

“The Beatitudes -- the “blessed are” verses at the beginning of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount -- point to a way of life that is so at odds with secular values that many are tempted to dismiss them as useful only to the would-be saint, not the ordinary person slogging it out in the real world. Not true, Dan Ebener demonstrates in *Blessings for Leaders*. Not only can these eight simple Gospel guidelines prove life-saving in anyone’s daily life, but they are especially valuable to Christians in leadership positions.”

- Jim Forest, author of *Ladder of the Beatitudes*

"Dan leads the reader on a brief stroll through Jesus' core teachings in the Beatitudes to unveil a rich treasure of insight, wisdom, guidance and encouragement for leaders in every walk of life. This wonderful, biblically-inspired guide will be a valuable resource for everyone who wants Jesus to be their leadership guide and teacher."

-Owen Phelps, Ph.D.

Director, Yeshua Catholic International Leadership Institute

“Blessings for Leaders is an amazing book written for everyone who wishes to energize their faith and practice real leadership. Dan’s book makes leadership very do-able!”

-Clyde Mayfield, Owner
Greatest Grains on Earth
Davenport, Iowa

“Blessings for Leaders is truly inspiring reading for those of us who are hungering for more profound leadership growth. Using the life and words of Jesus, Dan illustrates how we can pursue our missions in life while we effectively and authentically impact the world around us.”

-Marty Kurtz, CEO,
The Planning Center, Inc., Moline, Illinois and
2012 Chair, The Financial Planning Association

“Blessings for Leaders is a straight-forward account of how leaders can learn from the wisdom of Jesus. Dan provides insight into the daily challenges of leadership.”

-Cheryl Goodwin, CEO

Family Resources, Inc., a regional not-for-profit serving the Quad Cities of Iowa and Illinois

Blessings for Leaders Connects Beatitudes to Leadership

By Jeff Korgen

There are a lot of books published today about helping leaders become more effective, and a lot of resources available to help Christian disciples become more authentic. St. Ambrose University management professor Dan Ebener has written the rare book that puts it all together – *Blessings for Leaders: Leadership Wisdom from the Beatitudes* (Liturgical Press, 2012). *Blessings for Leaders* invites Christian leaders to reflect on the context and content of the Sermon on the Mount and its most memorable element – the Beatitudes.

Early on, Ebener makes the case that the Beatitudes were part of a *leadership discourse*. Jesus had left the crowds behind – the “Come and see!” event was over. He retreated to the mountain with his disciples and sat down, the position of formal teaching at the time, to give a lesson in leadership for the disciples who would later carry his message proclaiming the reign of God far and wide. Ebener believes that the words that followed still have resonance for leaders today – helping us stay true to Christ’s message and effectively build his Kingdom.

Each chapter of the book takes one of the eight Beatitudes and develops its implications for leadership. Ebener illustrates these points with examples from his personal life, career in social ministry, and case studies of small businesses. He convincingly argues that the Beatitudes are “leadership wisdom,” not a guide for everyday life, like the Ten Commandments.

Each Beatitude therefore touches on a different dimension of leadership:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit” calls forth the virtue of humility. Good leaders know who they are and who God is – and never confuse the two.

“Blessed are those who mourn” points to a leader’s capacity to connect with the suffering of other people. Ebener notes that this ability goes beyond individual connections. The best Christian leaders help communities grow through “collective mourning” of group loss, as, for example, an effective pastor ministers to members of a merged parish.

“Blessed are the meek” evokes the servant-leader’s unity of strength and gentleness. Ebener also underscores the “meek” leader’s ability to take blame for failure and give away credit for success.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” speaks to the integrity of the leader and her commitment to justice in personal and community relationships. Right-relationships build the credibility and therefore the trustworthiness of the leader.

“Blessed are the merciful” refers to the leader’s capacity for empathy and his ability to act on it. Merciful leaders forgive mistakes and show their followers the right path to follow.

“Blessed are the pure in heart” zeroes in on the motivations of the leader. Is leadership about experiencing power, ruling over others, working out personal issues, etc., or about serving a mission?

“Blessed are the peacemakers” highlights the importance of peacemaking, in its truest sense. Peace is not “artificial harmony” or even the absence of conflict—peace is the *resolution* of conflicts. A Christian leader is a peacemaker.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness” speaks to the need for Christian leaders to speak the truth—even when it’s inconvenient, countercultural, or otherwise frowned upon by others.

Each of these Beatitudes, along with Ebener’s insightful commentary, represents a piece of the truth of what it means to be a Christian leader. Any Catholic leader, from priests to deacons, religious, lay ecclesial ministers and lay leaders in parishes, will find this book to be a valuable touchstone.