

# LEADERSHIP IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

*Biblical Foundations  
and Contemporary Practices for  
Servant Leaders*

JUSTIN A. IRVING  
AND MARK L. STRAUSS

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Servant Leaders

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From Justin:  
To Tasha Irving, for your friendship and love.  
I am so thankful to be sharing this journey of life with you.

From Mark:  
To the memory of my father, Richard L. Strauss,  
a consummate model of a servant leader.

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# Introduction

## *A Fresh Look at Empowering Leadership*

### **Introduction**

In his 1978 book simply titled *Leadership*, James MacGregor Burns notes that leadership is “one of the most observed and the least understood phenomena on earth.”<sup>1</sup> While such an observation can make writing and reading a book on leadership sound daunting, we see an opportunity in this observation.

Leadership affects all of us. For better or worse, our lives are and will be impacted by leadership done well or leadership done poorly. Because leadership has such far-reaching importance, we see in this reality an opportunity. It is an opportunity to bring health to teams and organizations. It is an opportunity to bring job satisfaction to leaders and followers working together. It is an opportunity to see the organizations and churches of our world flourish and become all that God intends for them.

Throughout this book we will be talking about leadership practices that focus on empowering others to grow and flourish in their service and work. Because the mission and effectiveness of most organizations matter, we want to see leaders learning to embrace this empowering approach to leadership practice.

Let’s begin with our definition of empowering leadership:

Empowering leadership is a process by which leaders and followers partner together for the purpose of achieving common goals and shared vision.

This definition tells you about some of the values we bring to the table in this leadership book.

First, empowering leadership is about *empowerment* more than control. Although historical models of management and leadership often emphasized control, biblical principles and contemporary research point to the power and effectiveness of leadership focused on empowering followers rather than controlling followers.

Second, empowering leadership is about a *process* more than an event. Leadership is not about simple meetings and activities. Empowering leadership is about a leader-follower relationship over time. Leaders' modeling what matters, appreciating and valuing followers, and equipping and developing followers take time and investment in that core relationship.

Third, empowering leadership is about *shared* goals and vision more than it is about the leader's goals and vision. Although it can seem efficient for leaders to have a hands-on and highly directive approach to leadership, long-term effectiveness necessitates that both leaders and followers are owners of a common agenda.

Although models of directive and controlling leadership are often easier to find, throughout this book we will aim to highlight models of leaders focused on empowering and serving their followers. Increasingly, researchers are demonstrating that such empowering and servant-oriented practices are not only a good idea but also produce superior results.

As we begin our journey, we'd like to highlight the empowering leadership of Colleen Barrett, former president of Southwest Airlines. Barrett served as the president of Southwest Airlines from 2001 to 2008, after working in a variety of other roles with the company from 1978. Barrett had the same philosophy as the organization's founder—they viewed their primary job as working for their people and their customers. Barrett notes, "Our purpose in life as Senior Leaders at Southwest Airlines is to support our People. To us, that means treating People as family."<sup>2</sup>

The commitment of Barrett and other leaders at Southwest has been to make sure employees and the customers are the top priority—in that order. Barrett notes that their entire philosophy of leadership is quite simple: "Treat your People right, and good things will happen."<sup>3</sup> Barrett notes that when senior leaders talk to their employees at Southwest, their message goes like this:

You are the most important Person to us. You are our most important Customer in terms of priority. Therefore, we're going to spend 80 percent of our time treating you with Golden Rule behavior and trying to make sure that you have an enjoyable work environment where you feel good about what you do, about

yourself, and about your position in the Company. But if we do that, what we want in exchange is for you to do the same thing by offering our Passengers—who are our second Customer in terms of priority—that same kind of warmth, caring, and fun spirit.<sup>4</sup>

This model of empowering and follower-focused leadership is compelling, and throughout the book we aim to provide you with biblical insight, research-based reflection, and practical recommendations for how you can grow as an empowering leader as well.

## **Leadership in Christian Perspective**

*Leadership in Christian Perspective* is intentionally an integrative project. Although independent books could be written on effective leadership practice (based on current research and theory) or biblical reflections on leadership practice (based on thoughtful study of the Bible), we intentionally wanted to bring these disciplines together into a joint reflection.

Mark is a biblical scholar, with expertise in New Testament studies and Bible translation. Through his fifteen-plus books, Mark specializes in making sound biblical scholarship accessible to his readers. Justin is a leadership researcher and educator, with expertise in servant leadership and its application to team and organizational effectiveness. Justin has a passion for bringing sound research-based reflections on leadership to leaders in diverse sectors.

Though we could have simply engaged the topic of leadership from our respective disciplines, we desired to bring our disciplines together in this integrative project. Because of this, throughout the book we examine effective leadership practices in light of three primary areas of reflection: (1) biblical and theological perspectives, (2) theory and research-based perspectives, and (3) historic and contemporary examples and perspectives. In the end, we hope that drawing from these diverse and integrative sources of knowledge will provide rich and meaningful insight for you on what makes leaders effective and enables them to empower others.

As we consider the integrative nature of a project like this, some cautions are in order. It can be dangerous to use the Bible to support your pet theory. We groan when we see the latest self-help fad supported with a Bible verse taken out of context. Suddenly we have the “biblical view” of dieting, or dating, or exercise, or parenting, or financial investment. This book is about leadership; but we need to say right up front that the Bible is not a handbook on leadership. The Bible is a record of God’s dealings with human beings: the

story of their creation, their fall, and their redemption through the coming of Jesus the Savior. It is an invitation to find our place in the story and to come into a relationship with our Creator God.

So the Bible is not, first and foremost, a guide to leadership. Nor is every leader—whether in Israel or in the early church—a model to be imitated. There are some terrible examples of leaders and terrible models of leadership found in the Bible. We must also recognize that examples of leadership found in the Bible are deeply embedded in culture and so are not necessarily always “God’s way to lead.” For example, much of the Bible is set in highly authoritarian and hierarchical cultural contexts, where kings, emperors, governors, fathers, and husbands exercised absolute authority and dominance over their subordinates. Slavery was pervasive both in the ancient Near East and in the Greco-Roman world. Yet no one (we hope) would propose that this is a model for biblical leadership. So, again, caution must be used when drawing “biblical truth” about leadership from a cursory reading of the text.

With these caveats in mind, however, we can also assert that the Bible speaks a great deal about leadership. There are certainly positive models of leadership in the Bible worth emulating. We see leaders acting with discernment, wisdom, godliness, and compassion. We see courage in the face of adversity and perseverance in the face of trials. These leadership models appear in both the Old and New Testaments.

Yet the real revolution in leadership came in the teaching and example of Jesus. In the context of an authoritarian world—where power, dominance, and oppression were the order of the day—Jesus introduced a radical new model of leadership. This model has often been called “servant leadership.” But it is anything but *subservient* leadership. A better description might be *empowering* leadership. It is a leadership that is other-centered, the goal of which is to enable others to fulfill their calling before God, to be all that God wants them to be. It is therefore also *equipping* leadership, with a focus on training up the next generation of leaders.

The radical premise behind this model is that the goal of leadership is not to promote the position, power, status, influence—or even the agenda—of the human leader. It is to accomplish *God’s purpose* in the world. The leader is therefore more concerned with doing what is right than with personal success. He or she is focused more on the growth and success of those being led than on personal power or prestige.

Throughout this book we will pause in each chapter to take a biblical perspective on the topic at hand. The vast majority of these are taken from the example of Jesus himself and those who followed him, especially the apostle Paul. Paul perhaps sums up best this equipping model when he describes the

reason Christ raises up leaders in his church: “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, *to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*” (Eph. 4:11–13).

The leader’s role is to equip God’s people for works of service, with the goal of spiritual maturity and a deeper relationship with Christ. We would assert that this should be the ultimate goal of all Christian leadership, whether of those in full-time Christian ministry in the church or those serving as Christian leaders in other sectors. The aim of empowering and equipping others to effectively engage God’s purpose in the world, in diverse sectors, is vital for all seeking to lead in Christian perspective.

## **A Brief Survey of Leadership Study**

### ***Ancient Roots***

Almost all models of “great leadership” from the ancient world were hierarchical and top-down. To lead meant to convince, cajole, coerce, or compel others to do your bidding. Indeed, most history writing—both ancient and modern—follows the exploits of rulers and their conquests. Leaders are extolled and remembered for the lands they occupied and the peoples they conquered.

This is not to say that rulers never served as benefactors for their nations and people. In the fourth century BC Alexander the Great, one of the great military geniuses of history, through his conquests spread Greek language and literature, art and architecture, philosophy and jurisprudence throughout the eastern Mediterranean and as far east as India. Three hundred years later the influential leadership of Caesar Augustus turned the Roman Republic into an empire and brought in the Pax Romana—an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity. The whole Mediterranean became a “Roman Lake,” with open sea-lanes, a vast network of roads, and a good measure of law and order—all protected by the nearly invincible Roman legions.

Yet the Roman “peace” was not so peaceful for subject peoples and was often enforced with the sword. The Roman historian Tacitus quotes the Caledonian general Calgacus on the eve of a battle against the Roman legions. The Romans, he says, are “bandits of the world. . . . Robbery, butchery and pillaging they call government; they create a wasteland and call it ‘peace.’”<sup>5</sup> One individual’s peace is another’s decimation.

When Jesus sees his disciples reflecting this kind of leadership by seeking the best positions in his kingdom, he sums up the world's model of leadership like this: "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them" (Mark 10:42). That pretty well epitomizes leadership through the centuries. Yet Jesus's next words turn the organizational chart upside down, representing a revolution in leadership theory: "*Not so with you*. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43–44).

In a world where the patriarch of the family has absolute authority over the household; where all of society is hierarchical, from the emperor at the top to the lowest slave at the bottom; where the wealthy exploit the poor with near impunity; where the powerful manipulate the court system for their own means; where slaves are viewed as mere property, not persons—it is in this world Jesus calls for "servant leadership"! This must have sounded like a strange oxymoron to his disciples. They would *not* hear it as the boss who "serves" the employees by bringing coffee to the office in the morning. They would hear it as "slave leadership," and a slave exists merely to serve the master, to do the master's bidding. This is the opposite of leadership!

Yet we would contend that Jesus is anything but nonsensical. He explains his model of leadership by pointing to himself: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Jesus demonstrated extraordinary authority and power during his public ministry—healing the sick, raising the dead, calming the storm, and so on. Yet his whole life was lived for the benefit of others—to bring them back into a right relationship with God. The leader who serves is not one who is weak and manipulated by others. Rather, he or she is other centered, taking the lead to equip and empower others to be all that God calls them to be. Many individuals throughout history have practiced this kind of empowering leadership. And a number of modern theorists have recognized its power and potential.

### ***Leadership in the Past Hundred Years***

While the practice of leadership has ancient roots, the contemporary study of management and leadership has taken place in a focused manner for the past 120 years. The intent of this book is not to provide an in-depth overview of every management and leadership theory over these years. Our intent is to provide practical and research-based insights on effective leadership practices *for the next hundred years*.

In order to do this well we must provide context for our reflections. Paying attention to core management and leadership theories from the past hundred years helps us see key advances over these years and how current practice stands on the shoulders of established theorists and researchers from the past.

In this section we provide an overview of four primary time periods and key leadership themes related to these periods. It will not be exhaustive—either in scope or depth. Other resources provide a more exhaustive overview of the history of leadership theory, and we recommend those desiring a more in-depth look at this history to explore these resources.<sup>6</sup> We do, however, want to highlight important leadership development and themes related to leadership practices we present in this book. We begin in the early 1900s.

#### TRAIT THEORY, SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT, AND HUMAN RELATIONS (1900–1940)

Based on this “great man” concept of leadership, leadership reflection in the early part of the twentieth century often focused on well-known historic leaders. The assumption was that leaders were primarily born, not made, and that the characteristics and traits of these leaders could be identified. Examples of traits studied include intelligence, self-confidence, integrity, extraversion, and determination.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to trait-based emphases, the early part of the twentieth century also emphasized two divergent themes: scientific management and human relations. *Scientific management* focused on minimizing human variance in the workforce through standardization practices.<sup>8</sup> This approach to leadership viewed organizations as machines. In this approach, human uniqueness is essentially a problem to be solved through standardizing practices. The heart of this approach is captured in a statement frequently attributed to Henry Ford: “Why is it that I always get the whole person when what I really want is just a pair of hands?”

By the 1920s there emerged studies focused on the sociopsychological dimensions of human work.<sup>9</sup> Building on the emphases of scientific management, the Hawthorne studies revealed the importance of manager care for and interest in workers and their work. Beyond financial motivations, the social and psychological dimensions of *human relations* were also motivating for workers.

#### LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND SKILLS (1940–70)

Moving beyond and building on the trait, standardization, and human relations themes of the first forty years of the twentieth century, the next time

period emphasized the skills and behaviors of leaders. Early work related to the skills of leaders highlighted the technical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills managers need at different levels of an organization.<sup>10</sup> While top-level managers need higher levels of conceptual skill, supervisory managers need high levels of technical skills. Managers across all organizational levels benefit from high levels of human or interpersonal skill.

The benefit of human interpersonal skills is also seen through research conducted on behavioral approaches to leadership. The Ohio State studies and the University of Michigan studies<sup>11</sup> identified the importance of leadership behavior focused on both task accomplishment and people orientation. Although task and production orientation produced results, absent of employee-oriented behaviors these results included negative factors such as increased absenteeism and turnover. When increased focus on employee-oriented behaviors was added, production was also high, but with higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of absenteeism and employee grievances. This line of research eventually resulted in something known as the *managerial grid*, which highlights the benefit of team management that has a high concern for people and a high concern for production.<sup>12</sup>

Theory X and Theory Y also emerged in this time period. Building on prior management ideas, Theory X and Theory Y emphasized important shifts in how followers in an organization were viewed and managed. *Theory X* emphasizes a pessimistic view of people and their commitment to work. In this approach, followers must be micromanaged due to the belief that workers will not produce results without extrinsic reward and punishment. Think of this as leaders primarily using a carrot-and-stick approach to managing others.

In contrast to Theory X, *Theory Y* emphasizes an optimistic view of people, maintaining that most people desire to take pride in their work when appropriately motivated. Participative management is used in place of micromanaging, and employee reviews are primarily used not for reward and punishment but rather for creating a leader-follower dynamic of open communication built on trust.<sup>13</sup>

#### FOLLOWER CONSIDERATION AND MOTIVATION (1970–90)

The previous time period raised the value of leaders focusing on human skills and behaviors in leadership. These shifts served as a foundation for management and leadership theories in the 1970s through the 1990s to bring increased consideration to followers and how they are motivated.

One follower-considerate model of leadership—SLII®—emphasizes the importance of leaders adapting their behavior based on the needs of followers.

By assessing a follower's level of competence and commitment related to a task that needs to get done, leaders can apply the appropriate level of direction and support needed for individual followers in diverse situations.<sup>14</sup>

The *path-goal theory* of leadership was also developed in this time period.<sup>15</sup> At its core, path-goal theory is about leaders responding to follower needs in an effort to support goal accomplishment along defined paths. This leadership work involves defining goals, clarifying paths, removing obstacles, and providing support.

Building on these follower-considerate models of leadership, *leader-member exchange theory* emphasizes the relational interaction between leader and follower.<sup>16</sup> The quality of this relationship in the leader-follower dyad is seen as instrumental for influencing positive individual and organizational outcomes. When a high-level leader-follower relationship is present, this tends to result in positive outcomes such as higher organizational commitment and lower levels of employee turnover.

This time period also saw the formal introduction of two major leadership themes addressed in this book: servant leadership and transformational leadership. Although *servant leadership* has ancient roots, the contemporary study of servant leadership arose out of the work of Robert K. Greenleaf.<sup>17</sup> For Greenleaf, the servant leader ensures that other people's highest-priority needs are being served. Servant leaders put the needs of followers above the self-interest of the leader and engage followers with characteristics such as listening, empathy, and a commitment to the growth of people.

*Transformational leadership* is focused on organizational transformation and effectiveness through leader behaviors such as the intrinsic motivation of followers and the development of followers. As leaders and followers pursue organizational change and effectiveness, this is accomplished as people enter into a process of personal transformation. The theory is captured by the Four *I*'s of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In contrast to transactional leadership that is based on a quid pro quo leader-follower exchange, transformational leadership raises the motivation of leaders and followers to focus on mutually shared goals and aspirations for the organization.<sup>18</sup>

#### AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWER EMPOWERMENT (1990 TO 2020 AND BEYOND)

In the final time period we cover, many of the threads introduced in the past continue. For instance, an optimistic view of follower motivations, leaders'

adapting their behavior based on needs of followers, a commitment to the transformation of organizations and people, and a commitment to serving the needs of followers all remain as key priorities for contemporary leaders. Building on these themes, greater definition has developed to assist leaders, particularly around the themes of emotional intelligence, authentic leadership, leader purposefulness, and servant leadership.

*Emotional intelligence*, applied to leadership, emphasizes the importance of the personal and social competence in the leader. This includes themes such as leader self-awareness and self-regulation (personal competencies) as well as leader empathy and social skills (social competencies). At its core, emotional intelligence is about recognizing and responding to emotion in oneself and in others, which is vital work for leaders.<sup>19</sup>

*Authentic leadership* emphasizes intrapersonal wisdom and an awareness of personal strengths and limitations. Core principles such as purpose, values, relationships, self-discipline, and leader heart characterize leadership done with authenticity. Authentic leaders are not simply committed to the organization's mission, they also bring personal passion and purpose to the table on behalf of the organization. While Henry Ford simply wanted "a pair of hands," authentic leaders recognize limitations when leaders do not bring their whole selves to the organization's needs and opportunities.<sup>20</sup>

Connected to themes identified in authentic leadership, *leader purposefulness* is also a priority for contemporary leaders. Rather than simply focusing on the "what" of leadership tasks and responsibilities, leader purposefulness encourages leaders to dig deeper into the "why" of leadership. While the reasons and purposes of organizations must be clear, followers likewise benefit from leaders who understand their personal sense of purpose and meaning. Leader purposefulness benefits followers and organizations by positively influencing variables such as higher levels of organizational commitment and higher levels of job satisfaction among followers.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, this recent time period has seen the *servant leadership* concepts introduced by Greenleaf developed into measurable theories and a growing research agenda. While it is easy to argue that servant leadership is a biblically consistent approach to leading, this contemporary study is demonstrating the positive effect servant leadership has on teams and organizations. Servant leadership is characterized by valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership, and sharing leadership. As leaders move beyond autocratic and paternalistic forms of leadership, followers and organizations benefit from leaders who place the needs of followers above the self-interest of the leader.<sup>22</sup>

## **Key Leadership Themes in the Book**

As our reflections above clarify, leadership has been studied from diverse angles and perspectives down through the ages. While we will interact with some of these angles in this book, our discussion of leadership practice in light of the Bible and leadership theory will emphasize four major themes: (1) servant leadership and follower focus, (2) transformational leadership and organizational transformation, (3) team leadership and collaborative orientation, and (4) leader purposefulness and meaning-based work.

### ***Servant Leadership and Follower Focus***

How do you prioritize your commitments and practices as a leader? Servant leadership is an approach to leadership that prioritizes followers over leader self-interest. While many argue that a commitment to organizational goals must be prioritized over the people of the organization, a servant-leadership perspective argues that the most effective way to accomplish organizational commitments is through focus on followers. Barrett and the team at Southwest Airlines modeled this for us. By leaders focusing on followers, these followers are then able to deliver exceptional products or services to those the organization serves.

While the organization as a whole needs to be externally focused (serving its customers, constituents, or mission), the primary focus of the leader must be on serving and caring for the followers who are directly responsible for fulfilling the organization's mission. We prioritize such servant-oriented practice in our reflections on leadership in this book. This leadership commitment is about prioritizing follower focus and empowering followers for service of the team's mission.

### ***Transformational Leadership and Organizational Transformation***

Complementing the follower focus of servant leadership, transformational leadership is about creating broad and intrinsic ownership of the organization's mission by leaders and followers alike. Transactional leadership is primarily based on a leader-follower exchange that incentivizes followers through extrinsic motivators. In contrast, transformational leadership is based on a leader-follower engagement that motivates followers intrinsically. Transformational leadership is about engaging followers in such a way that leaders and followers are mutually committed to the organization's mission and are willing to undergo transformational change with organizational goals in view.

### ***Team Leadership and Collaborative Orientation***

In addition to servant- and transformational-leadership principles, we also advocate for collaborative and team-oriented approaches to leadership. Collaborative approaches to leadership and the use of teams recognize and affirm that great wisdom exists within the people of organizations. Rather than providing an overly directive or top-down approach to leadership, collaborative and team-oriented approaches to leadership harness the wisdom and insights of the people that compose the team. This leadership commitment is about leveraging team wisdom and utilizing collaboration toward the end of decentralizing authority and empowering people to carry out local work effectively.

### ***Leader Purposefulness and Meaning-Based Work***

Finally, we emphasize the importance of meaning and purpose in the work of leadership. On this point, Eric Eisenberg and Harold Lloyd Goodall write that “employees want to feel that the work they do is worthwhile, rather than just a way to draw a paycheck,” and to see work as “a transformation of its meaning—from drudgery to a source of personal significance and fulfillment.”<sup>23</sup> While employees bear responsibility for personally engaging their work with purpose, leaders play an important role in helping organizational members understand why the work they do matters. This leadership commitment is about leaders and followers alike seeing their personal work and the work of their colleagues as meaningful and significant.

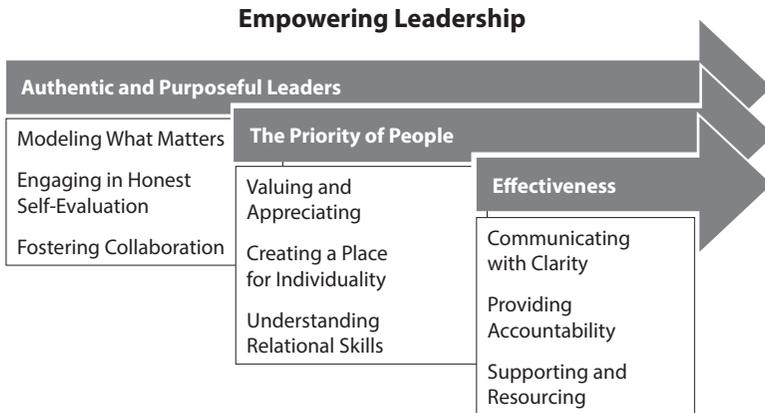
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Collectively, these four leadership priorities call leaders to see their role primarily as equipping and empowering the people they lead for effectiveness. Throughout the book, we argue that the most effective approaches to leadership move leaders from a focus on follower control to a focus on follower empowerment. Great things can be accomplished in and through teams and organizations when leaders and followers alike are empowered to accomplish great things in service of their mission and the people they serve.

## **How This Book Is Organized**

In the remaining sections of the book, we present nine core leadership practices. These leadership practices cluster around three primary themes, which are the three main parts of the book: (1) beginning with authentic and purposeful leaders, (2) understanding the priority of people, and (3) navigating toward effectiveness (see fig. I.1).

Figure I.1



### ***Part 1: Beginning with Authentic and Purposeful Leaders***

Effective leadership begins with authentic and purposeful leaders. In a day when examples of ineffective and inauthentic leadership abound, it stands out when leaders truly understand their purpose and then authentically guide and empower others out of this sense of purpose. Three core leadership practices are highlighted in this part of the book: modeling what matters, engaging in honest self-evaluation, and fostering collaboration.

### ***Part 2: Understanding the Priority of People***

Premised on authentic and purposeful leadership, part 2 calls leaders to prioritize and focus on followers. Although leader service of self is common across diverse sectors and organizations, biblical wisdom and contemporary research support the priority of leaders focusing on followers as they seek to carry out team and organizational mission. Three leadership practices are explored in this part of the book: valuing and appreciating, creating a place for individuality, and understanding relational skills.

### ***Part 3: Navigating toward Effectiveness***

When authentic and purposeful leaders focus on the priority of the people with whom they work, great things can happen. Part 3 of the book emphasizes the importance of leaders and followers working together toward effectively accomplishing their shared mission. Toward this end, the final three leadership practices provide a pathway on which effective goal accomplishment may

take place. These final leadership practices are communicating with clarity, providing accountability, and supporting and resourcing.

### ***Organization of Chapters***

The nine leadership practices selected for this book are not arbitrary. Although we personally believe in the power and effectiveness of these practices, you do not simply need to trust our judgment. These nine practices arise out of thoughtful research on which leadership behaviors contribute to effective teams and organizations. As previously noted, we unpack each of these nine leadership practices around three primary perspectives: (1) exploring the biblical foundations for the practice, (2) explaining the leadership research and theory that stand behind the practice, and (3) illustrating the practice with leadership examples and practical recommendations.

We count it an honor to share these reflections on effective leadership practice with you. It is our hope that your journey through this book will provide a vision for leadership that empowers others and transforms the teams and organizations within which you serve and work.