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Review of Ron Edmonson, *The Mythical Leader: The Seven Myths of Leadership*

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The Mythical Leader: The Seven Myths of Leadership

by Ron Edmondson, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017.

In becoming an effective leader, clarifying long-held misconceptions about leadership is imperative. In his book *The Mythical Leader: The Seven Myths of Leadership*, Ron Edmondson, a pastor, blogger, church planter, and leadership consultant, provides both a critical examination of seven common myths about leadership and a practical guide that encourages, challenges, and inspires his readers in becoming better leaders in their churches, communities, and the marketplace (xx).

Myth number one debunks the idea that “a position will make me a leader.” Edmondson uses personal and biblical stories to underscore the point that rather than being a positional leader, one should strive to be relational. Leaders are to remember the power of a title is not granted with a position but, instead, earned through relationships (6). The damaging “boss has ruled” mentality should be replaced by collaborative leadership practices that value the input of each team member.

The second myth scrutinizes the concept, “If I am not hearing anyone complain, everyone must be happy.” Edmondson believes that because people think and express themselves differently, leaders should learn how to ask the right questions and create the ideal culture that encourages openness and transparency from team members. It is a fact that “the culture the leader creates impacts the feedback a leader receives” (40).

“I can lead everyone the same way” is the third myth Edmondson addresses. He reminds leaders that in order to be effective, they must be willing to alter their style to fit the different personalities of the people they lead (49). He goes on to provide some useful strategies for leading difficult people.


In tackling the fourth myth, “leadership and management are the same thing,” the author was quick to explain that these terms are not synonymous. “Leaders lead change. Managers guide systems” (79). Consequently, in establishing a

healthy organization, such as the church, equal importance must be placed on including both leaders and managers in the organizational structure (83).

The fifth myth the book assesses is “being the leader makes me popular.” Herein, Edmondson cautions that making hard decisions as a leader oftentimes results in unpopularity, criticism, and loneliness. Pastors, who are most susceptible to these periods of loneliness, need a survival mechanism, which should include seeking God’s counsel, confiding in a mentor, and building deep relationships with colleagues at the same level in the organization (119).

Myth number six focuses on the notion that “leaders must have charisma and be extroverts.” As an introvert himself, Edmondson states emphatically that “no one personality type has an advantage on providing good leadership” (147). “You can be an introvert and be a leader, of small and large churches and organizations” (161).

The seventh myth the book dissects is the thought that “leaders accomplish by controlling others.” For Edmondson, controlling leadership adversely affects an organization, resulting in the loss of good leaders, unfulfilled followers who remain, and a stalled organization (167–172). As opposed to being controlling, especially during times of conflicts, leaders are implored to be relational and prioritize time “to think, process, and develop a plan—all in a spirit of prayer” (181).

In summary, this volume uses personal stories and practical instructions to offer intriguing insights into how the six common leadership myths can be corrected. To avoid burnout, Edmondson implores leaders to “empower others and rest your soul. It is the best way to survive and thrive long term as a leader” (194). This volume is a valuable resource for pastors, corporate leaders, and leadership aspirants. 

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