

# Servant Leadership Chronicles

The leader should  
be like a servant

Luke 22:26

## THE LAWS OF SERVANT GROWTH

### LAW ONE:

Always make your future bigger than your past.

### LAW TWO:

Always make your learning greater than your experience.

### LAW THREE:

Always make your contribution bigger than your reward.

### LAW FOUR:

Always make your commitment greater than your applause.

### LAW FIVE:

Always make your gratitude greater than your success.

### LAW SIX:

Always make your joy greater than your effort.

### LAW SEVEN:

Always make your cooperation greater than your status.

### LAW EIGHT:

Always make your vision greater than your comfort.

### LAW NINE:

Always make your purpose greater than your position.

### LAW TEN:

Always make your questions bigger than your knowledge.

Adapted from *The Laws of Lifetime Growth* by Dan Sullivan & Catherine Nomura, Barrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2006. For more information visit [www.strategiccoach.com](http://www.strategiccoach.com).

## WHAT IS SERVANT LEADERSHIP?

by Randall A. Bach

*The ultimate judgment of leaders is often not about how they acquire and use power, but how they relinquish it.*

J.A. Sonnenfield

Servant Leadership sounds like a contradiction of terms. An army can't consist of just corporals and privates; someone has to be the general. Servant leadership can also evoke a picture of a leader running after people to serve them to the extent that it begs the question, "Is anyone in charge?" Is servant leadership just a nice way of saying that leaders should be sensitive to those they lead? Before considering what servant leadership is let's first look at a contemporary definition of leadership.

### DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

Two scholars from Regent University conducted exhaustive research of 160 documents and books about the subject of leadership, endeavoring to boil down the data they amassed into one integrated definition of leadership. They ended up with an understandably long, yet comprehensive definition. It is appropriately academic but I ask you to carefully reflect on how accurately it describes who and what a leader needs to be. I have taken the liberty of substituting [church] for "organization."

A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the [church's] mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the [church's] mission and objectives. The leader achieves this influence by humbly conveying a prophetic vision of the future in clear terms that resonates with the follower(s) beliefs and values in such a way that the follower(s) can understand and interpret the future into present-time action steps. In this process, the leader presents the prophetic vision in contrast to the present status of the [church] and through the use of critical thinking skills, insight, intuition, and the use of both persuasive rhetoric and interpersonal communication including both active listening and positive discourse, facilitates and draws forth the opinions and beliefs of the followers such that the followers move through ambiguity toward clarity of understanding and shared insight that results in influencing the follower(s) to see and accept the future state of the [church] as a desirable condition worth committing personal and corporate resources toward its achievement. The leader achieves this using ethical means and seeks the greater good of the follower(s) in the process of action steps such that the follower(s) is/are better off (including the personal development of the follower as well as emotional and physical healing of the follower) as a result of the interaction with the leader. The leader achieves this same state for his/her own self as a leader, as he/she seeks personal growth, renewal, regeneration, and increased stamina—mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual—through the leader-follower interactions.

**Winston, Bruce E. & Patterson, Kathleen (2006). An integrative definition of leadership. *International Journal of Leadership Studies, Volume 1, Issue 2, 2. Regent University.***

## LOSING AND FINDING LIFE

Did you notice all of the servant-oriented attributes in that definition of leadership? If servant leadership sounds like a contradiction, consider what Jesus said to the 12 as He sent them out: “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” Matthew 10:39 (NIV). Servant leadership flows out of the perspective that Jesus offered. When the disciples were jockeying for position and concerned about who would be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven, Jesus was straight-forward in His response: “But among you, those who are the greatest should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant” Luke 22:26 (NLT).

Servant leadership means the leader serves rather than controls or directs others. The servant leader puts others’ needs and interests above self-interest. He or she invests in others to help them grow and become empowered as servants of the Lord. A leader who gives away power receives back something more significant in terms of relationship and influence. Give me a choice between power and influence and I will choose influence. You can have power but may not have influence. However, if you have influence, then you have power to make a difference through others. A servant takes delight in seeing the mission fulfilled through others, not in whether he or she receives credit or acclaim.

## ELEMENTS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

So, what does servant leadership look like? The authors of *Coaching For Leadership* (Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas. 2000. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer) identify these tenets:

- They take people and their work [*ministry*] seriously.
- They listen, learn, and take their lead from their staff [church leaders]. “Servant leaders don’t have all the answers, but they do know how to ask the right questions.”
- They heal. Servant leaders manage openness and a willingness to share mistakes.
- They are self-effacing. *Probably one of the most effective leaders in our time with this tenet was President Ronald Reagan, the “Great Communicator,” who always used humor at his own expense instead of others. Even people who disagreed with him politically could not resist the charm of his self-effacing nature. Servant leaders recognize the value of humility and are more concerned with results and effectiveness than who receives the credit.*
- They see themselves as stewards. *Servant leaders know God has entrusted them with authority and that drives them to take a responsibility-based, rather than power-based approach. It also encourages decision-making with a long-term perspective.*
- Leadership is considered everyone’s responsibility.

*Before assigning fault to others servant leaders look into themselves. They also realize that others have visions as well and they look to mesh those visions.*

*(continued on page 3)*

## Perseverance Sustains Your Talent

By John C. Maxwell

Perseverance is not an issue of time or talent. Perseverance is about finishing. Talent provides hope for accomplishment, but perseverance guarantees it. No matter how talented people are, there is no success without perseverance. If you desire to become a talent-plus person, you need to understand some things about perseverance.

- 1. Perseverance means succeeding because you are determined to, not destined to.**
- 2. Perseverance recognizes life is not a long race, but many short ones in succession.**
- 3. Perseverance is needed to release most of life’s rewards.**
- 4. Perseverance draws sweetness out of adversity.**
- 5. Perseverance has a compounding effect on life.**
- 6. Perseverance means stopping not because you’re tired but because the task is done.**
- 7. Perseverance doesn’t demand more than we have, but all that we have.**

### ***The Five Enemies of Perseverance***

Perseverance begins with the right attitude — tenacity. But the desire to persevere alone isn’t enough by itself to keep most people going when they are tired or discouraged. Perseverance is a trait that can be cultivated, and the initial step to developing it is to eliminate its five greatest enemies:

- 1. A lifestyle of giving up.**
- 2. A wrong belief that life should be easy.**
- 3. A wrong belief that success is a destination.**
- 4. A lack of resiliency.**
- 5. A lack of vision.**

From *Talent Is Never Enough* by John C. Maxwell, 2007, Thomas Nelson Inc.

As John Rosenblum states, “*Servant leadership at its heart is an openness, an ability to listen, and an ability to speak in a way that engages people directly affected by the choices to be made. It positively encourages commitment...*” In other words, it is the servant leader who best nurtures and develops commitment on the part of the people he or she leads/serves. And, isn’t lack of commitment a primary lament of leaders today?

## **LESSONS FROM HISTORY**

We are well aware of strong leaders in history. Situations and eras may have called for power-based leadership. However, upon a closer look, many of those leaders were not as successful as they might appear. General George Patton was famous during World War II for his fierce determination. “May God have mercy on my enemies, because I won’t,” was one of his notable quotes. If the enemy is on your doorstep it is assuring to have someone with Patton’s determination at the leadership point. But, ultimately, his gruff power grabs and abuse of authority cost him his command. “Lead, follow, or get out of my way,” Patton growled. Some pastors and other church leaders have used that approach and found it could work – for a season. Ultimately, however, the back door of the church begins to swing wider than the front door and the number of damaged people competes with the number of encouraged people.

## **WHEN SURVIVAL IS NOT THE PRIORITY**

I remember a riveting message that John Maxwell preached at a convention in 1984. His theme was, “I Don’t Have to Survive.” As only Maxwell could describe, he emphasized how liberating ministry is when a pastor is not consumed with or driven by his or her need to personally survive as the leader, how that he or she is then empowered to risk and venture into uncharted waters for the sake of the Gospel. In other words, John defined a leader as one who considers the cause greater than himself or herself; a mark of a servant leader. Our delight is to serve the Lord with all of our hearts, minds, and souls. If we yield up drives for power, position, and control, and endeavor to lead as servants, the journey is sweet. It isn’t about us; it is about glorifying Him. Reduced to the most basic foundation, our purpose is to make a difference for Him, irrespective of acclaim, power, or position. Our lives belong to Him. So do our callings.

## **BOLDLY GO**

It would be a grievous error to conclude that a servant leader merely waits for others to take the initiative, is timid, or does not know what to do. Look again at our initial definition of leadership. A servant leader is a leader, but one whose mission includes building and empowering followers instead of but using them. Do you remember the original Star Trek television series? Can you hear the theme music while the mission of the Enterprise crew is proclaimed? “*Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise, its five year mission to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life, and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before...*” I suggest to you that servant leadership is our frontier to be explored and could cause us to discover new worlds of ministry fruitfulness, to bring new life to people in what we already recognize to be a strange new world, and cause the church to be

renewed into more of a scriptural civilization. But it will require that we boldly go where we and many of our former mentor models have not gone, to truly become servant leaders. It is a journey – I have certainly not reached the destination – let’s boldly explore the frontier!

*The leader who clings to power, who is afraid to give to others, will in fact cease to be a leader. Goldsmith, Lyons, & Freas*

## **“Don’t you care that we drown?”**

**by Randall A. Bach**

I wonder how many people have concluded that God, if He truly exists, doesn’t care about them? Our outlook on life, circumstances, and other people is impacted by our belief or lack of belief in a caring God. When Jesus was sleeping in the boat as a storm arose (Mark 4:38), “*The disciples woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?’*” Not only did they fear for their lives, they were concerned about whether or not Jesus really cared. Their question is profoundly revealing and illustrative. How many times have you taught people that they may be the only God others see? Meaning, is there some godly attribute, some recognizable residue of His divine nature that is exhibited through the person who calls Him Father? Sharing the “Roman’s Road,” “Four Spiritual Principles,” or some other explanation of salvation may be effective. But, the first need of most people is not for more knowledge. As has been oft quoted, “People don’t care about how much you know until they know how much you care.” “...*don’t you care that we drown?*”

## **What model are people catching from you?**

What kind of leader are you? Truly sensitive and caring? Or, caught up in the ministry stuff while saying the professionally correct things at appropriate moments? What model are your people catching from you? Do they sense that your first response to their need is to offer instructive words like the Bible answer man? Or, do they know that your first response will be to offer loving care? The answers to those questions give shape to who and what you are as a leader. I am being transparent when I confess I have not always been pleased with my response. What about you?

For the last few years I have been learning about what it means to walk out Romans 12:15, “*Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*” It is not complicated. It is simple in its purity. Often, it works most effectively when you cannot find fluently correct words. But, living it can bring renewal, a fresh re-linking with what is most important to the Lord, and have a stunningly powerful impact on people. With whom do you need to intentionally mourn? With whom can you intentionally rejoice? Who needs to know, today, that you truly care?

*Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”*  
John 11:35-36 (NIV)