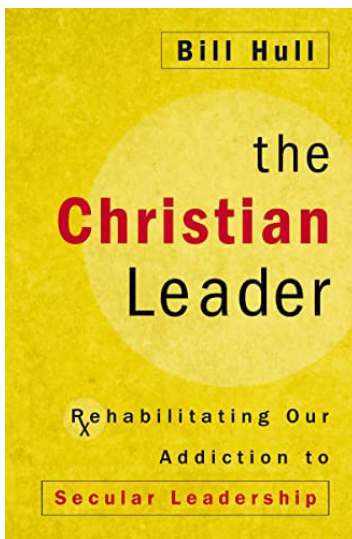


EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

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The Christian Leader

THE NUTSHELL

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Introduction

Most leadership literature talks about a “right kind” of leadership personality. You know the type: big-picture visionaries who serve others and get the best out of people. The question that has nagged me is this: *Did Jesus fit the successful leadership profile?* From everything I know about him, he didn’t, or does he intend or expect any of us to fit the profile. I am writing this book because I believe we need to change how the church views Christian leadership. I am calling for the rehabilitation of the Christian leader.

CHAPTER ONE: The Rehabilitation of Christian Leaders

Rehabilitation for Christian leaders begins with a commitment to do more than acknowledge Jesus’ uniqueness; it is when they rearrange their lives around his practices. The challenge for the Christian leader is to find the same balance Jesus found. He had enough ambition to carry out his mission and enough humility to stay in submission to his Father. The determining factor is whether we model Jesus’ style of leadership. When those leaders say, “Follow me,” people will do so because they see leaders they want to follow.

CHAPTER TWO: What Makes a Leader Happy?

Jesus was happy when his followers experienced joy and meaning. Yes, we should do what we are gifted and called to do in the body of Christ, but we find the deepest level of satisfaction in ordinary service to others. The truth is that,

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while it is great to be well known, it is much better to be loved. A happy leader is based on a happy person. Who we are in the ordinary moments reveals whether Christ is the real thing in us.

CHAPTER THREE: Making a Dent in the World

Jesus was most effective when he was himself in the ordinary circumstances of life. There seems to be confusion about how hard a leader ought to work, how much a leader should plan, and how thoroughly a leader should strategize. The answer is to learn about yourself and work in a way congruent with how God made you. For Christian leaders, knowing our motivation means seeking God in prayer and hearing from him at a deep level. When we hear God's voice and do his will, Christlikeness is built in us.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Leader's Worldview

Jesus was effective in this world because he was guided by the reality of another world. He valued the Father's agenda more than a hassle-free life.

My favorite way to think of prayer is Jesus and me talking about what we are doing together. In this way I stay connected to the other world, the kingdom not of this world. This enables me to be a leader who is connected to my leader and to see the world the way he does.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Humble Leader

Jesus was able to serve because he had a clear understanding of whom he was dependent on and gladly acknowledged it. Humility does not come naturally to us. What's natural is treating ourselves in the most generous way possible. Even Jesus' disciples argued among themselves as to which one of them was the greatest. Despite our aversion to humility, there is no more important character trait for the Christian leader to develop.

CHAPTER SIX: Becoming Something Else

Jesus withheld nothing; he taught us that we must lay aside privilege and that we have great capacity to change. As leaders we must be willing to change in order to learn how to live for others. As I tell my students, if you want to become something you have never been before, you will need to do things you have never done before. Jesus is our model in this. When God became a person, he took the definitive action of emptying himself of rights and privileges in order to serve and live for others.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Leadership in Hard Times

Jesus taught us how to suffer under pressure, thrive in it, and teach others in the middle of it. Of all the leaders in America, the most important are pastors. They are the last group of cultural teachers that remain a force for good. They are not strapped with limitations of government; they still have the freedom to teach and act without restraint. It is time to step up and speak out, to commit their lives and people to a life of discipleship.

CHAPTER EIGHT: The Rewards of Leadership

Jesus was satisfied with the knowledge that he had faithfully completed his Father's work and that he had not squandered anything his Father entrusted to him. On this side of the heavenly divide we often receive our recognition with pride. In heaven it will be with humility. The rewards God gives will survive the fire of his judgment and discerning

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eye. When our letters, trophies, and mementos are lost or destroyed, what God has called great and good will remain with us forever.

CHAPTER NINE: Leaders Are A Work in Progress

Jesus modeled for us that leadership is as much following, listening, and submitting as it is leading others. It calls for authentic living. It requires humility, service, vulnerability, sacrificial living, and the willingness to put up with a constant stream of abuse. The Christian leader is called to receive criticism in humility, to learn from it, to admit one's faults, and to not seek revenge. It will involve pain and pleasure, and it will continue until we are finished with God's work.