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LEADING WITH INTEGRITY: THE 28 ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES OF SOLOMON

By Pat Williams
Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour (2005)
Hardcover, 256 pages

Reviewed by DANIEL HOOVER

Solomon was one of the most successful leaders in history and was blessed with special wisdom. *Leading With Integrity* claims to examine everything Solomon said about leadership, discover how Solomon achieved such success, and learn to apply Solomon's lessons to our own leadership situation (p. 20). The author claims that "when a leader follows these principles of leadership, there are no limits to what he can achieve" (p. 17). He also says, "I guarantee that if you will immerse yourself in these . . . strategies then you can consider yourself officially certified as a Wise Leader" (p. 229).

Written by prolific author, motivational speaker, and basketball manager Pat Williams, *Leading With Integrity* begins with a brief biography of Solomon and establishes a context for his leadership scenario. Following the biographical background chapters are 28 dense chapters highlighting leadership insights from Proverbs and Ecclesiastes—one key principle per chapter. Questions following each chapter encourage personal reflection and application of the principles discussed and suggest practical steps to implement them. Particularly nice is a summary chapter that lists each of the 28 strategies covered in the book with a brief corresponding exhortation.

If you're looking for a strong, stand-alone biblical treatment of leadership principles, you won't find it here. Some chapters simply made passing reference

to the key verse from Solomon's wisdom literature used to support the principle for that chapter; the rest of the material consists of secular anecdotes from the world of sports, business, and politics, with absolutely no further biblical reference. Though the material is inspiring and in keeping with biblical principles, the foundational evidence is lacking.

Many chapters contain a section offering ways to go about implementing the principle being discussed. However, while a reader already familiar with biblical servant leadership and steward-leader ideas will recognize the truth and value of the practical suggestions made in this book, most of the time Williams seems to offer nothing but his own personal assurance that these methods are good and true. There is a distinct dearth of evidence in many chapters, biblical or otherwise, that the behaviors suggested are sound.

One strong point of *Leading With Integrity* is that it provides a strong moral compass in a culture of pluralistic ideology and moral relativism. In a particularly strong chapter, the author holds up the Ten Commandments as an absolute, transcendent foundation for ethical and moral thought that must form the anchor point of ethical considerations to prevent drifting into an endless ocean of ends-justify-the-means relativism.

The author's work does indeed take a brisk tour through Solomon's tidbits of wisdom, providing much food for thought and extracting many principles worthy of digestion and assimilation. However, the depth of treatment of the principles selected for discussion doesn't quite measure up to the stated purpose to "examine everything Solomon has to say" on the topic.

The principles contained in this book can provide guidance to any leader of any kind of organization. They are particularly relevant to a religious organi-

zation such as a church. The examples provided by Solomon's leadership of literal Israel show us how one should lead God's spiritual Israel today. Church leaders of all varieties—Sabbath school or Sunday school leaders, elders, deacons, and board members—could use this book to serve as a filter against the erroneous ideas originating from secular culture that are seeking to influence thought on leadership within the church. The principles in this book can also help to stand guard against our own sinful human tendencies of selfishness, dominance, and the corruption of power. Properly applied, these principles can provide a guiding hand to moderate the interactions of leaders in the church with those whom they should serve. The succinct morsels of practical advice given in this book can help church leaders set up functional ministry teams, deal better with organizational structures and personalities above and beneath them, and implement safeguards to avoid the common pitfalls encountered by less-enlightened leaders throughout history.

I recommend reading *Leading With Integrity* and using it as a framework within which to place more in-depth study. This book, and its summary chapter in particular, can serve as an excellent quick-reference guide of solid biblical leadership principles to keep leaders' thinking clear as they ponder the morass of leadership material available. Or leaders could simply review it periodically as a refresher to help them affix strong leadership principles into their minds.

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