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Learning from the Giants : Life and Leadership Lessons from the Bible, by John C. Maxwell

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midst of the process that prevent either party from continuing. There may be disagreement between the two parties, or one party may simply decide to stop the whole process. These unforeseeable events may occur at any point during the mentoring process. Since Dr. Harris did not address any of these issues in the book, it is not clear how he would advise a mentor to handle the breaking up of the relationship so that the breakup does not lead to any hard feelings in either party.

It is important for Christian leaders to adopt Jesus' model of mentoring. Jesus selected his twelve mentees at the beginning of His ministry. Throughout His ministry, He taught His disciples about bringing others to the Kingdom of God. Jesus taught them through His actions, rather than mere words. He set the example in praying, preaching, healing the sick, and comforting those in sorrow so that His disciples could carry on His mission when He was no longer with them. Likewise, church leaders ought to mentor members of the congregation to step in when they are no longer around to carry on the responsibility of shepherding the flock. Such mentoring will also help to empower church members to be a part of the ministry. Through these steps, a good mentor is rewarded with the blessing of knowing that there will be a successor in continuing the job.

I recommend this book not only because it is well-written and easy to read but also because it provides a road map for good mentoring. As the title of the book (*Mentoring With Common Sense*) indicates, Dr. Harris draws on the biblical disciplines to define "common sense." His book contains valuable information, particularly for readers who are new to the relational aspects of mentoring in

leadership. The stories, illustrations, and real-life experiences help solidify the concept of mentoring. Additionally, Dr. Harris's honesty and realistic writing style help readers see and understand the importance of mentoring.

All in all, Dr. Harris has written a book on mentoring that is worth reading. I highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in developing others through mentoring.

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LEARNING FROM THE GIANTS: LIFE AND LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE BIBLE

By John C. Maxwell
New York, NY: Hachette Book Group
(2014)
Paperback, 160 pages

Reviewed by PAUL WILMOT

Ever wish you had the opportunity to sit down with leaders who have been through the mill and who have learned leadership lessons in the cauldron of life? In *Learning From the Giants*, John C. Maxwell simulates this experience by speaking to the heart of the aspiring leader who would appreciate a few hours with several of the biblical giants of the faith. His purpose is to ascertain what these leaders of old considered to be important leadership qualities, together with the life and leadership lessons that they would wish to pass on to us.

Maxwell claims that what he has learned about leadership has the

Bible as its source—an interesting assertion for a widely recognized leadership thinker, prolific author, and speaker—thus making this book a summary of his leadership learning over more than 50 years. He allows nine giants of the faith (Elijah, Elisha, Job, Jacob, Deborah, Isaiah, Jonah, Joshua and Daniel) to briefly become our mentors, tell us about their history and experience, and share what they have learned that will prove beneficial.

The various giants are interviewed in an informal setting, making the interaction with them seem like a casual conversation in your living room. This helps to build a relationship with the individual being interviewed.

Direct scriptural support is provided to facilitate ongoing personal study of these leaders, allowing for extended exploration of the lives of these mentors to see tangible examples of where the lessons were learned. Working from the assumption that we still experience similar challenges and therefore will benefit from applying these lessons today, Maxwell helps us to explore a combination of life and leadership lessons. As we learn, we recognize that the life lessons we learn not only prepare us for leadership but also allow us to better appreciate the consequences and the life experiences of those we lead.

An important feature of this book is the practical application to the reader: leaders' life situations are addressed by reviewing personal challenges and comparing them to the experiences of the giants. This proves to be an encouragement to work through personal issues that will demonstrate the benefit of applying the lessons shared. Excellent discussion questions designed for use in personal reflection and in facilitating leadership development discussions

extend the practical and personal benefit.

God uses each leader's unique gifts and competencies to address human and organizational needs in a specific context. All leaders need to embrace the importance of vision and purpose that comes from listening to the voice of God and appreciate their role in achieving leadership goals. Maxwell further affirms that leaders are best prepared by an encounter with God.

There is some risk in exploring deeper personal issues without the presence of a coach and mentor to either support the examination or to direct the reader to appropriate resources for further assistance. Therefore, this book would best be applied in the context of an ongoing supportive conversation with such a person.

Maxwell's book is as worthwhile for experienced leaders who continue to assess their personal growth and development as it would be for the novice leader. We all face times when we feel that we are not making an impact, or even that we are a failure. It is helpful to see recognized successful leaders of the past as ones having faced the same leadership demons. God is not surprised by our performance as He knows the outcome before we even commence. *Learning From the Giants* encourages leaders to pay attention to a lifestyle that is characterized by integrity and dependence on God's presence and power to accomplish the essential goals set before us.

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