

SOUTHWESTERN ASSEMBLIES OF GOD UNIVERSITY

HARRISON SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MOTIVATION, TEAMS, COACHING, & MENTORING

LDR 5283-531

INSTRUCTOR:

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ASSIGNMENT: Book Interaction: "Spiritual Leadership," by Henry & Richard Blackaby.

STUDENT DATA:

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Point 1: The key to spiritual leadership is our relationship with the Father.

Interaction to point #1. The authors describe spiritual leaders as those who "seek God's will, whether it is for their church, family or corporation, and then they mobilize their people to pursue God's plan" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 41). While a spiritual leader may use secular plans or methods, he must keep his motives pure and aligned with God. The authors state: "The key to Jesus' leadership was his relationship with his Father" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 43). Spiritual leadership must emanate from the desire to please God in everything the leader accomplishes. Leaders need to demonstrate this discipline in the way they guide God's people and organizations.

I agree with the main point of the book; twenty-first-century leaders must keep God as their source. When we fail to keep God as the source of our activity, our results and lives end up riddled with unhealthy ambition, ladder climbing, position seeking, and only personal improvement. On the other hand, when leaders exercise spiritual leadership, they center around others and seek to love them and fulfill their needs; this is a holistic approach.

Point 2: Self-Leadership: are leaders born or made?

Interaction to point #2. The authors suggest that "contemporary writing reveals that most scholars believe leaders are both born and made" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 53). While some people are born with innate leadership abilities, and those give them initial assistance, many more leaders work vigorously to develop their capacity. Remarkable personalities show leadership early in life, but most leaders must exercise self-leadership because the most challenging person they will lead is themselves. Therefore as the authors suggest, leaders should "maintain a healthy

professional development budget and encourage their people to participate in seminars and programs that will enhance their professional growth" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 308).

I find this point fascinating, especially as someone attempting to earn a master's degree in leadership. We can read all the books for these assignments and learn some great truths, but if it all stops at the head level and we fail to live it out, it is futile. As Dr. Blakney encouraged us in our fall cohort, we cannot just learn the cold facts about leadership; we need to apply them. We start by reading top leadership material, but if we want to take our leadership to the next level, we must go from reading to thinking to processing and subsequently applying these revelations.

Point 3: Time management: the myth of balanced people.

Interaction to point #3. The authors devote an entire chapter to the topic of the leader's schedule. Great leaders know where they invest their time because time represents our life. To some, living a balanced life might mean never missing a family commitment while at the same time showing up to work all two hundred and sixty-one workdays available this year without ever asking for a vacation. The author stresses that "it would be a stretch to say Jesus lived a balanced life. Yet he managed to accomplish everything his Father assigned" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 256). If we focus on achieving balance in our daily life, it might be impossible, but the author encourages us to look past the day-to-day and look to seasons.

In ministry, the Easter and Christmas seasons maintain church staff and pastors remarkably busy. We must look at the ebbs and flows of ministry to take time off to

recharge and come back energized. For example, Jesus often went away with his disciples in solitude to later come back into a season of supernatural ministry.

In the topic of time management, the author mentioned something else that intrigued me: "So many time-saving programs and devices are becoming available it would take weeks just to read about them" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 266). I am afraid I have to disagree with the sentiment of this statement because it sounds as though he thinks learning about such time-saving technologies wastes time. As someone who works with technology daily, I can attest to the effectiveness of mastering new programs to optimize time in the future. Leaders can utilize new technologies such as artificial intelligence to decrease the time they spend on specific tasks. I, for example, use artificial intelligence to schedule meetings; I employ a technology called "calendly" that allows me to manage my schedule and set up parameters for new meetings. I can attest that setting up such technology took me a few hours of research, but the time it saves me now has more than tripled the original investment.

Point 4: How to motivate and lead others: spiritual leaders value people.

Interaction to point #4. In point one, we established that spiritual leaders "seek God's will, whether it is for their church, family or corporation, and then they mobilize their people to pursue God's plan" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 41). But the question here is, how do spiritual leaders mobilize people into God's plan? First, as the author states, "leaders must be cognizant that just because they see something, it is not necessarily obvious to everyone else" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 283). Spiritual leaders are alert and can tangibly see the future. However, leaders must refrain from having such expectations of others who might see the world differently. Therefore, the

leader's job is to help people see the desired destiny and guide their steps towards that preferred place.

To motivate their supporters, leaders must demonstrate the following: (1) an ability to express gratitude to the importance of their followers' sacrifices of time and energy because "people want to know their sacrifice of time and energy is valued" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 138). (2) Frequently build trust through acts of service, "breakfast and lunch meetings with employees or volunteers, as well as regularly scheduled staff meetings, can build morale" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 197). And (3), actively contend for the values of the organization or team because "the greatest liability for many organizations is careless recruitment" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 296).

I agree with these statements, and I believe that leaders intuitively do this. Years ago, when I was trying to grow our volunteer team from six to sixty, I started taking people out to lunch. I did not know that I was building trust with them. I just did it because I wanted to know them better; this, in turn, created a rapport, and we formed a deeper connection. However, there exists a final warning for anyone who abuses the principles of spiritual leadership. Even though we work with people and our work is achieved through them, we must never leave them feeling used. The authors state: "using people to achieve organizational goals is the antithesis of spiritual leadership" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 123). Spiritual leaders value people.

Point 5: Using secular methods to accomplish a spiritual vision.

Interaction to point #5. When it comes to organizational vision and execution, there were many points in which I disagreed with the author. The overtone of some of

the text that covered corporate vision and strategy antagonized using secular elements to achieve church goals. Late in their work, the authors state, "Christian organizations often follow the same planning procedure secular organizations use except for the symbolic bookend prayers" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 229). Since I work in vocational ministry, I have heard this statement numerous times, "it must be nice to work at the church because you guys must only pray all the time."

Must we in professional ministry not act? Should we only spend our working days praying? We work hard, and more often than not, we work over forty hours any given week. We strategize, devise plans, and set up goals. So, yes, Jesus prayed, but he also performed miracles, traveled, created and trained a following of people, and planned strategies for effective evangelism.

I believe the authors answer this interrogate with this phrase found towards the end of the book: "while biblical principles and values never change, methods appropriate in one era may be obsolete, even counterproductive, in the next" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 346). In this sense, I agree with the author; when prayer is only a symbolic bookend to start and end meetings, that is wrong. But planning, strategizing, and even setting goals for how many people we would like to see encounter Christ at our church is not bad either. It ties back to point number one. What is the leader's motivation to achieve all of this? Is our motivation the Father or our glory? We will let God be the judge of that.

Point 6: Pitfalls of Leadership.

Interaction to point #6. Throughout the book, a theme of leadership pitfalls kept re-emerging. To avoid these pitfalls, a leader must possess the following: (1) A good

attitude, (2) a flexible posture that allows learning, (3) true confidence, and (4) a personal life that speaks louder than a public persona.

A good attitude is essential because "a pessimistic leader is a contradiction in terms. Leaders, by virtue of their role, are obligated to nurture positive attitudes" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 203). Flexibility is critical because "defensive leaders learn nothing" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 226). True confidence because "some leaders cannot wait for others' affirmation, so they blow their own horns" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 314). Finally, their personal life needs to stay on good terms because "the arena of a leader's greatest accomplishments ought to be their homes" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 356).

Leaders gain influence by exemplifying integrity. Leaders know they must model integrity. These guidelines help us demarcate our lives. A spiritual leader must be accountable in public but also in private. To quote Mark Batterson, "I want to be famous in my home."

Interaction with the video on the subject of spiritual leadership

In the video, Dr. Blakney mentions some attributes regarding spiritual leadership: spiritual leaders are humble, bad leaders think they cannot fail, and spiritual leaders value people because people are no interruptions.

Why do spiritual leaders fall morally or ethically? Because they think they are above ever committing such sins. I believe Dr. Blakney's advice on rehearsing what you would say to a loved one after a moral failure helps put things into perspective for me. Rehearsing it, even if it is in your mind, enables you to feel the pain you would have to exert if you had to explain your failures to someone.

As someone with many responsibilities at work, I protect my time, and it is easy for me to focus on my to-do list and start checking off tasks without stopping to check on the people who work closest to me. John Maxwell uses the phrase, "Leaders walk slowly through the crowd." He is not pointing out that leaders are slow, but they stop and talk to individuals even amid a multitude because people are not interruptions; they are the mission.

Reading statement

I, Daniel De los Reyes, have read 100% of the book.

References

Blackaby, H. T., & Blackaby, R. (2011). *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda, Revised and Expanded* (Revised edition). B&H Books.