BECOME THE PERSON YOUR NATION IS WAITING FOR

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Eighteen Keys to Leadership, Character, and the Work of Becoming Someone Worth Following

Chapter 1

Every Nation Is Waiting

The shift. You may believe leadership belongs to a few people with titles. This book holds that it begins with an ordinary person who decides to carry more than their share. That person may be reading this page.

Someone Must Step Up

At every point in its history, every nation waits for someone. Not a title, not an office, but a person. Someone willing to take on more than is asked of them, keep a promise when it costs them something, and lead simply because it needs to be done.

That person is not born ready. Whatever image comes to mind when you picture a great leader (composed, decisive, somehow already equipped), forget it. Every one of them started as someone ordinary, at a moment so ordinary that no one else in the room thought to act. The only difference is that they did.

Leaders are built one choice at a time, out of the same raw material available to anyone: character, attention, and the willingness to keep showing up after the moment stops feeling urgent. There are eighteen chapters here, not because leadership is a complicated formula, but because it is built the way anything worth building is built: in layers,

over time, through a repetition most people abandon too soon.

This book is about becoming that person. Not the leader your title might one day demand, but the one your character can actually sustain. It is written for every reader, whatever your age or stage of life, and for young people above all, the readers the author cared most about.

In everyday use, leadership can also mean being in front, being the best. The word applies to people, companies, countries, business areas or institutions. Many who write about leadership regard it as a leading factor in development, whatever part of a nation's life you look at: politics, governance, the economy, education, health or infrastructure. Every nation must settle this matter, and settle it well, if it is to develop and stay developed. Some say that by the time an organisation, a community or a nation solves its leadership problem, it has already solved more than half its problems. No wonder so many groups place a premium on leadership, and so many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) make the grooming of leaders their main work.

So what is leadership? What forms does it take, and why does it matter so much? This chapter sets out to answer these questions.

Many Names for a Leader

People have many names for a leader: the head, pathfinder, mentor, navigator, rallying point, torch-bearer, captain.

Each describes a role and shows how important a leader is. People rightly expect a leader not only to show the group the way but to lead it to success. A leader needs visible achievements to justify so enviable a position. And because a leader's responsibilities are so great, the author believes a leader must rely heavily on God to succeed and to take the group higher than where it started.

Leaders Come in Many Kinds

Leaders come in many kinds. Some are strong and some are weak, some democratic and some authoritarian, some lead alone and some together. Some are remembered for what they achieved, while many are better forgotten for what they failed to do!

There are leaders for almost every setting: heads of families, church leaders, leaders of companies, schools, hospitals and communities, traditional rulers, heads of the judiciary and the armed forces, and leaders of nations.

Why Leadership Matters

Good leadership matters in any nation, organisation or institution, because a sound, effective leader shapes the group they lead. In the end, the leader achieves for the group.

When Good Leaders Are Missing

Those who have studied leadership across the world reach the same conclusion: many nations badly need good

leaders. Some call it a leadership deficit, some the problem of good leadership, others leadership failure, and still others a deep leadership crisis. Whatever the term, the message is the same. You may ask, "How can a country of many millions of people not boast hundreds, if not thousands, of good leaders?" It is a fair question, but answering it is not the aim here. The aim is a request: a request to God, the Giver of every good thing, for good leaders for every nation.

A well-known musician once reminded all who bring requests to God to state them clearly. When you pray for a child, he said, say what kind of child you hope for. His own prayer was for a well-read child, one who could help him in his old age.

The lesson reaches far beyond one prayer, for people also pray for leaders, and what they ask for matters. Some want leaders who will reach high office and dance only to their tune. Some want leaders who will do their bidding alone, or avenge the wrongs they believe were done to them. Some want leaders who will treat high office as a chance to enrich themselves and their circle, as if it were "their turn to eat". Such people are not looking for good leaders. All they want are leaders who will favour their own people and get them everything they ask for. A better prayer asks for leaders of honesty and wisdom, with a heart for all the people.

In short, there are leaders, and there are leaders! Some are civilian; others are military. Some are thought leaders; others are thoughtless leaders. Some lead only for their

own group; others lead for the whole nation. Some are well-read; others are "less read". Some leaders smile; others frown.

Picture this. Picture a student who notices that the road to his school floods every rainy season, and that no one has taken it up. He is not the oldest on his street, and he holds no office. He is the first to ask who will repair it. The same is true of a retired nurse who gathers her neighbours to clean up their street.

Your turn. What is one need in your community that everyone sees and no one has taken up? What is the smallest first step you could take on it this month?

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

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