



LEAD

The 10 (and a Half) Commandments of Leadership

Do you have what it takes to become a great leader--the kind of leader who not only attracts people but actually makes things happen as well?



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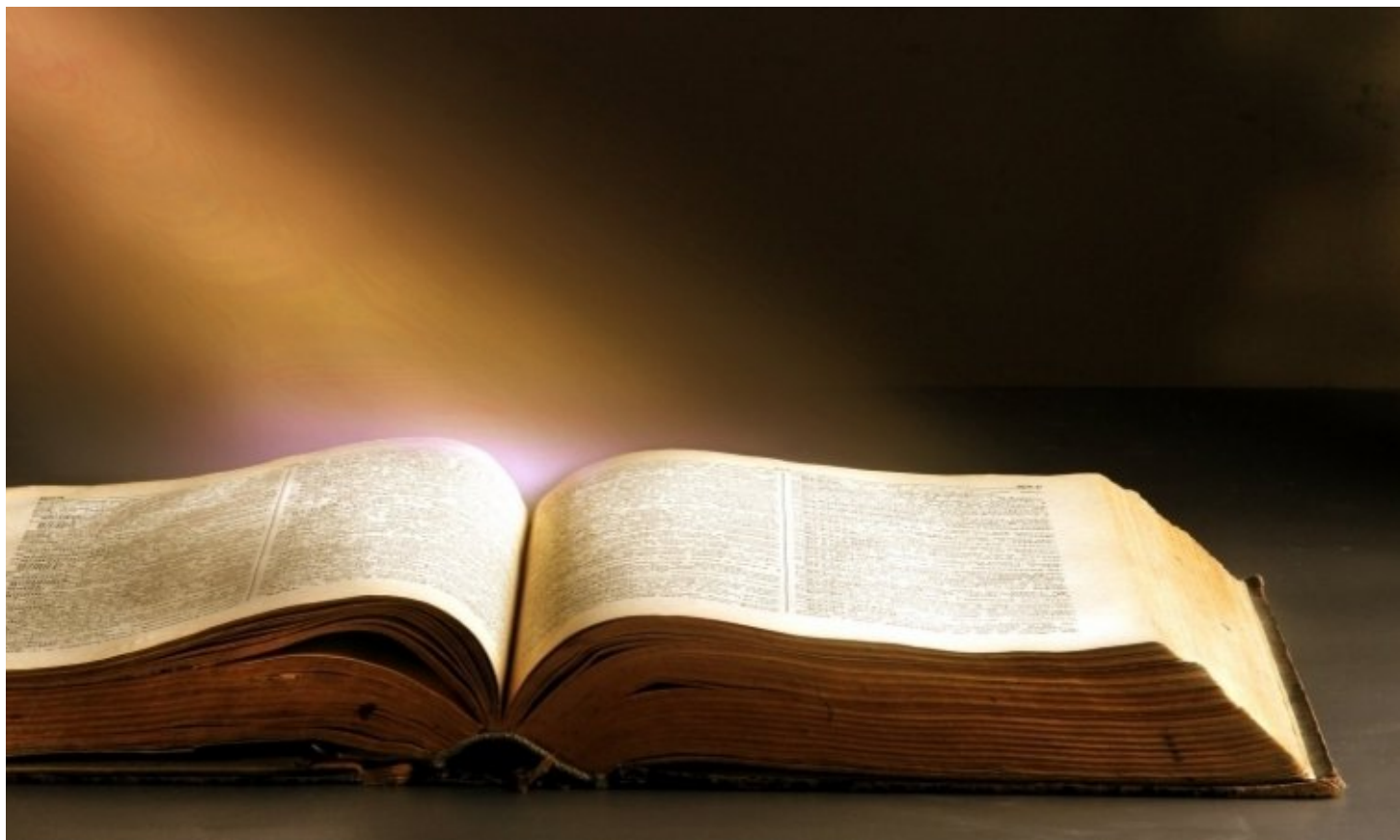


IMAGE: Getty Images

If you want to achieve your true potential and become the leader you are meant to be, you must start by being aware of who you are.

If you can become the leader you ought to be on the inside, you will be able to become the leader you want to be on the outside.

Here are some directions to help you, whether you're at the beginning or further down the road. These commandments may not have been handed down on stone tablets, but if you follow them you'll find there isn't much you cannot do.

1. You shall be more concerned with your character than your reputation.

Your reputation is just what other people think; your character is what you are. Every leader faces challenges that require a choice between character and compromise; every time you choose character, you gain respect. Character is the core of leadership.

2. You shall be committed in all that you do.

To be an effective leader, you have to be committed, and true commitment starts in the heart. It inspires and attracts others; it shows them you have convictions. They will believe in you only if you believe in a cause. The commandment of commitment is the responsibility of leadership.

3. You shall listen more than you speak.

Communication is critical to successful leadership. People want to follow someone they can understand, someone who listens. As a leader, you should listen far more than you speak--and when you do speak, make sure your words are consistent with your actions and character.

4. You shall bring the best of who you are into everything you do.

It's easy to admire those who are highly competent, but the truth is we don't always have to be LeBron James or Steve Jobs to excel. To cultivate competence you need to show up every day; you need to keep improving, get ahead of the game where you can, and keep setting the bar higher.

5. You shall stand brave even in the face of fear.

As a leader, your dedication to your mission and principles must remain stronger than your desire to appease others. You must be able to stretch past your comfort zone, to speak to those who need to hear it most and those you'd rather avoid, to do the right thing when everyone else is frightened, to step forward in a bold way.

6. You shall live by your convictions.

By definition leaders are people who stand for something. Strong convictions precede

great actions, and it is our convictions that call us to act with integrity. For those of us to whom much has been given, much is required. How you act, what you say, how you treat others--your convictions build the trust that leadership requires.

7. You shall focus with consistent excellence.

Concentration lets you get things done. It's a discipline that allows you to evaluate what's in front of you and set priorities, and to do your job with consistent excellence.

8. You shall be clear in your vision.

From the loftiest idea to the most mundane transaction, leadership requires clarity. When you have a clear sense of your vision, mission, and purpose, you draw others to you, and you know what standard to measure your accomplishments against. The commandment of clarity gives vision to leadership.

9. You shall seek knowledge and wisdom.

Self-growth and a robust commitment to lifelong learning are the most effective tools you can have for surviving competition and managing change. Great leaders are constantly looking for ways to improve themselves and their team. They never stop asking questions and stretch themselves to stay teachable, curious, and open.

10. You shall honor others and know their importance.

When you understand that leadership--and life, for that matter--is about relationships, you truly know the importance of living in a way that builds and strengthens connections with those around you every day.

And finally, here's 10.5:

You shall make everything count.

It's the one that infuses all the others with meaning and significance. The best leaders make every action, every word, every moment, every relationship count.

As a leader, you have the responsibility to keep all the commandments and to understand the consequences of neglecting them. Hold yourself up to their standard, and above all, make it count--nothing matters more.

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