



When Leadership and Discipleship Collide
Copyright © 2007 by Bill Hybels

Requests for information should be addressed to:
Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hybels, Bill.

When leadership and discipleship collide / Bill Hybels.

p. cm. — (Leadership library)

ISBN-13: 978-0-310-28306-5

ISBN-10: 0-310-28306-X

1. Bible. N.T. Mark—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Leadership—Biblical teaching.

3. Christian leadership. 4. Leadership—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

BS2585.6.L42H93 2007

253—dc22


2007012728

This edition printed on acid-free paper.

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, Today's New International Version*®. TNIV®. Copyright © 2002, 2004 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Interior design by CHANGE Design Group

Printed in the United States of America



Hands down, the single most impressive leader in the history of the world is Jesus of Nazareth. Now, I don't say that just because I'm a card-carrying Christian, which I am, but because I believe the facts speak for themselves. No leader ever cast a more expansive or breathtaking vision—nothing less than the redemption of the planet—than did Jesus Christ. No leader ever built a higher-impact team in a shorter period of time with less talent to work with. No leader ever instilled deeper values or inspired people more than Jesus Christ—in many cases, enough for them to die for the cause. Certainly, no leader has ever changed the course of human history the way Jesus did . . . and is still doing, more than two thousand years later.

I'd say it all adds up to some pretty compelling leadership evidence: He was the best leader ever.

Breaking Leadership Laws

Imagine my surprise recently when I decided to read through the New Testament book of Mark and noticed several occasions when Jesus seems willfully to violate well-known, widely accepted laws of leadership. My observations were more than a little shocking.

Build a Team of Highly Qualified Leaders

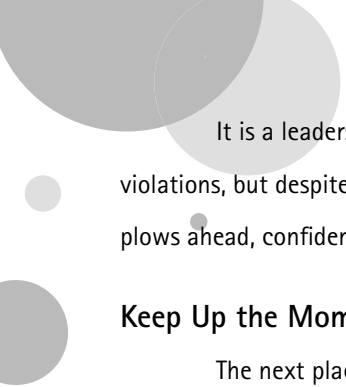
The first place I noticed the greatest leader in human history breaking a fundamental law of leadership is in the very first chapter of Mark. Jesus has just lost his strongest ally, John the Baptist, who has been thrown in prison for taking the leaders of the day to task on their sinful behavior. John may have had some odd culinary preferences and rather minimalist taste in attire, but you can't ask for a better ministry partner. He is bold, fearless, and fully devoted to the cause. Losing John to a jail cell

is a huge hit to Jesus, and the pressing question on his mind must be, Who in the world do I recruit to replace a superstar like John?

Jesus is a religion teacher, so how about adding a rabbi to the ranks? Or a highly trained Pharisee, maybe, or a well-respected Sadducee? What about some brilliant students of the Torah, a few leader types who are well schooled in Jewish custom?

No, Jesus goes out and instead gathers a rather motley crew of commercial fishermen. The majority of them are untrained, uncouth, and underage. Some have hot tempers, others have questionable business practices, and not one has evangelistic experience.

Imagine my surprise recently when I decided to read through the New Testament book of Mark and noticed several occasions when Jesus seems willfully to violate well-known, widely accepted laws of leadership.



It is a leadership violation to beat all leadership violations, but despite everyone's raised eyebrows, Jesus plows ahead, confident he has made the right decision.

Keep Up the Momentum

The next place I noticed Jesus breaking a law of leadership is found later in the first chapter of Mark. Jesus' popularity is building. The crowds are getting larger everywhere he goes. People see Jesus driving out evil spirits, healing sick people, preaching the kingdom of God, and they wonder if he might actually be the long-awaited Messiah. Right in the middle of this "Nielsen-rating" upswing, Mark 1:35 records that Jesus actually *withdraws* from all the action; he goes off alone to a solitary place to reflect and spend some quality time in prayer.

Obviously, this is in clear violation of the well-known law of momentum. Every leader knows how hard it is to establish momentum. And every leader knows that once you get it established, you should do whatever it takes

to keep it going. Momentum is one of a leader's closest allies. When the energy's high and the team is strong and people are buzzing, the last thing you want to do is pull the momentum plug.

But Jesus walks away from it all, a decision that really miffs his disciples, who are still flying high on the buzz of effective ministry. They quickly pull together a search party and, upon finding their fearless leader, reprimand him for leaving, "Jesus, everyone is looking for you!" Which is simply code for: "What's up with this? We've all been busting our backsides to get this kingdom dream realized for you, and now that we're on a roll, you want time off for a spiritual retreat?!"

From a leadership perspective, Jesus' seclusion makes zero sense, and the disciples know it. The greatest leader of all time violates a Leadership 101-level law, to the great shock of his followers . . . and me.

Propagate Good Press

Soon afterward, a man with leprosy approaches Jesus and says, in Mark 1:40, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." A hush settles over the watching crowd. Ants stop. Birds stare. Angels lean forward from their seats in heaven. Everyone knows that this diseased man has lived a pitiable existence his entire life. Leprosy has left him disfigured, excluded, and, according to Jewish custom, ceremonially unclean. The one person on the planet who possesses the power and authority to take away his physical, mental, and emotional anguish, Jesus Christ, now stands just two feet from him. Talk about a media event in the making!

Jesus knows the guy is in a sorry state. He also knows that the man is about to be completely and instantaneously healed. Facing a pending miracle of this magnitude, any leader worth his salary and bonuses would summon his PR folks and sanction a full-scale press conference. Rally the reporters and get the cameras rolling! This one will blow viewers away!