

“A Critical Review of: “Being Leaders.”

CENTURION EDUCATION FOUNDATION

by

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What is biblical leadership?

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INTRODUCTION

This student will first review the stated objectives and purposes of this book, “Being a Leader: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership.” Secondly he will give a brief analysis of the more notably positive aspects of this work. Thirdly, we will discuss any area of analysis that may be lacking. Finally, a conclusion on this students’ analysis will be offered for consideration and though relative to leadership in the ministry.

Malhur's Stated Objectives and Purposes

Malphur's stated objectives of this book by asking the following questions: "What is a leader, and am I one?"¹ Next, "What is leadership and is that what I bring to my ministry?"² Malphur also discussed, "And how can we talk about leadership, much less develop leaders, if we don't know what we're talking about or don't know what it is we're trying to develop?"³ Malphur then offers his stated purposes to be fulfilled in his book.

Malphur's stated purpose are as follows, (1) "Define Christian leadership based on the Scriptures and Christian leadership research over the past two centuries; (2) Define and develop their concepts of leadership."⁴

¹ Aubrey Malphur, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Bookhouse, 2003), 9.

² *Ibid.*, 9.

³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

A Positive Analysis of Malphur's Book

The first Scripture Malphur used to describe leadership was taken from I Corinthians 11:1 “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” was an excellent place to begin in one’s describing biblical leadership. Malphur has done a very good job of outlining his book, which makes it easier to read and is a teaching tool for better comprehension. Malphur uses a good mixture of theological principles, testimonies, and practical solutions. Malphur did well to explain that bishops, elders and overseers all hold the same office of Pastor. He stated, “Paul calls for the elders of the church at Ephesus, and in verse 28 he refers to them as overseers, which is the meaning of the term bishop.”⁵ It is imperative that when discussing Christian leadership that the correct hermeneutics and theological practice of Leadership in the New Testament local church is employed.

Malphur also does a good job of giving the outline of what he will be covering in each chapter ahead of time. This is also a good teaching tool, and shows the book is well laid out. Malphur has done a good job of titling each chapter heading, as well as a good job of charting and referencing biblical characters in columns. This is also a good teaching technique which helped to make this work so effective. Malphur gave good instructive questions in each of the chapters. As different philosophies that he discussed Malphur offered both pluses and negatives at each point. Malphur’s book was an effective tool in understanding biblical leadership, and how to discern the differing variations of the practice of leadership.

⁵ Ibid., Malphurs, 22.

A Negative Analysis of Malphur's Book

The negative aspects of this book are very minimal, but one core issue stands out to this student. At the heart of the discussion of this book is, "What is a leader? And am I one?"⁶ In most of these chapters Malphur spends an enormous amount of time discussing other than what this student thinks of as a biblical definition of leadership, which is simplified for us by our Lord when He stated in Matthew 9:9 "And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me." The Follow me" theory was certainly touched on by Malphur but does not seem to have been the driving theory or final conclusion. Being a servant was discussed in chapter two and though every leader must be a servant he must primarily be a follower first. Having a servant's heart is a byproduct of following close to Christ.

The following chapters discussed being credible, capable, and influential leaders, which none get to the heart of the matter, what is a leader? Not the results, not the mission, not even the Great Commission. A leader is one that follows Christ closely. And the closer one follows the greater the leader. Malphur did mention following Christ in a sub point, but if that was his thesis of the book it should have been driven home continually. The book was in fact helpful and though well laid out the main thesis might have been clearer and the main question could have been made with greater definition.

⁶ Ibid., 9.

CONCLUSION

The Final Analysis of Malphur's Book was that it was all very good and very biblical. Most every chapter had some practicality to it. The eighth chapter offered a list of things for leaders to put into practice in the local church, such as determining ones where one fits into the ministry, creating a visual such as mission's statement and a vision statement. All very good and practical but did not seem to definitively answer the main question, "what is a leader?"⁷ What he did do was to define leadership outcomes. He defined leadership characteristics. He defined some development leadership concepts. All in all it was well written and it is always good to read about Christian leadership.

⁷ Ibid., 9.

INITIAL SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPGY

Malphur, Aubrey. *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003.