

# Spiritual Leadership

Title: *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*

Author: J. Oswald Sanders

Copyright Date: 1967

## Book Summary:

With more than 750,000 copies in print, *Spiritual Leadership* stands as a proven classic for developing such leadership. In these pages, J. Oswald Sanders present the key principles of leadership in both the temporal and spiritual realms, illustrating his points with examples from Scripture and the biographies of eminent men of God (Moses, Nehemiah, Paul, David Livingstone, Charles Spurgeon, and others). He writes that even natural leadership qualities are God-given, and their true effectiveness can only be reached when they are used to the glory of God.

J. Oswald Sanders was a consulting director for Overseas Missionary Fellowship and carried out an international preaching ministry. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire for Christian service and theological writing. His many books include *The Incomparable Christ*, *Spiritual Discipleship*, and *Spiritual Maturity*.

## Book Notes:

Desiring to excel is not a sin. It is motivation that determines ambition's character. Our Lord never taught against the urge to high achievement, but He did expose and condemn unworthy motivation. (13)

True greatness, true leadership, is found in giving yourself in service to others, not in coaxing or inducing others to serve you. (13)

We must aim to put more into life than we take out. (14)

If the world is to hear the church's voice today, leaders are needed who are authoritative, spiritual, and sacrificial. Authoritative, because people desire reliable leaders who know where they are going and are confident of getting there. Spiritual, because without a strong relationship to God, even the most attractive and competent person cannot lead people to God. Sacrificial, because this trait follows the model of Jesus, who gave Himself for the whole world and who calls us to follow in His steps. (18)

Many people regard leaders as naturally gifted with intellect, personal forcefulness, and enthusiasm. Such qualities certainly enhance leadership potential, but they do not define the spiritual leader. True leaders must be willing to suffer for the sake of objectives great enough to demand their wholehearted obedience. (18)

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. (18- 19)

Leadership is in influence, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead. (27)

A true leader influences others spiritually only because the Spirit works in and through him to a greater degree than in those he leads. (28)

A natural leader by any measure, Paul became a great spiritual leader when his heart and mind were captured by Jesus Christ. (40)

A well-ordered life is the fruit of a well-ordered mind. (42)

Many who drop out of ministry are sufficiently gifted, but have large areas of life floating free from the Holy Spirit's control. (52)

In most decisions the key element is not so much knowing what to do but in living with the results. (60)

Courage is that quality of mind that enables people to encounter danger or difficulty firmly, without fear or discouragement. (60)

The spiritual leader will choose the hidden path of sacrificial service and approval of the Lord over the flamboyant self-advertising of the world. (62)

You can measure leaders by the number and quality of their friends. (70)

A person can have a brilliant mind and possess artful administrative skill. But without spirituality he is incapable of giving truly spiritual leadership. (77)

New birth in Christ does not change natural qualities but brings them in line with holy purpose; when they are placed under the control of the Holy Spirit, they are raised to new effectiveness. (81)

The spiritual leader will be alert to the most effective way to influence people. Hudson Taylor is well known for his expression, "It is possible to move men, through God, by prayer alone." (89)

Philosopher William James affirmed that the best use of one's life is to spend it for something that will outlast it. Life's value is not its duration but its donation—not how long we live but how fully and how well. (94)

The leader who intends to grow spiritually and intellectually will be reading constantly. (102)

To aspire to leadership in God's kingdom requires us to be willing to pay a price higher than others are willing to pay. The toll of true leadership is heavy, and the more effective the leadership, the greater the cost. (115)

Scars are the authenticating marks of faithful discipleship and true spiritual leadership. (116)

The leader must either initiate plans for progress or recognize the worthy plans of others. He must remain in front, giving guidance and direction to those behind. He does not wait for things to happen but makes them happen. (128)

To take responsibility willingly is the mark of a leader. (128)

The bracing lesson is that God delights to lead people, and then, in response to their trust, to show them power that matches every impossible situation. (133)

To succeed in getting things done through others is the highest type of leadership. (137)

The ultimate test of a person's leadership is the health of the organization when the organizer is gone. (143)

The church needs saints and servants, not “leaders,” and if we forget the priority of service, the entire idea of leadership becomes dangerous. (150)

Faith builds faith. Pessimism dismantles faith. The spiritual leader’s primary task is to build the faith of others. (167)