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BOOK REVIEWS

LEADERSHIP BY THE BOOK: LESSONS FROM EVERY BOOK OF THE BIBLE

*By Brent Garrison
Boise, ID: Elevate Faith (2015)
Hardcover, 301 pages; Kindle edition*

Reviewed by TEDDY BAGASSIEN

Leadership books are trendy these days. Business leaders seek to maximize the efficiency of their companies. Managers want to influence their employees to reach their maximum potential. Chief executive officers strive to communicate their visions, market their product, increase productivity, and develop their teams. Business schools offer leadership programs to prepare students for successful management careers. Unfortunately, most Christian leaders seek leadership principles from secular sources. *Leadership by the Book: Lessons from Every Book of the Bible* offers a wealth of leadership lessons from the sixty-six books of the Bible. Dr. Brent Garrison has a doctorate in educational administration and presently

serves as Vice President of Education at CEO Forum. He believes that leadership should be biblically based because the Bible is the ultimate leadership resource.

Many leadership lessons could have been drawn from the book of Genesis. The life of the prominent biblical character, Abraham, abounds with timeless principles that could kick off discussions. However, Garrison lays out the foundation of spiritual leadership with the biblical character Joseph. He has carefully chosen this patriarchal figure who experienced the betrayal of his family, false accusation, imprisonment, and restoration to the second highest office in Egypt to present the essential ingredient of leadership, Christlikeness (loc. 245). Garrison hammers this principle over and over again throughout the book. He states, “this book is about how we can become Godly leaders” (loc. 2662).

Garrison continues his quest on servant leadership by extracting leadership principles from biblical narratives between Genesis and Revelation. Ezekiel’s specific assignment as watchman facilitates an understanding of watchfulness in leadership. Strategizing is important, but leaders must spend time with God for spiritual insight (loc. 1602). The book of Daniel serves as a basis for the conversation about integrity in leadership. Daniel was called to leadership by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and continued to exercise his influence even after the fall of the nation. His integrity and moral character were recognized and valued by Persian rulers (loc. 1636). Isaiah’s vision of the throne of God allows Garrison to address pride in leadership (loc. 1410).

Speaking about the danger of pride in leadership, Garrison states, “A prideful leader can’t build a team,

learn new lessons or accept feedback. Proudful leaders can't admit mistakes and never reach their potential because they have already arrived in their mind" (loc. 1430). Paul's exhortation to the church of Thessalonica sparks a new discussion on the devastation of sexual impurity. The author shares very destructive examples of immorality and advocates accountability as a safety measure (loc. 3241). Finally, he ends his biblical exploration in Revelation, by reminding the reader of the main point of the book, to "use the Scriptures as your primary source of leadership wisdom" (loc. 4107).

Garrison has taken on the massive challenge of presenting leadership lessons from each book of the Bible. Nevertheless, he has successfully demonstrated that the Bible has a lot to say about leadership. Chapters always begin with a Bible text and their biblical exposition. Garrison exegetes passages, provides sufficient information about the historical context for better knowledge, and makes frequent usage of Koine Greek to define key words in enhancing understanding of leadership principles.

Because each lesson is presented like a nugget in this book, I have the impression that the format of the book did not always allow him to develop his ideas. For instance, many leadership topics are covered, but it seems that Garrison rushed toward the end of some chapters. Furthermore, I wish he had taken a thematic approach to present his lessons, instead of jumping from one subject to the next.

Despite all of this, I would highly recommend this book to any Christian leaders. It is a great leadership resource for pastors desiring to prepare sermon series, elders interested in leadership, board members searching for a devotional book on

leadership, and anyone wanting to train church members on Godly leadership. The format of the book has been prepared for journaling and reflection. Each lesson is illustrated with powerful illustrations, life examples, and quotes from prominent leaders. I will use this book for further training in my congregations in Canada.

TEDDY BAGASSIEN serves as Pastor of the South Shore Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Quebec Conference.

COMMANDING EXCELLENCE: INSPIRING PURPOSE, PASSION, AND INGENUITY THROUGH LEADERSHIP THAT MATTERS

*By Gary Morton
Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press (2017)
Kindle edition*

Reviewed by ABEL MORROBEL

Leadership has been a topic for man since its creation. It was in the 20th and 21st centuries that many theories were developed to try to make sense out of the concept. Leaders and scholars alike questioned what the cause of some organizations succeeding and others failing was. Many concluded that it was necessary to be inside an organization and have a firsthand experience to know the real reasons for the success or failure of an organization. This book gives the reader that experience. *Commanding Excellence* is an inside look at two great companies that arose from humble beginnings to become successful companies in the world.

Author Gary Morton worked for