

LEADERSHIP AS AN IDENTITY

By Crawford Loritts (2009)

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Crawford Loritts offers a refreshing perspective on Christian leadership in his book *Leadership as an Identity*. Many books on leadership focus on the strengths of leaders, but Loritts takes a very different approach. His Biblical research points to four main characteristics in leaders: Brokenness, Uncommon Communion, Servanthood, and Radical, Immediate Obedience. Dr. Loritts states, “I’m writing this book to Christian leaders...no matter what role you fill, God has raised you up for something. This book can help you discover what that is” (p. 12).

BROKENNESS

The first six chapters of *Leadership as an Identity* focus on the characteristic of personal brokenness before God. “Brokenness is a conscious, core awareness that you need God in all things” (p. 36). Loritts makes the case that Godly leaders are imperfect and many times incapable of achieving the task at hand; therefore, they are totally reliant on Him. The key to an attitude of brokenness is a spirit of surrender. “God does not delight in using what you bring to the table. Instead, He delights in using what you surrender to Him” (p. 64). Many leaders who have accomplished much have a tendency to allow pride to creep in. Proverbs 16:18 sends a warning to these leaders that God will ultimately humble them. This act of humbling leaders is God’s way of pushing them toward brokenness and a deeper communion with Him.

UNCOMMON COMMUNION

Chapters seven through nine of *Leadership as an Identity* focus on Uncommon Communion. Uncommon Communion is when Christian leaders “tap into His power and cultivate a deep heart connection with God” (p. 89). Christian leaders not only have a daily walk with the Lord, they have a relationship and desire for the Lord that permeates all that they do. This relationship with the Lord drives the leader to his/her knees to seek Godly wisdom for all decisions. Christian leaders are marked with the realization that God’s presence is with them, and this

realization makes them fall down in constant worship. The characteristic of uncommon communion makes God the well from which leaders draw their knowledge, direction, and provision. As leaders experience communal relationship with God, they will realize that serving Him means serving others.

SERVANTHOOD AS AN IDENTITY

The leadership characteristic of servanthood is the focal point of chapters ten through twelve. Anyone who has studied leadership is familiar with servant leadership, but Dr. Loritts digs deeper than much of the previous research. Embracing servant leadership is not a strategy, it is an identity. Individuals should earn their roles as leaders by displaying humility and a servant’s heart first. Only then can they earn the permission to lead others. This philosophy is counter-cultural, but Crawford Loritts points to various scripture passages that reveal how Christ’s identity was that of a servant, and others gladly followed His leadership. Sacrifice is a key element of servanthood. “Sacrifice also is an expression of your faith and confidence in God” (p. 160). Sacrifice means moving away from selfish desires and motives, and moving toward obedience.

RADICAL, IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE

Chapters 13 through 15 conclude *Leadership as an Identity* by discussing how Christian leaders display radical, immediate obedience. “We either completely do what God says or we disobey Him. God is to be taken seriously” (p. 171). By contrasting the lives of King Saul and King David, Loritts demonstrates that Christian obedience is done from the standpoint of relationship, not obligation. “Saul was afraid of losing his position as the leader of Israel. But David was afraid of losing the touch, the intimacy, and favor of God” (p. 176). Courage plays a crucial role in obedience. Leaders are frequently faced with opposition, but when God calls a leader, He always sees them through. Crawford Loritts shares a

great practical insight into successful leadership. “Success or failure is determined by your obedience to the Word of God” (p. 193). As leaders are faced with many duties and responsibilities, they should rely on God’s direction to find their true calling.

Being just over 200 pages and costing less than \$20, *Leadership as an Identity* is a small investment of time and money that can pay huge dividends. Crawford Loritts does a masterful job of explaining Christian leadership in a way that will keep readers hungry for more. He successfully offers a fresh perspective on Biblical lead-

ership by focusing on the characteristics of Brokenness, Uncommon Communion, Servanthood, and Radical, immediate obedience. Students, professors, businessmen/women, church leaders, and scholars will all benefit from this outstanding book. While it is an easy read, most will need some time to absorb all of the Biblical gems that are offered in this book. I have personally read over 100 books on leadership, and *Leadership as an Identity* is in my top five favorites. This book has the potential to change the way readers view their roles as leaders, and force them to their knees to tap into God’s omnipotence.