LEAD like CHRIST

Reflecting the qualities and character of Christ in your ministry

A.W. Tozer

Compiled and edited by James L. Snyder
LEAD like CHRIST

REFLECTING THE QUALITIES AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST IN YOUR MINISTRY

A.W. TOZER

COMPiled AND EDITED BY JAMES L. SNyDER
CONTENTS

Introduction 7

1. Lead like Christ: The Foundation 9
2. Lead like Christ: The Model 17
3. Lead like Christ: A Demonstration 27
4. Lead like Christ: Motivated by the Complete Truth 35
5. Lead like Christ: The Framework of God’s Promises 47
6. Lead like Christ: Manifested through Preaching 55
7. Lead like Christ: Understanding Biblical Order 63
8. Lead like Christ: The Obvious Fruit 71
9. Lead like Christ: Attributes of a Spiritual Leader 81
10. Lead like Christ: Understanding the Threefold Foundation 89
11. Lead like Christ: Maintaining a Tight Grip on the Word 97

5

Lead Like Christ • A.W. Tozer, James L. Snyder
Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group © 2021 used by permission
Contents

12. Lead like Christ: A Commitment to Sound Doctrine 107
13. Lead like Christ: Teaching the Attributes of God’s Grace 115
14. Lead like Christ: Our True Value to Christ 125
15. Lead like Christ: The Fullness of Christian Leadership 135
16. Lead like Christ: How God Sees Us 143
17. Lead like Christ: The Christ-Centered Servant 153
18. Lead like Christ: Our Motives Reveal Christ’s Character in Us 163
19. Lead like Christ: Facing Spiritual Warfare 171

Conclusion 181
INTRODUCTION

Reading a Tozer book can be quite a challenge. Throughout his ministry, he never focused on weak Christians who were only after the pleasures of life.

The audience Tozer focused on were those with an incurable hunger and thirst for the deep things of God. In chapter 15, for example, he essentially says only Christians with backbone will ever get into heaven. Of course, what he meant was that our Christianity has to be such that we stand against everything contrary to the nature of Jesus Christ.

If we are going to be servants of Christ, we need to be Christlike in every regard.

One quote I like from Tozer is “God does not call the equipped. Rather, in His wisdom, God equips the called.” That seems to be the underlying message in this book.

Throughout his ministry, Tozer was never hesitant about offending people. He did not do it unnecessarily or because he had a mean spirit. Quite the opposite. He knew that some of the things he was teaching and writing about would not be acceptable to immature and carnal Christians. And sure
Introduction

enough, his teaching did offend them because it did not fit into their spiritual agenda.

This book is based on a series of sermons on the book of Titus. In this series, Tozer used Paul’s advice to Titus to guide those of us today who want to serve Christ acceptably.

This is not an inspirational book to help spiritual leaders feel good about themselves. Consider it a workbook to empower men and women to be the kinds of leaders needed by the church today. To drive them to their knees in absolute surrender.

Sound doctrine is so essential that Tozer does not write to CEOs but rather to people akin to CTOs (chief theological officers). That is why he spends time dealing with theological issues that Paul established for Titus. One concern Tozer had was that many spiritual leaders are doctrinally challenged.

Tozer’s emphasis is that we are to lead like Christ, which requires a thorough understanding of biblical doctrine. Too often people focus on certain issues and divide the church into little doctrinal clubs.

The challenge Tozer gives is to follow the real Jesus—the Jesus of the New Testament—and be prepared to be treated like Christ was treated in His day.

Like with other Tozer books, you will not be able to read this in one sitting. It will take time to process the truth he shares in these pages. Yet I believe, and it happened to me, that this book will give you a new perspective on what it means to be a spiritual leader.

Dr. James L. Snyder
That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:10–11
Many are interested in what we call ministry. Yet, my heart saddens to realize that many do not understand what spiritual ministry is all about from the biblical point of view. For some reason, we have brought into the church the world’s business methods to fulfill Christ’s call.

A journey through the Gospels will show the passion Christ had when it came to ministry. He completely rejected the world and even religion to minister to the people around Him.

I am not against education. But I do feel many people are too educated, and by that I mean they are educated beyond their ability to function in the spiritual world. They are trapped in techniques and methods.

If secular education were absolutely necessary for ministry, that would rule me out. After my first day of eighth grade, I came home from school and told my mother that I could do a better job than my teacher. I never returned to school, and instead spent most of my time in the library reading books. It was perhaps a little arrogant of me, but I eventually got over it.

Education is important; but where it’s coming from and how we handle it matters.

A friend of mine used to say, “Get as much education as you can and earn as many degrees as possible, and then when you’re all finished, lay it on the altar and give it over to God. If God uses it, great. If God does not use that education, that is His choice.”
Christ, the Key to Ministry

This book is not a book of techniques and methods—a book that could be titled something like 10 Keys to a Successful Ministry. That would be how a worldly minded person would approach it. There is only one key to ministry: Christ.

When Abraham laid Isaac on the altar, it must have seemed like the most horrendous thing he had ever done in his relationship with God. Isaac represented everything Abraham had worked for, and now God wanted him to lay his son on the altar. Yet when Abraham did it without reservation, God gave Isaac back in a way that Abraham never could have imagined.

When we lay our education, experience, and expectations on the altar and give our ministry over to God without reservation, and are even willing to walk away from it, then God in His power can give what He wants us to have.

God does not call the equipped. Rather, in His wisdom, God equips the called. And that’s where the power and authority of God flow in the life of the servant. The equipping of God’s servant is a wonder that flows from heaven, and nothing on earth can hinder it.

In no way is biblical ministry associated with business. Business techniques of the world cannot accomplish the goals of spiritual leadership. When we use the world’s methods, we push aside the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit, and nothing else, who runs and energizes our spiritual leadership. To grieve the Holy Spirit is to jeopardize the true ministry of Christ.
Whenever God moves, He pushes aside the world, and the focus is on Christ. The world cannot honor Christ—only the true church can.

I’m not sure a church’s size has anything to do with this, but I’ve noticed that the bigger the church, the more it relies on worldly and business methods.

If we are going to lead like Christ, we need to model our leadership after His and observe how He dealt with the issues of His day. At the time, His main opposition was religion. The religious people and leaders did not want anything to do with Jesus. They considered Him a danger to their religiosity and lifestyle.

The government also opposed Jesus, and when the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to choose sides between religion and Rome, He responded, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ And they marveled at Him” (Mark 12:17).

When Jesus walked on water, it was a great illustration that He never allowed worldly circumstances to determine what He was going to do or not do. (Remember what happened to Peter when he tried to walk on water? He became obsessed with the circumstances and fell in.)

In this book, my purpose is to focus on how you and I, as servants of Christ, can lead like Christ in the circumstances we are in today. My focus will be on the book of Titus, which records how Paul mentored Titus to be a model servant and lead like Christ.

The Foundation of Spiritual Leadership

But before we go further, what is the foundation for all of this? On what do we build our spiritual leadership?
Again, is it education? Is it experience? Is it adopting the world’s methods?

No, it is none of that. Thus, we need to clearly understand what we build our ministry upon. I want to say right here that every born-again Christian is involved in ministry. We are not called to do the same kind of ministry as our brother or sister. But all of us, together, are engaged in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

To lead like Christ, the first thing we need to do is to know Christ. This is a crucial element of spiritual leadership.

Now, if I were to go up to people in church on a Sunday morning and ask them if they know Jesus, I would get a positive response from most everybody. Everybody knows who Jesus is.

That’s not the issue. Because it’s one thing to know about someone, and it’s another thing to experience a person intimately.

The apostle Paul writes, “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:8).

To know Christ on a personal basis does not come naturally or without cost. Knowing about Christ is one thing, but knowing Him personally is quite a different thing. That was certainly Paul’s experience before he became a Christ follower.

As a Pharisee, he knew all there was to know about the Messiah from the Old Testament. But it was on a journey to Damascus—a trip to further persecute the church—that Saul (Paul’s name at the time) encountered the real Christ.

Every born-again Christian is involved in ministry.
Saul... went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

Acts 9:1–4

It was at this moment that Saul transformed into the Paul we know of today.

Following this Damascus transformational moment, Paul went into the desert for approximately three years. I believe he was unlearning religion during those years in order to understand who Jesus Christ really is.

Moses spent forty years in the wilderness to unlearn Egypt so God could use him to lead His people into the promised land.

Jacob was another Old Testament character who had such a transformation: “Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it’” (Genesis 28:16).

The Lord was with Jacob all the time, and he did not know it. His life changed when he encountered the Lord.

With the apostle Paul, it was the same. During his desert journey, Paul experienced Christ in a way that transformed him so completely that God was able to use him to lead like Christ and establish the church of Christ as we have it today.

The foundation of my spiritual ministry is to personally know Christ in such a way that my life has been transformed. To do this, I have needed to unlearn the world and be filled with the Holy Spirit.
To lead like Christ, we need to work in resurrection power that has nothing whatsoever to do with the world’s elements. I can’t emphasize it enough: This begins with a transformational encounter with Jesus Christ. Out of this experience will flow a passion and desire to serve Christ that colleges and seminaries cannot provide.

I like Charles Spurgeon and the requirement they had at Pastor’s College. They would not accept an applicant for the college until he could prove he had been called of God for ministry. Spurgeon’s idea was that you don’t go to college to discover your call. You go to college because you have been called of God to serve.

This perspective is lacking today. Consequently, our churches are suffering drastically because of the lack of Christ-led leadership.

My purpose is to inspire you to discover your calling in Christ that will enable you to receive the power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit in your life. As you build on the spiritual foundation of Christ, you will begin to see ministry from a completely different perspective. You will see ministry as Christ sees it and see people as Christ sees them.

I praise You, O Father, for the love You show to all of us in allowing us to be part of Your work here on earth. Help me today to surrender to Your way of doing ministry that I would honor You. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.