



The Top Ten Leadership Commandments

by Hans Finzel

For each chapter I included the “Big Idea”, some key quotes I want to remember and a few personal thoughts of application.

#1: THOU SHALT CLING TO THE VISION

“Big Idea: *Where there is no vision, the people don’t follow. It is as simple as that. Vision for a better future, conveyed with genuine passion, is the great motivator. Lack of vision can kill any organization, no matter how great it used to be. And if it’s already dead, you will never bring it back to life without a megadose of fresh vision.”*

“In the absence of great dreams, pettiness prevails.”

“If your group lacks a compelling current vision, work on getting it. It is job number one. When the vision is clear, people begin to move. If they are busy rowing to an exciting destination, they don’t rock the boat.”

Personal Thoughts:

It is vital for me to keep the BIG PICTURE in front of those I lead. They will be focused on something, if they are not focused on the big picture, they will begin to focus on smaller, pettier problems. When teams are focused on a common goal, they are able to unite and rally together to tackle the task rather than working as independent operators. This will enable them to see petty issues as inconsequential and resolvable.

#2: THOU SHALT NOT SERVE THINE OWN EGO

“Big Idea: *Reluctance is a common trait of great leadership. It is the foundation for humble lifelong leadership. If you find yourself a reluctant leader, you are in good company.”*

“God cannot use people who are full of themselves. He prefers empty vessels. Why did Jesus choose fishermen to be His inner circle? Same reason. They were not prominent, highly gifted, or wealthy. They were perfect candidates for Jesus to mold into the leaders He needed them to be. My take on God’s choice of Moses is that Moses’ ego was not going to get in the way. God knew that Moses was up for the selfless task of leading God’s people on a very difficult journey. I think a whole lot of very gifted people do not make themselves available to God. So the fact that Moses did not feel he had anything to offer made him perfect for the job.”

Personal Thoughts:

God is looking for humble leaders for at least 2 reasons:

Because the task is impossible. Only humble leaders realize that they are totally dependent on God and cast themselves on Him and rely on His power to accomplish the task and not their own.

Because God is committed to act for His glory He does not want servants who embezzle glory from Him. He wants servants that position themselves so that God gets the glory, not the servant.

#3: THOU SHALT PRACTICE SERVANT LEADERSHIP

*“**Big Idea:** A servant leader cares more about the good of the organization and its people than his or her own enrichment. Servant leaders are not about being self-centered, but they love to share the load. They are team focused.”*

“Servant leadership—what is it really? My definition of servant leadership is simply: when the leader cares more about the good of the organization and its people than his or her own enrichment.”

“This leadership style is more of an attitude than anything else, an attitude in which leaders realize that they carry the organization on their shoulders and that their goal is to help make everyone else successful.”

Personal Thoughts:

Servant leadership puts others at the top. Hans views his organizational chart with the leader on the bottom, not the top, an “Upside-Down Org Chart”. I must define my success as a leader as: helping others to succeed. It is not controlling others, it is serving them, engaging with them, and empowering them to succeed.

#4: THOU SHALT BE OPPOSED, RESISTED, AND MISUNDERSTOOD

“Big Idea: Great leaders face great opposition. The bigger the vision, the more some people will resist it. Expect opposition, and learn how to deal with it when it comes. “Being responsible sometimes means p***ing people off,” observed military leader Colin Powell. He said it, not me, but I agree with him. Great leaders face great opposition.”

“Even if they are 95 percent wrong, look for that 5 percent of truth in what they are saying. What is God trying to tell you about your leadership through this criticism? How can you be a better leader through this?” In the years since, I’ve found that sometimes there’s more than just 5 percent truth in criticism, and there is always a message of help for my leadership.”

“Sometimes being a good leader is going to upset people. That is part of leadership.”

“If I were to try to read, much less answer, all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how—the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so to the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me will not amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference.” Abraham Lincoln

Personal Thoughts:

My focus needs to first be to make the best decisions for the glory of God and the long term good of the missionaries. So my approval must first and foremost be before God to act in the way that pleases him.

Second, I must stay humble. I am not perfect and I can always improve as a leader. Even if the decision is right and people are upset, I must 1. Learn from their critique, and 2. Listen to their critique with grace and love, not anger.

#5: THOU SHALT HAVE A LIFE

“Big Idea: Don’t let work trump family. Because of the intense demands on leaders, it is tempting to get out of balance in our personal lives. Many leaders fail in their professional lives because they lose control of their personal lives.”

“When I got home from work, it was family time. When I got home from trips, I would spend extra time with my family to make up for my absence. I called these “TRDs”—travel recovery days. I did not go straight back to the office, but rather straight home to the family.”

“There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn’t mind who gets the credit.”

“I try faithfully to go on a self-imposed electronic vacation.”

Personal Thoughts:

In order to be effective for long term ministry I must maintain a healthy balance between work, family, spiritual renewal, physical health (rest, exercise, stress, and eating well).

If I don't care if I get the credit, I am free to delegate and share the load.

#6: THOU SHALT SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

“Big Idea: Character always trumps gifting in leadership. And character is made up of many small acts of integrity. Effective leaders have to pay attention to the small stuff even if they are big-picture thinkers.”

“How would you describe a successful life when you are looking back from the finish line?” I really like the answer that author and speaker John Maxwell emailed me: I have always stated that my definition of success is that those closest to me love and respect me the most. So I will have finished well if at the end ... those closest to me, who knew me inside and out, love and respect me the most.”

“Sweating the Small Stuff Means Paying Attention to Character God pays very close attention to our hearts. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Matt. 5:8).”

Personal Thoughts:

The holiness of my heart before God each moment of each day is the most important aspect of my leadership. If that fails, I fail.

#7: THOU SHALT SPEND TIME IN THE TENT

“Big Idea: Leaders in ministry cannot succeed in the realms of the spirit without the “God factor.” Our relationship with Him affects every aspect of our leadership. Time with Him translates into power for His cause.”

“We need to be leaders listening to God. We need to be pursuers of God. We need to be more about being, less about doing. Our relationships with each other are key to God’s blessing.”

“They kept their eyes on their leader as he met with God. Similarly, our people know if we’re spending time with God. This is something we cannot fake.”

“If you can’t be silent in your soul and listen to God, then you can’t be silent in your soul and listen to people. If you can’t be silent, then when you open your mouth, you will have nothing to say to man or to God.”

“first comes the vertical nourishment by God’s grace, and then the horizontal bringing of that nourishment to others.”

“Moses refused to lead without the presence of God, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter: Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us?”

“And the LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

Personal Thoughts:

Without time in the tent, we lead from the flesh and not in the power of the Spirit. We lead by the wisdom of the world, not the wisdom of the Spirit. We get man’s results, not God’s results. Without time in the tent, we have nothing to give others. We must take time to refresh and renew our souls before the Lord; He is what will we and others need most!

Time in the tent is both an act of worship as we proclaim by our actions that the person of God is more valuable to us than serving God and it is also an act of faith as we proclaim by our actions that because our success in ministry depends on him we can be still to be with Him.

#8: THOU SHALT LEAD TO LEAVE

*“**Big Idea:** Leadership success without successors is failure. We should lead not by hanging on to our positions of authority till the bitter end—but by mentoring future leaders so we leave with grace and open hands.”*

“My theory is that I just need to spend time with my interns. It is an organic process. These interns are people in our organization who over a period of one year have special access to me. They travel with me. They are included in most leadership meetings. They actually get to sit in our board of directors meetings. We go on bike rides together. If they’re married, we enjoy social connections with our spouses and children. We drink a lot of coffee together at Starbucks. To me it’s a Paul-and-Timothy kind of relationship. Not only am I seeking to develop future leaders with my own personal time and input, but I am also modeling this behavior for the other leaders in our organization. I want them to do the same with other up-and-coming leaders on their teams. Organizations live and die on the basis of their flow of new leadership talent. The only way to guarantee that our ministries do not slide down

into institutionalization, calcification, bureaucracy, and death is to constantly renew our organizations with fresh blood in the form of new leaders.”

“For you who are reading these words and are a part of that new generation, look for mentors and leaders who will give you room to grow. Look for your Moses with humility, and ask older leaders to take you under their wings for a season.”

Personal Thoughts:

I must take time to mentor future leaders by spending time with them. It doesn't necessarily have to be a program, just take time to do life with them and involve them in ministry together with you.

I must also continually seek to grow from those with more experience than myself. I can always grow.

#9: THOU SHALT NEVER GIVE UP

“Big Idea: There are many times we want to quit as leaders. There is not a leader alive who will not face deep waters of loneliness and discouragement. It is lonely at the top. This chapter will explore why that is true and why we need to be patient in leadership.”

“discouragement can be the number one tool in Satan's arsenal to take out leaders. If he hates what we're doing, he will try everything to bring us down. I have found such encouragement in seeing how much pressure Moses faced and yet kept going.”

“We all need confidants who are not colleagues. There is a level of transparency in a safe friendship that cannot happen at the workplace. I do believe that your spouse is not enough. Some leaders dump way too much on their spouses and experience negative effects. I do share a lot with Donna, but I don't want her to be my dumping ground. Since she does not work with me, she can develop a skewed perspective. She can become bitter against people I work with if I complain to her about them. I just might forget to tell her when it's all resolved, and she is still angry long after I have moved on! Complaining to someone who doesn't have a dog in the fight is a totally different dynamic. So make sure you have a Craig.”

Personal Thoughts:

I must seek first to find my encouragement in the Lord day by day. As David strengthened himself in the Lord. Second, I need to develop friendships that will be able to be mutually uplifting and encouraging in leadership.

“Do what you like (to do), like what you do”. Find the “sweet spot” in your ministry. Make sure that a good percentage of your ministry is fitted for the strengths that God has fitted you for. Not all of it will fit your strengths, but make sure the majority does.

#10 THOU SHALT KEEP THINE EYES ON THE PRIZE

*“**Big Idea:** Motivation to lead should come from a calling higher than just serving people or making a living. The drive to keep going comes when we serve our values, we serve our God, and we serve our passion, vision, and calling. We do not simply work for the organization or people who hired us.”*

“The drive to keep going comes because they follow their passion, vision, and calling. People who change the world do not simply work for the organization or people who hired them. I have a simple definition of calling that I came up with years ago. It’s a simple phrase, but in my mind it covers the entire issue: “Follow the most compelling of many options at any cost.”

“The only justifiable reason for organizational existence is the production of worthwhile results.”

“Who do we serve, and what crying need are we trying to solve? This is what keeps us going in the tough times. We live in tough times, but the right leader with the right calling can change the world. Leaders fill a need in organizations for direction, deliverance, rescue, and more.”

Personal Thoughts:

I must always keep the need and the vision before myself and those that I serve. It will feed an internal motivation that will encourage us to keep going through the difficult times that will inevitably come.

“May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.” Above all, rest in God to accomplish the true work!