhancing

peoples' lives. God is in the people business.

- —Reggie McNeal, *Practicing Greatness*
- Spiritual leadership emerges from our willingness to stay involved with our own soul—that place where God's Spirit is at work stirring up our deepest questions and longings to draw us deeper into relationship with him.
 - —Ruth Haley Barton, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*
- Leadership is a relationship of trust. We listen to people we trust. We accept the influence of a person whose character we respect.
 - —Walter C. Wright, *Relational Leadership*
- To become a leader worth following, you must give time and attention to the inner man. To leave a legacy that goes beyond accomplishment alone, a leader must devote himself to matters of the heart.
 - —Andy Stanley, *Next Generation Leader*
- People who are leaders first are too often those who naturally try to control, to make decisions, to give orders. They're 'driven' to lead—they want to be in charge. And they're possessive about their leadership position—they think they own it. They don't like feedback because they see it as threatening their position, the one thing they most want to hold on to...Leaders who are servants first will assume leadership only if they see it as the best way they can serve. They're 'called' to lead, rather than driven, because they naturally want to be helpful. They aren't possessive about their leadership position—they view it as an act of stewardship rather than ownership. If someone else on the scene is a better leader, they're willing to partner with that person or even step aside and find another role for themselves where they can better serve. They don't have the need to hold on to a leader's role or position if it doesn't make sense from the perspective of service.
 - —Ken Blanchard, Bill Hybels, Phil Hodges, *Leadership by the Book*
- God does not ask leaders to dream big dreams for him or to solve the problems that confront them. He asks leaders to walk with him so intimately that, when he reveals what is on his agenda, they will immediately adjust their lives to his will and the results will bring glory to God.
 - —Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*
- Leading is very likely the most costly thing you will ever do. And the chances are very good that it will never bring you riches or fame or praise in exchange for your great sacrifices. But if you want to love God and others, and if you long to live your life now for the sake of eternity, then there is nothing better than being a leader.
 - —Dan Allender, *Leading With a Limp*
- You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and

their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

- —Jesus, *The Bible*

So whether the NCAA tourney did you good or did you in, odds are pretty good that reflecting on these trophies of leadership wisdom will prep you well for YOUR next season.

Lord, thank You for the benefit and blessing of learning from those who have not only walked the paths of leadership before us, but have left a trail to follow.