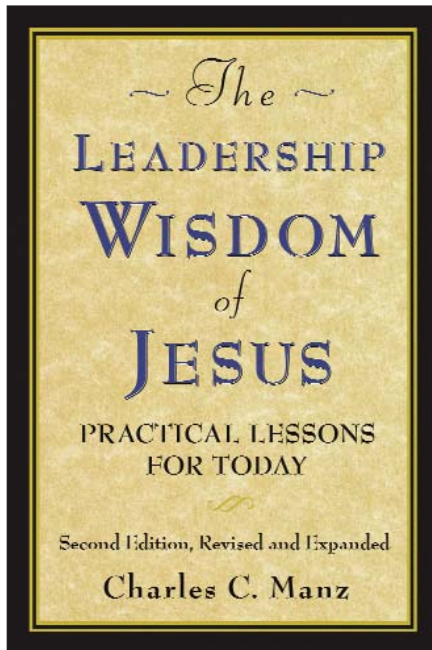


# Theory Without Justification



## The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus: Practical Lessons for Today

By Charles C. Manz  
Reviewed by Deanne Bryce



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** As a follow-up to last month's cover story, "Faith at Work," this month's column is devoted to the topic of spirituality in the workplace.

**THE LEADERSHIP WISDOM** of Jesus: Practical Lessons for Today. That title alone is sure to stir up a host of opinions and make lasting impressions on the minds of potential readers. Chances are, and depending on their religious experiences, readers will decide whether or not to read the book simply from its title.

I know my reaction was honestly one of concern. Not that I doubted Jesus's wis-

dom and what it could offer today's leaders. Rather, I was concerned that author Charles C. Manz wouldn't be able to present the information from an organizational perspective. In other words, I wondered how the author could use ancient theological teachings that continue to divide many societies to bring people together. My guess was that he used them to justify a position instead.

I also wondered why another business book on this subject was necessary when there are already so many others, like *Jesus CEO: Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership* by Laurie Beth Jones.

But Manz is not a theologian. His experience as a business consultant prompted him to write this book, as well as 16 others. In this revised version of the original, he focuses on the interpersonal approach to leadership excellence as opposed to the visionary approach that similar books take. He believes that a visionary approach emphasizes the charisma of the leader rather than the empowerment of others.

From my own experiences, I've found that both are equally important: Without a vision, people aren't compelled to move, but assisting people to perform at their best also is important. That latter aspect is more difficult to master, says Manz, because it takes time to acquire the interpersonal skills needed to deal with people individually.

Improving interpersonal skills often requires the same kind of reflection and introspection necessary for spiritual growth. (By "spiritual," I'm talking about the expansion beyond our material nature.) Yet, we often think we can't lead in new ways because we are trapped by our personalities. We feel frustrated by the demands of leadership and expect others to learn to work with us.

The information in the book models the spiritual growth process: It begins with personal reflection and moves outward to an examination of readers' interactions with others. Part One is titled "Clean the Mirror Image" and reminds

readers that they cannot fix others, they can only improve themselves.

The second part is about leading with compassion and serves as a crucial transitional chapter. It teaches readers to be compassionate with themselves first. Then, they can outwardly express it toward others as they help them develop new skills.

The final sections deal with leading others to be their best and the ability to mix love and faith. Manz applies the notions to the workplace by asserting that it takes patience and faith for our plans as a leader to become a reality.

The concepts in each chapter are presented in a logical structure. First, the author cites a biblical quote from the New Testament. Then, he provides relevant examples that illustrate how the quote applies to the workplace. Each chapter ends with a statement by Manz that concisely summarizes the concepts taught.

For example, the chapter titled, "The Golden Rule and Beyond" begins with the well-known passage from Matthew 7:1, "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you."

Next is this explanation:

"The Golden Rule is probably the most powerful human relations strategy in the history of the world. And although it has been around for thousands of years and was prescribed by other spiritual leaders such a Confucius and the Buddha well before Jesus prescribed it, it is still a sound principle today. The aim of treating people as we would like to be treated is to honor others as inherently valuable (spiritual) beings and as miraculous unique creations, no matter how seemingly imperfect and unworthy they are in their humanity. Each person is one of a kind. There are no duplicates."

The relevant workplace example Manz draws upon is Southwest Airlines co-founder Herb Kelleher when he was CEO. Kelleher made it a priority to learn employees' names, and he would chip in and work alongside of them when needed. As a payback, employees pooled

together their own money and ran an ad in the USA Today recognizing him on Boss's Day for being a friend, not just a boss. Manz concludes the chapter with this statement: "The Golden Rule is a priceless guide for leadership."

As I read through the short and tightly written chapters, my initial doubts began to fade. The author incorporated the ancient text with finesse and used practical work-

place examples for the teachings of Jesus. I invite readers to look beyond their religious experiences and read its simple, yet powerful words. I give it three full cups of coffee.

*The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus: Practical Lessons for Today*, Second Edition, by Charles C. Manz. Berrett-Koehler: San Francisco. 150 pp. \$20.

**Deanne Bryce** is principal of LeaderStrength Systems in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. She is the author of ReaderStrength, a monthly e-zine featuring reviews of current leadership books; www.leaderstrength.com; dbryce@leaderstrength.com.

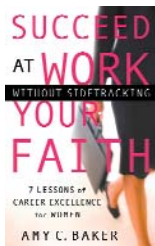
Send books for possible review to **Books, T+D**, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043; books@astd.org.

## Personal Jesus

**T+D** editors describe three new niche-themed, Christian-based books.

### Succeed at Work Without Sidetracking Your Faith: Seven Lessons of Career Excellence for Women

By Amy C. Baker  
(New Hope Publishers,  
January 2006, \$17.99)



Citing stories and advice from hers and other's personal experiences, and then relating them to biblical principles, author Amy Baker challenges her female readers to do something about their dissatisfaction at work. She says that by using their natural talents, applying divinely inspired attitudes, and approaching work from a bigger perspective, readers can affect their success, satisfaction, and impact levels.

Each of the seven chapters of the book are based on these lessons:

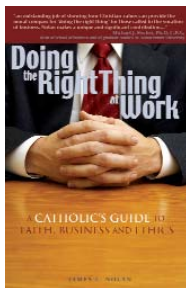
- Career planning is our job, even if it's not on our job description.
- Organizational politics exist in every company.
- There's always a customer.
- You are not defined by the title on your business card.
- Mentoring can be magical, but not manufactured.
- There's no such thing as too much integrity.
- Your work impacts the Kingdom of God.

In addition, each chapter ends with an assignment. Some simply require thought, others need real action, but all are designed to challenge assumptions and foster new behaviors.

—Josephine Rossi

### Doing the Right Thing at Work: A Catholic's Guide to Faith, Business, and Ethics

By James L. Nolan  
(Saint Anthony Messenger Press,  
December 2005, \$12.95)



Author James Nolan found inspiration to write this book from his association with the Woodstock Business Conference, a peer ministry group whose members strive to understand their vocations in the

marketplace. Nolan draws from their experiences at work, the challenges they met, and their quests to always do the right thing. And while the book is based upon the teachings of the Christian gospel and Catholic faith, he says that the desire to do the right thing is innate to all people, regardless of their world views, governing philosophies, or religious traditions.

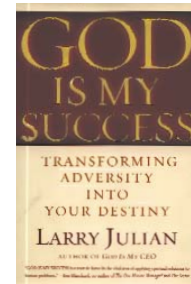
Chapter seven contains a five-point program that helps readers identify and better understand what drives people in the workplace and what motivates a person to do good. Nolan calls on readers to examine their own level of self-awareness, expand their horizons, engage with others, build community,

and incorporate prayer into their daily lives and workplaces.

—Josephine Rossi

### God is My Success: Transforming Adversity Into Your Destiny

By Larry Julian  
(Warner Faith Hardcover,  
October 2005, \$19.99)



This book, written by the author of the nationally acclaimed business book *God is My CEO*, reveals that God doesn't promise a life free of problems and misfortunes, but instead promises to be with

us in our adversity.

Structured for readers facing tough times, the publication points out five internal obstacles that sabotage efforts and become road blocks to success. They are

- pain
- financial slavery
- lack of confidence
- distractions
- fear and worry.

Each of the eight chapters is designed as a self-paced personal training and coaching module that prompts readers to discover those roadblocks in their lives and offers practical life applications to help overcome them. The book includes firsthand accounts from a sports star, pastor, CEO, and radio personality about their personal struggles with these issues. The book also has group discussion questions and scripture.

—Paula Ketter