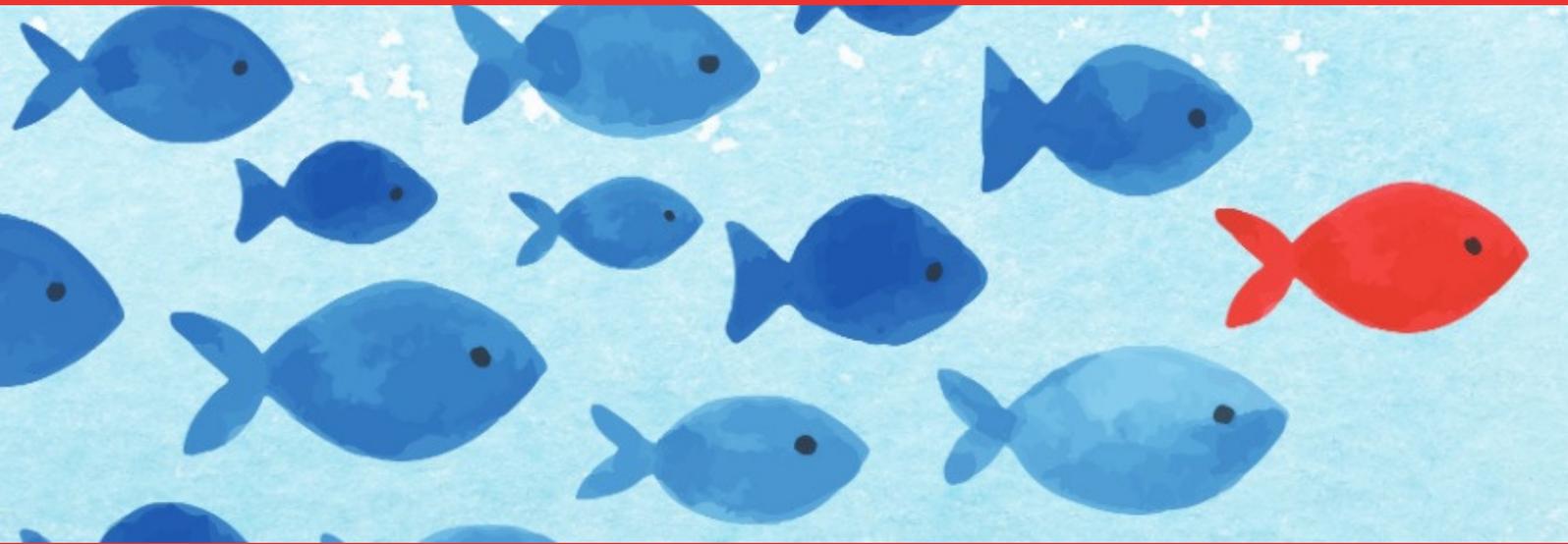


LEADERSHIP



DOING IT WELL. SURVIVING WHEN IT'S BAD.

ANDREW LAIRD

Leadership: Doing it well. Surviving when it's bad.
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*Videos featured in each study
can be viewed at lifeatwork.org.au/leadership*



Visit lifeatwork.org.au for a wide range of resources to help connect your faith with your work.

DISCUSS

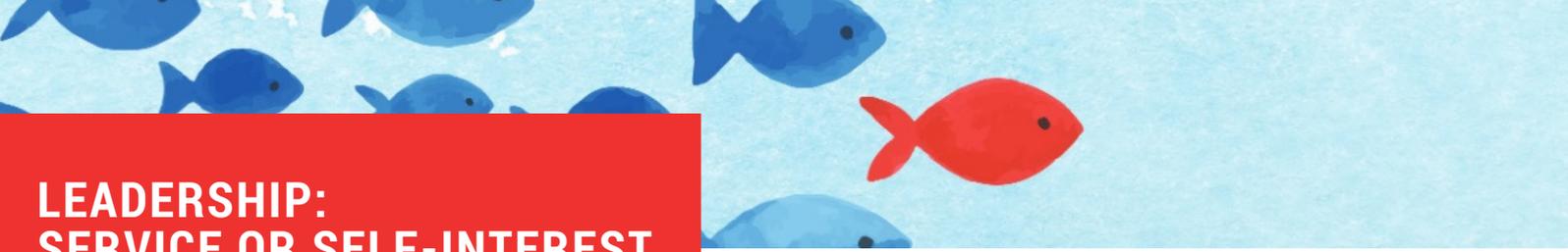
1. Think of the best boss you have ever had. What was it you liked about them?
2. Think of the worst boss you have ever had. What was it you disliked about them?

READ

42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42-45)

13 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13-14)

WATCH *Service or Self-Interest – Andrew Laird (13:37)*



LEADERSHIP: SERVICE OR SELF-INTEREST

DISCUSS

3. What is the context of Jesus' statement regarding His service (see Mark 10:35-41)? How does that context make His statement even more extraordinary?
4. What are some of the features of the authority of the "one like a son of man" (Daniel 7:13)? What would you expect such a leader to be like in person?
5. John Dickson* writes about the aesthetics of virtue, the way that service looks beautiful. How have you been struck by the beauty of Jesus' service, especially in light of His authority as the Son of Man?
6. What makes it difficult to be a servant-hearted leader (or employee) in the workplace?
7. What are some practical acts of service you can do in the week ahead?

*"Do you have big ambitions for yourself or big aspirations for the people on your team?"***

WATCH *Service or Self-Interest – Jennie Pakula (14:08)*

* John Dickson, *Humilitas: A lost key to life, love, and leadership*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011) 69

**Cheryl Bachelder, *Dare to serve: How to drive superior results by serving others*. (Oakland: BK Publishers, 2015) 11

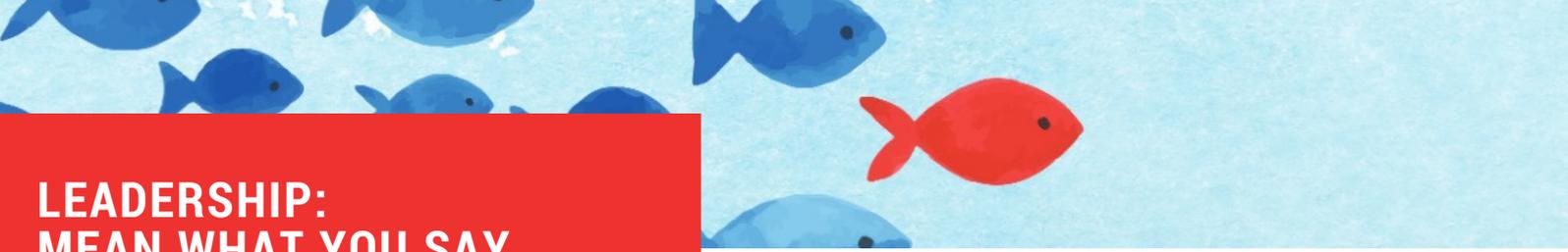
DISCUSS

1. What are some examples of poor communication in your workplace? (For example, over-promising, lying etc.)
2. What do you think lies behind many of the workplace word problems we encounter?

READ

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Colossians 3:1-10)

WATCH *Mean what you say – Andrew Laird (13:50)*



LEADERSHIP: MEAN WHAT YOU SAY

DISCUSS

3. To what extent do you think pride lies behind some of the workplace word problems you listed in question one?
4. What other “heart issues” might lie behind problems with our speech?
5. What practical ways can you remind yourself and others of your status (starting first with status before considering speech)?
6. How might being sure of your status affect not just how you speak but also how you listen?*

“You’ll mean what you say when you know who you are.” (Andrew Laird)

WATCH *Mean what you say – Jenny George (21:07)*

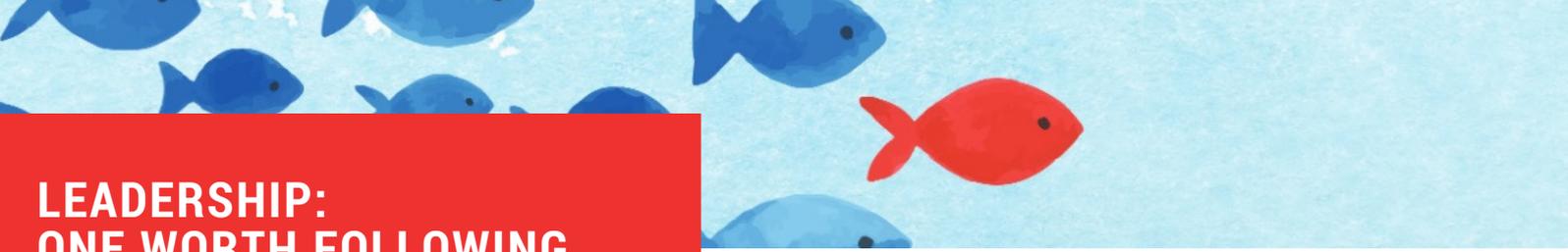
DISCUSS

1. Think of a workplace leader who has had a positive impact upon you. What words would you use to describe them?
2. What matters more to you in a workplace leader – someone who is very *competent* at their role, or someone of impressive *character*? Why?

READ Matthew 23:1-11, 25-28

1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2 “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. 3 So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. 5 “Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by others. 8 “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. 11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

25 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!



LEADERSHIP: ONE WORTH FOLLOWING

You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. 27

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

WATCH *One worth following – Andrew Laird (13:48)*

DISCUSS

3. What might it look like in your workplace to be a leader who “puts heavy loads on people’s shoulders” and “does everything for people to see” (v4-5)?

4. What things do you do in the workplace that might reflect an unhealthy concern with your outside? What inner aspects of your character may instead need attention?

5. Our inside is ultimately not changed by our own striving or effort alone, but by the work of the Holy Spirit. Take a moment now to pray about those inner aspects.

6. For those who have a leader not worth following, practically what might it look like to “be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do” (v2)?

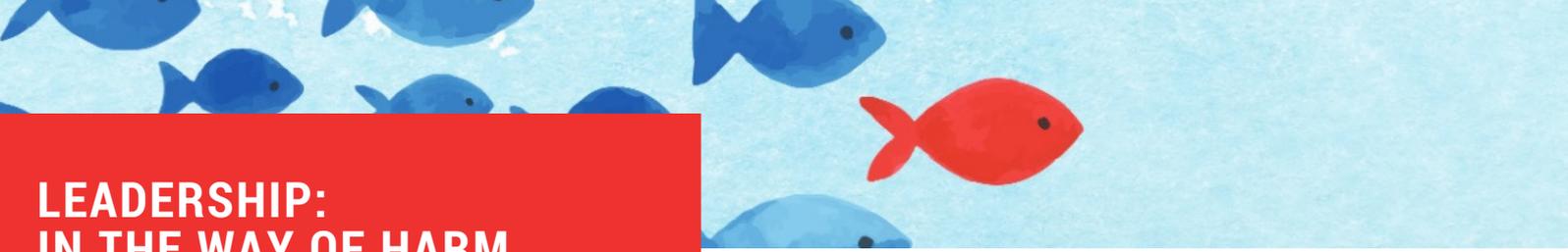
WATCH *One worth following – Graham Hooper (13:38)*

DISCUSS

1. Have you ever had someone protect you from a difficult situation in the workplace? Or have you ever had someone shift responsibility for a problem onto you? Share your experiences with others.
2. Why might it be uncommon for people to take responsibility for others' faults, or bear pain for the sake of others in the workplace?

READ Psalm 121

- 1 *I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?*
- 2 *My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.*
- 3 *He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;*
- 4 *indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*
- 5 *The LORD watches over you—
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;*
- 6 *the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.*
- 7 *The LORD will keep you from all harm —
he will watch over your life;*
- 8 *the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.*



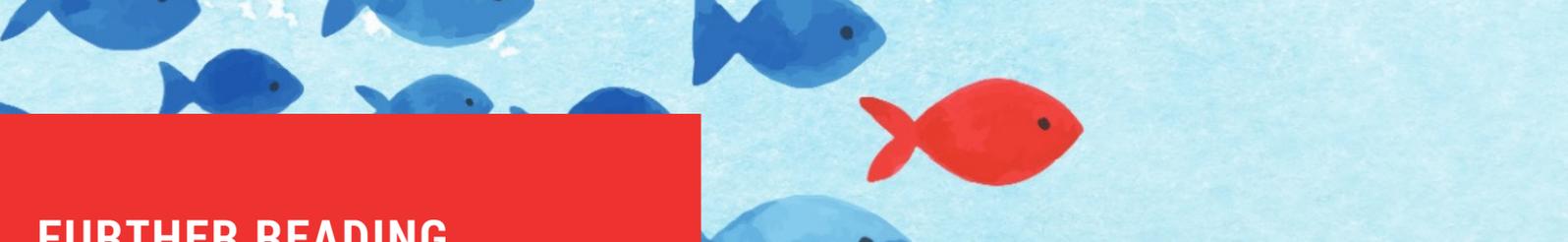
LEADERSHIP: IN THE WAY OF HARM

WATCH *In the way of harm – Andrew Laird (13:23)*

DISCUSS

3. Which aspect of God's help in Psalm 121 do you find most extraordinary? Why?
4. How would you explain the idea of God standing in the way of harm to others?
5. What is a simple way that you might be able to stand in the way of harm for your colleagues?
6. How does this passage help us respond when we experience the opposite in the workplace, a leader who inflicts harm upon us?

WATCH *In the way of harm – Allan Bulman (13:38)*



FURTHER READING

This article first appeared on lifeatwork.org.au

THE LISTENING LEADER

by Andrew Laird

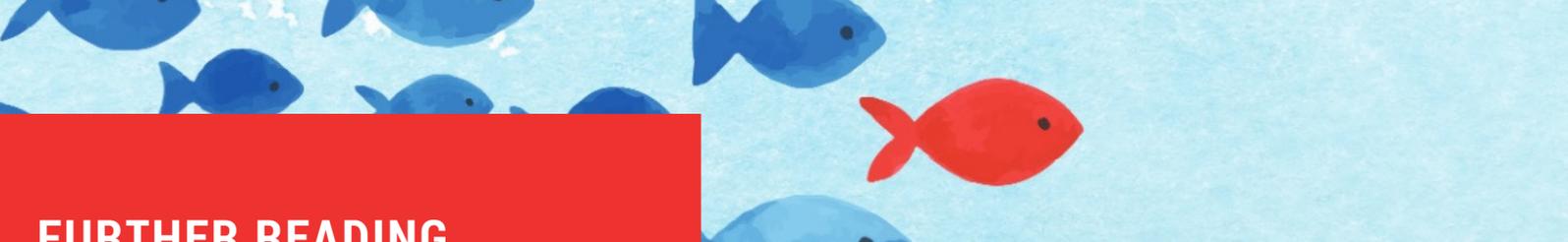
Bad listening is unforgettable.

I still recall the occasion like it was just yesterday. Sitting down for a meeting with a senior colleague, explaining my thoughts on a topic, only for them to cut me off mid-sentence with a comment about a completely unrelated matter. Their glancing over my shoulder earlier in the conversation should have been a give-away that they weren't listening, but this response made it perfectly clear!

Listening in leadership

Increasingly the working world is recognising the importance of listening, especially when it comes to leadership. In the book *Harvard Business Review on Effective Communication* the first chapter is titled "Listening to people" - a striking opening chapter for a book all about effective communication! Similarly, Judith Humphrey is the founder of leadership communications firm *The Humphrey Group*. She says that with the flattening of leadership structures in recent decades has come the need for people at all levels of an organisation to be good listeners. Listening fosters loyalty, and yet "listening is not something people in business are comfortable with yet"*. And when it comes to the different genders, men are particularly bad at this, interrupting women three times as much as women interrupt men.

* abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bestpractice/leaders-who-listen/7962232



FURTHER READING

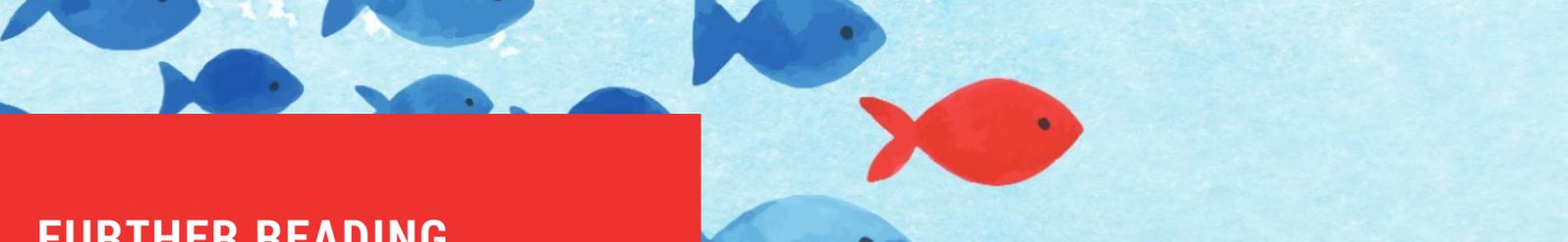
Listening the hallmark of wisdom

But listening is more important than just being good for business. Proverbs says that listening is a hallmark of the wise person. The fool on the other hand never stops talking. “When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise” (10:19). “The way of a fool seems wise to him, but a wise man listens to advice” (12:5). “A fool finds no pleasure in understanding, but delights in airing his own opinions” (18:2).

In Proverbs, the fool prattles, chatters and speaks before listening. The wise on the other hand fear God and recognise that they are not the fount of all wisdom. They instead listen to the wisdom of others. They hold their tongue and store up knowledge, so that when they do speak - because Proverbs is all for the wise person speaking - they have listened so much beforehand that they have apt and fitting words to say (25:11). No wonder listening is good for leadership!

The ministry of listening

In his book *Life Together* Dietrich Bonhoeffer has a chapter called “The Ministry of Listening”. He writes that there are many times when “listening can be a greater service than speaking”. He warns of danger of “a kind of listening with half an ear that presumes already to know what the other person has to say”. This, Bonhoeffer says, “is an impatient, inattentive listening, that...is only waiting for a chance to speak.”



FURTHER READING

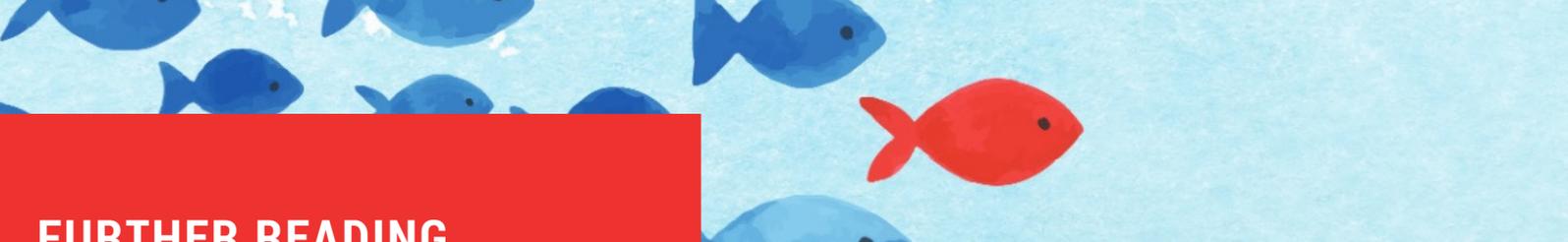
But Bonhoeffer takes this inability to listen one step further, warning of the eternal danger of not listening. “He who can no longer listen to his brother will soon be no longer listening to God either; he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too. This is the beginning of the death of the spiritual life... Anyone who thinks that his time is too valuable to spend keeping quiet will eventually have no time for God, but only for himself and for his own follies”. If you just “prattle in the presence” of colleagues and employees, Bonhoeffer warns that it won’t be long before you’re too busy prattling in the presence of God. You’ll take the practice of thinking that you know everything and introduce it to your relationship with God also. Which is not just foolish; it’s deadly.

The how-to of listening

So how do we become good listeners? Like all right living it requires both heart change and habit change.

Our words are a reflection of our hearts. “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34). And our inability to be quiet and listen is also an overflow of the heart. It is the proud heart that never listens to the wisdom of others. They know it all so there is no need to be quiet and learn from others.

Rather, as we’ve already noted, the wise person in Proverbs fears the Lord (1:7). They have a humble regard for themselves before the maker of heaven and earth. So the first step to becoming a good listener is a daily reminder of your status which awakens a right and appropriate fear of the Lord, and with it humility.



FURTHER READING

But heart change can be aided by habit change as we seek to practice the “ministry of listening”. And we can look widely to learn from the wisdom of others for how to listen well. Judith Humphrey again suggests that there are three kinds of listening, all of which are important in the workplace*. Firstly there is physical listening, where you look the person speaking in the eye, or turn towards them. This physical posture both helps you concentrate on what the person is saying, and communicates that you are paying attention. Secondly there is mental listening where you create a mental road map of what the person is saying. You take note of their points of logic and the conclusions that they are making, which allows you to then engage with them and ask thoughtful questions. Thirdly there is emotional listening which is another way of speaking about empathising. You affirm what the speaker is saying with a few simple words or with your body language. All three types of listening both communicate that you are paying attention, but also help you truly listen and take on board what is being said.

Judith Humphrey tells of the manager who says “I have to lead by listening”. Listening is not just for the employee. It is also for the employer. Indeed it is for all those who fear the Lord and want to be truly wise.

* abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bestpractice/leaders-who-listen/7962232

LEADERSHIP

DOING IT WELL. SURVIVING WHEN IT'S BAD.

The top can be a lonely place. Marked by uncertainty. Insecurity.
The feeling that you're only ever as good as your last success.

It's not always easy to respect the one at the top. When their decisions are self-serving.
Their judgements are poor. A failure to truly lead, motivate and inspire.

How does the Gospel reframe leadership? How does it define true success?
What hope does it provide in the face of failed leadership?

In this series of four studies (plus accompanying videos) discover how to redeem leadership from false success and crushing failure.

FEATURING

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Graham Hooper
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