Leadership as an Identity

Title: Leadership As An Identity

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Book Summary:

Leadership is more than the sum of someone's personality traits, abilities, and talents. Leadership is also more than following a "How to" manual or an organizational structure of tasks and strategies.

Leadership is something God specifically calls people to…and God doesn't look for leaders the way the world looks for leaders. The person God trusts with leadership is the person he trusts to implement and fulfill His assignments.

Christian Leaders live from and lead with four common identity characteristics:
- Brokenness
- Uncommon communion
- Servanthood
- Radical and immediate obedience

If you are interested in wielding a lasting influence, if you believe you are called to lead anyone anywhere, and if you believe God is calling you to something great…then seek these traits.

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Book Notes:

Nothing is sustained or passed on from one generation to the next apart from leadership. God's cause and purposes in human history is advanced through faithful, focused leadership. (10)

Christian leadership always lives at the intersection of God, assignment, and a person. (11)

In short, distinctively Christian leaders live from and lead with these characteristics, which comprise the four sections of this book: • Brokenness • Uncommon communion • Servanthood • Radical, immediate obedience (12)

We need to stop making idols out of leaders and stop idolizing the position of leadership. We need to turn down the volume and put leadership in context. As followers of Christ, we should not parrot a culture that celebrates image, stature, and position, nor should we tour leadership as the pathway to recognition and fame. (23)

The real irony is that God's assignments involve changing your life as a leader just as much as they involve changing the people you want to reach. (26)

Brokenness is a conscious, core awareness that you need God in all things. A broken person has come to realize that he is nothing and can do nothing apart from God's presence and enabling power (John 15:5). A broken person has come to the end of himself—at least what he understands at that moment to be the end of himself. (36)

Brokenness is not a onetime event. It is never finished; it's an ongoing process. (36)

Surrender is the leader's response to his brokenness. Surrender demonstrates that he always and forever needs God. (43)

Effective Christian leadership is sustained by surrender. When a Christian leader stops yielding to God, he or she has ceased to be a Christian Leader. It's really quite simple. When a leader gets to a point at which he or she trusts more in skills, abilities, or experiences to accomplish God's assignments, then he has just walked away from the place of god's blessing and His enabling power. (44)

What an irony. In reality, that pride that leads us to abhor weakness is perhaps the most deadly weakness of all. (61)

Instead, you should welcome your weakness, even celebrate it. Weakness means that you are usable. (61)

God will do whatever it takes to remind us that there is never a single second in our lives when we can make it on our own. So He takes us through seasons and episodes of brokenness to keep us under His shadow and to tie our hearts to His. And in order for Him to trust us, sometimes He has to break us. (74)

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A wise older pastor was asked one day when is it appropriate to restore someone who has sinned. His response was priceless: "When the repentance is known as broadly as the sin." (82)

In a certain sense, based on your background, you may in fact be the best qualified and, in comparison to others, the best leader. But when the source of your leadership is your personal competency, the contribution you make to the assignment God has given to you will—in the long run—be mediocre at best. You may shine for a season, but at some point you will begin to experience failure. (88)

That's because God gives leaders assignments beyond their ability to accomplish. We're not capable of doing what He has called us to do. And that's the way it should be. (88)

Because your assignments are beyond your ability, and because you need to depend on God for guidance, wisdom, and power, everything you do as a distinctively Christian leader should emanate from you walk with God. (89)

God is making a statement about Himself through the leadership assignments He gives you. And He does not want you to pollute what He is doing by relying a counterfeit source, namely yourself. (92)

The wealth and richness of your life and leadership over time is produced by the consistent habit of turning to God in the face of your weaknesses, difficulties, storms, and seemingly insurmountable challenges, and seeing Him unfailingly come through time and again. (94)

I call them the "four jewels" of leadership development. • The first jewel is suffering. • The second jewel is personal struggles. • The third jewel is failure. • The fourth jewel is success through hardship. (94- 96)

There are four things to learn about God's presence and leadership from this amazing encounter. First, the challenges of leadership are meant to make you hungry for God. Second, God's presence is the distinguishing characteristic of your leadership. A call to lead is a call to know God. Please do not miss this: A call to lead is a call to know God. Everything you do as a leader is an extension of the presence and the work of God in your life. Finally, do not move if you're not sure God is with you. (108- 113)

I believe the key is embracing servant leadership not as a strategy but as an identity. (131)

In other words, it's not something you do to bring about change or fulfill your agenda, but it is who you are. You are a servant just as much as you are a leader. (131)

The core character quality out of which servant leadership flows is humility. There cannot be genuine servant leadership apart from genuine humility. (133)

Humility is the intentional recognition that God is everything to you, and that you are nothing without Him. It is the acknowledgment that life is not about you, and that the needs of others are more important than your own. (133)

Pride is always lurking in the shadows. You will never stop battling it. Here are a few questions you should ask yourself often to test whether you are drifting toward a proud attitude: • First, are you teachable? • Second, are you concerned with visibility and recognition or with significance? • Third, are you over focused on comparison and entitlement? (135- 137)

One of the convictions I have developed through the years is that those who work with me or report to me should feel as if I have invested more in them than I have asked them to give. (146)

And there's one sure way to test that commitment—one way to prove whether leadership is a hobby or a passion. Are you willing to sacrifice yourself in order to serve those who serve you? (158)

Biblical leadership is characterized not only by brokenness, uncommon communion, and servanthood, but also by radical, immediate obedience. (170)

I've heard a number of definitions of courage over the years, but I like to think of it as complete obedience in the face of opposition. (186)

Leadership is not about the conference room or the boardroom; it is all about the battlefield. Leadership is always about verbs, action. It is not about the safety of ideas (as important as that might be), but about implementation and movement in the face of opposition. And that takes courage. (192)

Over time, faithfulness wins hands down. There's no comparison. It's not even close. It's good to be smart, gifted and faithful. What a wonderful combination! But intelligence and ability will only get you so far. Faithfulness will carry you across the finish line. (196)