

Discussion Questions for *Transforming Leadership*

1. Do you think that leaders are “born” or “made”? Are there certain characteristics or traits you seem to have been born with that have either helped or hampered your leadership? Are there areas of your leadership you have set out to improve consciously? How would you like your leadership style and skills to improve?
2. The author argues that Jesus Christ is the ultimate leader. How so? From what you know of Jesus’ style of leadership, how is your leadership like his? Different from his?
3. What were the values that Jesus’ leadership exemplified? As you examine your own leadership, what are the values that motivate the decisions you make, the priorities you set and the ways you relate to people?
4. The author writes: “We cannot simply baptize secular models and import them into our work for Christ without subjecting them to critical examination.” What are some of the criteria we might have and questions we might ask before we draw from secular leadership models?
5. Take a few moments and reflect on your own motives for wanting to be a leader. Is pride involved in any way? Ask God to show you the motives of your heart.
6. What does it mean that God is more interested in our *being* than in our *doing*?
7. What temptations did Jesus face in his desert encounter with Satan? Compare Jesus’ temptations to some of the temptations facing Christian leaders today. What does it mean that the “appeal of the good can be the enemy, not only of the best but of the call of God’s kingdom”?
8. “Jesus saw the heart of the human problem as the problem of the human heart.” What does this mean? What implication does this statement have for us as Christian leaders who must live with and minister to human people with human hearts?
9. What are some of the morally imperative “musts” required of Christian leaders today?
10. How would you respond to a well-meaning friend who says, “I don’t think Christian leaders should strategize. We should simply be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit moment by moment day by day”?
11. Those who are “workaholics of the kingdom” may work so hard because of “the anxiety of unbelief.” How is it possible that lack of faith can lead to overwork?

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12. As you examine your leadership, do you find that you are more often cautious or impetuous? Why do you think this is so?
13. What does it mean to say that “vision is the seeing power of faith”? How are faith and vision related to each other?
14. “Jesus’ authority was not something imposed on others, but rather a force he exposed.” What does this mean? What was the source of Jesus’ power?
15. Jesus moved through life with a perfect balance of character—he was authoritative without being pushy, courageous without being insensitive, patient yet decisive, a leader who was willing to serve. Reflect on your own life and character. What are the areas of balance and imbalance in your life?
16. “Leadership involves not only suffering and sovereignty, but also servanthood.” How would you define a servant? Is it a term of prestige or insult?
17. The author writes: “As I understand Jesus, his bottom line was not just getting the job done but growing people and getting the job done.” What does he mean? How do you grow people without sacrificing task accomplishment?
18. Jesus had an “inner core” of three disciples in whom he invested much of his time and energy. Explain why choosing an inner core to develop is not favoritism. Are there dangers in choosing to focus on a few? If so, what are they? What are the benefits?
19. How can failure help develop a leader? How do you generally handle failure in your life?
20. Why are effective communication skills so important for leadership in today’s world? What was the source of Jesus’ authority in his speech? How did authority and humility come together in Jesus? What does authority coupled with humility look like in a Christian communicator today?
21. Practically speaking, what does it look like to meet conflict with truth and grace? Try to frame your answer with real-life situations in mind.
22. When you consider the future for your church, ministry, job or family, are you optimistic or pessimistic? Do you believe that people can make a difference? Or do you tend to assume that things will take their course and that the leader’s task is to preserve and protect values? Having studied Jesus’ leadership, which of these two philosophies would you say he held?

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