A Series for Leadership Success
- Volume 1

LEADERS LEADING LEADERS

Empowering the Innovator and Implementer

OTIS PETTEWAY, III

FREE CHAPTER 4: ARE YOU READY TO LEAD?

A FREE CHAPTER FROM

Leaders Leading Leaders

Empowering the Innovator and Implementer

Thank you for downloading Chapter 4.

Every leader eventually has to answer the question this chapter asks: are you ready to lead? Take your time with it. Work through the study guide at the end, and pray the closing prayer over your own leadership.

If this chapter speaks to you, the rest of the book is waiting. There's a page at the end that shows you how to get your own signed copy.

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CHAPTER 4

ARE YOU READY TO LEAD?

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."
~John Quincy Adams

What allows us to become effective leaders? Think about that for a moment. Many people want to lead a project, organization, ministry, or business, but are they truly ready to lead? Do they have what it takes to be an effective leader? Are they a leader who inspires, influences, and encourages others to live out their God-given dreams? Are YOU ready to be that type of leader?

In today's culture, most people think that leadership is about being the one who makes the important decisions. Others think that being a leader looks like someone who is in the spotlight. Unfortunately, some only see it as a position for recognition. Here's the thing: being an effective leader takes way more than being in a place of notoriety. It also goes beyond ordinations, certifications, degrees, and medals. Leadership is about INFLUENCE.

So, who are you looking to influence as a leader? Are you making a positive impact in the lives of those whom you lead? When people describe you, do they say things like, "He has really impacted my life for the better," or "She is such a great influence in my life"? This is an example of influential leadership.

As leaders, we want to lead others well, spiritually, personally, and professionally. We also want to lead with intention and integrity. While we desire to lead this way, we must beware of the myths surrounding leadership. I want to go over four common myths about leadership as you prepare to be the leader that God has called you to be.

LEADERSHIP MYTH #1:
"If I am a great leader in one area, I should be great in all areas."

While some ministries desire their pastor to be all things to all people, it's just not humanly possible. Granted, you may be great in one or a few areas, but I would venture to say that you are not great in all. And neither am I. The truth of the matter is that we don't have to be great at all things, yet we do have to know what we can and cannot do and be able to staff for our weaknesses. I like to call this model the "Staffing Your Weaknesses." Hire staff or invite volunteers to bring their strengths to the table for a task. When we adopt this model, it's a win for everyone.

LEADERSHIP MYTH #2:
"Having weak areas takes away from my ability to be a good leader."

This couldn't be further from the truth! Dear leader, please understand that no one expects perfection from a human. You can't turn all your weaknesses into your

strengths to become a person with no vulnerability. One of the things that will help you advance in any area of leadership is knowing how to lead while having weaknesses. Just because someone else is better equipped at a scale than you, does not automatically make them the best leader. One of the crucial lessons of a leader is understanding that your awareness of your weaknesses makes you approachable to those who follow you. Even better, it allows you to accept the imperfections and weaknesses of the people you lead.

Hence, if you want to be a great leader, know your shortcomings but understand that you cannot lead from your weaknesses. Look at your people and see who could be co-leaders. Who are your innovators and implementers? Everyone has their strengths, including you, so lead with your strengths and bring on others to help in areas where you are weak.

LEADERSHIP MYTH #3:
"Leaders lead, not follow."

It's simply not true. Great leaders understand the power of following. How can we expect to be a positive influence on others if we are not willing to learn ourselves? On my own journey and after spending ten years serving under the leadership of my pastor, I learned that spending time with him and listening while he planned meetings, worship services, and ministry events helped me to become the pastor that I am today. While my friends had gone on to become senior pastors before me, leaving me feeling like I'd "lost out," I discovered the importance of taking my time to receive the lessons needed by sitting under the feet of someone ahead of me who had achieved ministry success that I was only hoping to achieve one day.

I remember there was a story told about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., about a time when he sat in a meeting listening to everyone around the table discussing and arguing about the next right steps to take surrounding an issue. He listened. He gleaned. Then he spoke up. He didn't diminish anyone's words or demeanor, but he was able to lead well because he learned ahead of time to listen and learn from those who went before him. Moments such as this are critical to your ability to lead others well.

Every good leader knows that the path to leadership includes growing under the tutelage of another. Truth be told, great leaders are great students. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having proper, ongoing training that sets you up for success or effective ministry. So do not shy away from moments and seasons that require you to sit at the feet of others and glean.

LEADERSHIP MYTH #4:
"When it's my time, it's my turn."

Even though you may sit in the leadership seat, there are times when you are NOT called to lead. I love to refer to this as the "My Time" principle. This principle is derived from the process of an appointment at the doctor's office. When you schedule your appointment, you arrive at the assigned time. However, you still have to wait in the lobby until they call you back. Yes, you have a set appointment time, but it's not your turn until they call you in during that appointed time. As a leader, you have to understand when it is your time and your turn. Just about all leaders go through phases and seasons of waiting.

COMPROMISED INFLUENCE

Now that we've dispelled some myths about leadership, let's talk about how not to compromise your influence. Understand that people are watching you as you lead. They watch your character. They watch how you talk to people. They watch how to treat your family, staff, and volunteers. When you don't watch your walk, your influence can be compromised.

How is your influence? How is your life when you think no one is watching? Based on your answers to these questions, do you feel like you're ready to lead? Because leadership is more than a title. It's a lifestyle on display.

As a leader, you will be the chief workhorse. This means that you will have to watch out for overextending yourself. When we exhaust ourselves with busyness, we run the risk of burning out or responding emotionally and out of character with those whom we lead. Losing our tempers because of ministry or work fatigue can compromise our influence. The prevention is to work but know when to rest.

Lastly, surround yourself with good leadership friends. Most of us are familiar with the wisdom found in Proverbs 27:17, "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend" (NLT). Find those who do what you do well and help hold each other accountable. In doing this, you will safeguard your influence without compromising it.

LEADERS LISTEN

As you prepare to lead or grow in leading others, it's important to listen. Leaders who listen with intentionality can

engage with their teams to accomplish goals. A leader who listens is capable of understanding and learning simultaneously. In these moments, we are front-row witnesses to communication magic. One person is listening, but two people are learning. The result is that a leader's effectiveness can be measured by what he or she is attempting to achieve.

Let's take a quick litmus test. Are you open to advice? Are you willing to hear the opinions of others without taking offense? You may be ready to lead if you answered "yes" to these questions. One of the critical characteristics of leadership is communication and LISTENING.

When we think of communication, we often immediately think about our own words. What will we say? How will we say it? What medium will we use? Communication, however, is not just about the delivery but also the receiving of messages. When you learn to receive, you open yourself up to new thoughts and ways of accomplishing a goal.

LEADERS DON'T NEED A TITLE TO LEAD

I touched on this briefly earlier in the chapter, but now I want to drive the point home. Leadership is about influence, not titles. Authentic leaders work to accomplish team-driven goals without needing the affirmation of an official title. Real leaders rise long before a title is assigned. The natural leader in a room is not out front. They are a servant leader, also known as "peer leaders." Great leaders emerge from among their peers because they have garnered respect. There is a natural gravitation that occurs. From a place of respect and trust, these untitled leaders emerge.

I want to illustrate a leadership model called the "Works" model. This means that you can have a title, but you sit in

the position until you do the work. By the time you are officially appointed or acknowledged, you have already been doing the work unofficially.

You also find these leaders in communities of faith. They may not be the head deacon or lead ushers. They may not be the famed singer or powerful preacher. However, the influence of their work and worth is unmatched. Without fanfare or reserved seating, they execute communal goals and tasks for the glory of God and the betterment of their church or organization.

As someone looking to become a leader or a better one, it is important to know that great leadership requires making oneself available, able, influential, while instructing and inspiring others to change for the better and do great things. Jesus, the greatest leader of all time taught, "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works" (NLT).

So the question, again, is: "Are you ready to lead?"

STUDY GUIDE

1. After reading the opening quote, what is the key quality that John Quincy Adams associates with effective leadership?

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2. Why might some people who desire leadership roles not be ready to lead effectively, according to this chapter?

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3. How does true leadership differentiate from merely holding a position of authority or notoriety?

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4. What are the four myths of leadership discussed in the chapter, and which one stood out to you the most and why?

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5. Why do think "staffing your weaknesses" is important for effective leadership?

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6. How can recognizing and understanding your own weaknesses contribute to becoming a better leader?

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7. According to the chapter, why is it important for leaders to also be good followers?

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8. Looking back to the "My Time" principle, why is it significant in the context of leadership?

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9. What are a few ways a leader's influence can be compromised, and how can one safeguard against this?

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10. Why do you think listening is considered a crucial skill for leaders, and how does effective listening impact leadership?

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Leadership is About Influence, Not Position:** True leadership goes beyond titles, positions, authority, and notoriety. It's more about inspiring and positively influencing others.

2. **Myth of Supreme Leadership:** Effective leaders acknowledge that they cannot excel in all areas. They should staff for their weaknesses by surrounding themselves with gifted and talented innovators and implementers.

3. **Embrace Weaknesses:** Understanding and accepting one's weaknesses can make a leader more approachable and relatable. It also allows for better teamwork and collaboration for everyone to win and excel.

4. **Leaders Can Follow:** Great leaders recognize the importance of learning from others. Being a continuous student is a hallmark for effective leadership.

5. **Timing in Leadership:** Leadership involves understanding when it's one's time to step up and lead. Patience, humility, and discernment are essential.

6. **Protect Your Influence:** A leader's influence is under constant scrutiny, ridicule, and microscope. Maintaining integrity and consistent character in both your public and private life is vital.

7. **Preventing Burnout:** Leaders must be cautious of overextending themselves. Balancing work with rest is crucial to maintaining effective leadership and avoiding burnout.

8. **Value of Leadership Friends:** Surrounding yourself with fellow and strong leaders who provide accountability, encouragement, prayer, and support is a valuable component to long-lasting and effective leadership.

9. **Importance of Listening:** Effective leaders are excellent listeners. Listening helps better understand, engage, and communicate within a team.

10. **Leadership Without Titles:** Innovative and implementer type leaders emerge through their actions and influence rather than through formal titles. Peer leadership and respect are earned through consistent, impactful work.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

I come before You with a heart full of gratitude for the wisdom and guidance provided in this chapter. Thank You for reminding me that true leadership is not about titles or positions, but about positive influence and the ability to inspire others to learn, dream, and grow.

Lord, help me to understand and embrace my strengths and teach me to staff for my weaknesses with those You have placed around me. Please give me the humility to follow when necessary and to learn continually from those who lead me.

Father, I ask for Your discernment in recognizing the right moments to lead and the patience to wait when it's not my turn. Guard my influence, and help me to lead with integrity, kindness, and consistency, both in public and in private.

I pray for balance in my life, that I may avoid burnout and find rest in Your presence. Surround me with fellow leaders who will sharpen me, hold me accountable, and support me in my journey.

Lord, make me an attentive listener. Let me hear the needs and voices of those I lead and respond with wisdom and compassion. May my leadership be marked with a servant's heart, always striving to uplift and empower others without seeking my own glory.

I commit my leadership journey to You, trusting that as I walk in Your way, You will equip me to lead effectively and

with purpose. Thank You for the calling and the opportunity to influence others for Your glory.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Six more chapters are waiting, including Right Leaders, Wrong Position, Leading as an Innovator, Leading as an Implementer, The Middleman, and Know Your Role.

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