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Applying Nehemiah's Leadership Characteristics in the Business World Today

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SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL

This Honors thesis entitled

**“Applying Nehemiah’s Leadership Characteristics in the
Business World Today”**

written by

Amanda Abbud

and submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for completion of
the Carl Goodson Honors Program
meets the criteria for acceptance
and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

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Applying Nehemiah's Leadership Characteristics in the Business World Today

A Research Paper on Nehemiah's Leadership Traits

By

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Honors Thesis

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Abstract

As a Business major interested in Biblical studies, I studied leadership skills found in the biblical book of Nehemiah. My research involved identifying key leadership characteristics from Nehemiah's life, then comparing and contrasting these characteristics with books such as *Hand Me Another Brick* by Charles R. Swindoll and *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader* by John C. Maxwell. Also, I gathered information from New American Commentaries *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther* by Leslie Allen, and *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther* by Mervin Breneman.

Nehemiah's Top Leadership Characteristics

- I. Overcoming Opposition
- II. Trust in God
- III. Perseverance
- IV. Servant Leadership

Introduction

Almost every individual in the world today, has the opportunity to be a leader at some point in his or her life. Whether he or she is in a high leadership position over a vast number of individuals, or in a lower leadership position over a few individuals, having the right qualities and characteristics to be a morally sound leader is not only important but vital. Recently business professionals have been criticized for being money driven people who will cut corners to do whatever it takes to maximize profits. However, I believe that this is not true for the majority of business leaders. Therefore, I decided to conduct this study in order to learn how to enter the business world as a Christian with the biblical characteristics I will need to succeed. I hope to use what I have learned to become a leader that others desire to follow, while pointing them to Christ and following God as the most important leader of my life.

In the Old Testament, God gives us a clear picture of a godly man with remarkable leadership traits. The Book of Nehemiah is the last historical book of the Old Testament and is a Narrative History, with Nehemiah being the primary author. The events of the book take place in the Persian city of Susa in around the year 444 B.C. and the account concludes around the year 430 B.C. Key characters in the book include Nehemiah, Ezra, Sanballat, and Tobiah. The story's main theme is centered on the exile of the Jewish community with Nehemiah recording the reconstruction of the wall of Jerusalem, as Judah's capital city. Ezra, serves as the spiritual leader of the people and Nehemiah serves as the primary political leader, working together to rebuild the wall and restore the homeland of the Jews after the Babylonian captivity. The whole Jewish community thinks that God will restore them when they get back to the Holy Land. When this does not happen, people feel like God started the renewal but then had suddenly

stopped it whenever they entered the land. The city of Jerusalem remained in ruins for many years.

The book begins by telling the reader about Nehemiah's current occupation, which is cupbearer to Artaxerxes, King of Persia. Nehemiah feels called to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city. Since Nehemiah is a good servant who pleases the king, King Artaxerxes allows Nehemiah to leave his post in Persia to go back to his homeland. Not only did King Artaxerxes agree to let him go, he also provides Nehemiah with all the supplies and materials he needs for the journey. When Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem surprisingly he does not immediately begin to rebuild the wall but takes time to carefully inspect the wall to ensure he will get the task completed in the most effective manner. Nehemiah then assembles a citywide reconstruction team and begins to lead and direct the project. This project involves having each Hebrew family working on a section of the wall that is directly in front of their house. This gives them a purpose and passion to complete their assigned portion of the wall. With all the hard work and skillful organization and motivation, the wall is amazingly completed in fifty-two days. Once the wall is restored, Nehemiah put all his focus on repopulating Jerusalem, and Ezra begins to lead the Jews in renewal ceremonies and public teachings of the Law. The two leaders work together to restore the people and complete the mission that the Lord has given to them.

When thinking about leadership in the business world, many professionals will turn to the man known as America's foremost on leadership, John C. Maxwell. Born into a Christian home, Maxwell followed his father's footsteps into ministry, leading churches all over the country. He served as a senior pastor for a number of years before applying himself to speaking and writing full time. However, in 2004 Maxwell decided to return to congregational ministry as a teaching pastor. Maxwell is not only a well-respected Christian pastor, but he is also respected in the

business world for being the founder of INJOY Group, which is a company devoted to helping people grow their potential in personal and leadership opportunities. Having written twenty-four books, one that stands out for leadership traits is *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*. This book identifies the key leadership qualities that a great leader must develop. According to Maxwell, these qualities are the following character, charisma, commitment, communication, competence, courage, discernment, focus, generosity, initiative, listening, passion, positive attitude, problem solving, relationships, responsibility, security, self-discipline, servant-hood, teach-ability, and vision. This book demonstrates that character is the key to changing yourself from a person who merely comprehends leadership to an individual who is able to successfully lead in the real world. Maxwell says, "Part of any leader's development comes from learning the laws of leadership, for those are the tools that teach how leadership works. But leaders are effective because of who they are on the inside. To go to the highest level of leadership, you must develop these character qualities from the inside out." Maxwell developed a book that was engaging and easy to read while being designed for careful study and application. He intends for his readers to reflect on this book over a long period of time, so that they would not simply skim through it, but take each characteristic and focus on it and to then apply it to their lives. To develop into the kind of leader you desire to be on the outside, one has to first and foremost become that leader on the inside. Dr. Maxwell states, "If you are able to do that, you'll find there's nothing in this world you cannot do."

Nehemiah's Top Leadership Characteristics

I. Overcoming Opposition

Throughout the Book of Nehemiah there are various moments when Nehemiah is faced with great opposition, but in each case he faces that opposition with even greater perseverance. Stephen Dray states in "Nehemiah: An Applied Overview," "The best time to discourage anyone who has resolved to do something is immediately after they have decided on the new course of action and when the initial excitement has begun to wane" (67). This is seen perfectly in chapter four of the book, which displays oppression when the project of building the wall is underway and causes the enemy, Sanballat, to become more worried and angry. Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the people of Ashdod came together to fight against Jerusalem and cause chaos. However, Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem learn about this plot and prayed to God for safety. Nehemiah then arranged the people for battle, having half the individuals work on the wall while the other half stood alert for combat. It is important for leaders to not allow hardships to become a distraction, but rather to pray that the Lord will assist, and to focus on the ultimate plan while continuing the work (Maciariello, 403).

Chapter six shows a different kind of hostility that Nehemiah had to encounter. At the beginning of this chapter Nehemiah is able to quickly recognize the trap set out for him, which displays his attentiveness as a leader. The enemies sent various messages to Nehemiah in order to try to lure him into meeting with them, but he knew that their intentions were to harm him and to disrupt the progress of the wall. In *The New American Commentary: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, Mervin Beneman states, "In any great work of God the leaders are strategic; the enemy, whether human or satanic, will try to cause the leader to fall, lose credibility, or disappear altogether. Leadership always involves stress" (210). Stress is the brain and body's reaction to burdens and

pressures that can influence humans in different ways. It affects everyone and can be caused in various ways, such as numerous daily requests, a sudden negative change, or a traumatic event. It is common for leaders to feel stressed because of an overwhelming number of demands. However, not all stress is bad sometimes it can motivate leaders as it did for Nehemiah. When Nehemiah's enemies' initial attempts were not successful, they tried to ruin his credibility. The opposition takes a new role by trying to create doubt in the minds of the Jews', but despite this personal attack, Nehemiah stands strong and relies upon the Lord's encouragement (Maciariello, 403). It is common for enemies to try to cause a leader to fall by discrediting them, so it is important to follow the example of Nehemiah and continue to work hard at our task and know the Lord will take care of the outcome (Breneman, 212).

The people were becoming weary of the work involved in rebuilding the wall, but Nehemiah prayed that God would give them the strength to complete this task. By persevering through these events, the wall of Jerusalem was completed in fifty-two days and Nehemiah was not harmed.

Charles R. Swindoll, author of the novel *Hand Me Another Brick*, gives insight into how Nehemiah approached opposition in two ways. First, he gave his obstacles to God through prayer; and secondly, he persisted no matter the opposition (Swindoll, 76). To be a competent leader in times of opposition, you have to be able to encourage your people and keep them focused on the ultimate goal. As Swindoll explains, this focus is so important because "Nothing excites Satan or the critic more than for his negativism to result in a slowdown of progress. The easiest thing to do when one is criticized is to give up" (77). As seen in the entire book, Nehemiah inspires his people to keep working and not give up. God desires his people to have a complete trust in him; however, this does not mean that Christians do not have to work hard and

strive through difficulties. Rather, as Christians we need to remember what the Son of God has said in John 16:33, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Troubles are inevitable whether you are a Christian or not, but what shows your true character is how you react to whatever the world throws at you. Nehemiah is a prime example of how a Christian leader perseveres through opposition and encourages his followers to persevere alongside him.

Through these examples, Nehemiah proved to be a very competent leader. In *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, one of John C. Maxwell’s key leadership traits is competence. “Competence goes beyond words. It’s the leader’s ability to say it, plan it, and do it in such a way that others know that you know how – and know that they want to follow you” (30). It is clear that Nehemiah displayed this trait by the Jews’ willingness to follow him because they knew that he had a carefully laid out plan. Focus is also a trait that successful Christian leaders develop. Nehemiah had a strong focus, even though numerous distractions were constantly being thrown at him. Maxwell splits up how a leader should focus his or her time and energy in order to be used most beneficially. He writes, “Focus 70 Percent on Strengths,” because by doing this, individuals can develop and improve their strengths (54). Next, “Focus 25 Percent on New Things,” to be able to change and grow as a leader and then help your followers grow in their strengths (54). Lastly, “Focus 5 Percent on Areas of Weakness,” since it is impossible for anyone to completely avoid his or her weaknesses, it is necessary for leaders to work on these areas to lessen how the weakness affects the organization (Maxwell, 54). Focusing on weaknesses can prove difficult for individuals, but if leaders are able to differentiate their strengths from their weaknesses this can be extremely beneficial for any team, business, or organization. It is often thought that in order to be what society considers

a good leader, a person must have every trait from time management, to organization, to public speaking, etc. However, I have found that this is not entirely true. A leader that is talented in all areas is exceptionally remarkable, but individuals with such diversity are rare. Therefore, leaders who can discern their areas of weakness and are able to declare where they need assistance can create an outstanding organization. By delegating projects to fellow colleagues, the talents of each individual are put into play.

Another leadership trait that Maxwell emphasizes is having a positive attitude. Every individual's attitude is not only a choice, but also determines his or her daily actions (91). We see this through Nehemiah, because if he had allowed the opposition to affect his attitude, the whole project would have spiraled downhill and resulted in failure. This is the inevitable result when followers are influenced negatively by their leader's actions and attitude, and a leader's attitude is greatly influenced by his or her thoughts. Proverbs 4:23 states, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." This short statement is a reminder that inner feelings and thoughts have an impact on everything a person does. God wants his people to guard their thoughts, and when difficult times surface he desires to change their thoughts rather than their circumstances. Even though everything starts with thoughts and individuals' lives are shaped by them, Christian leaders should not be led by their feelings, but by their faith. When challenged with focusing on feelings one should heed, Philippians 4:8, which reads, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."

The last trait that showed perseverance was that of problem solving. Nehemiah had his fair share of problems, but as Maxwell notes concerning good leaders, Nehemiah handled his

problems in the way that is indicative of successful leaders. A leader does not allow the problem to get in the way of the major goal but accepts the reality of problems and is prepared when one occurs (98-100).

When faced with opposition, many times individuals want to give in and give up, but through the qualities that we see demonstrated within Nehemiah's life and ministry, we realize that through perseverance it is possible to overcome the obstacles and continue on to the greater goal.

II. Trust in God

Nehemiah's mission of building the wall and repopulating the city of Jerusalem would have been vastly different if he had not put his complete trust in God in every situation. One distinctive quality that shows Nehemiah's reliance on the Lord is his immediate and meaningful prayers. Whenever he is confronted with an important decision he first goes to God in prayer. These prayers are often documented to suggest that they are short, quick prayers; however, through them one can see Nehemiah's deep and close relationship with the Lord. It also suggests that he desired to have total guidance from his Heavenly Father. This type of prayer is achievable and effective if the individual has been previously dedicated in prayer and then uses these short prayers to focus on God's will at the moment (Breneman, 176). One example of this type of prayer is found in Nehemiah chapter two, verses four through five, where Nehemiah says, "The king said to me, 'What is it you want?' Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and answered the king, 'If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city of Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.'" (NIV) This passage reveals that before Nehemiah answered the king with his request, he prayed for the wisdom needed to respond.

Later, in verse eight, it is seen that after asking the king for all the resources he would need to make the trip, Nehemiah gave all credit and glory to the Lord knowing that it was not by human hand, but solely through God's grace that he received all that he needed (NIV). To individuals of less faith, the requests would have seemed highly impossible to achieve. Even though Nehemiah acted and thought in a realistic manner, he knew what the Lord was capable of achieving. Stephen Dray reminds us that

We need to learn that when our desires accord with that of the 'God of heaven' we should not doubt but remember that we are in the hands of one who can turn the heart even of kings.

Though God may seem to delay we are not to be discouraged but wait, plan and pray patiently for God to accomplish his promises. Then when he does answer we shall be ready and waiting... (Dray, 67).

In *Hand Me Another Brick*, Swindoll shares four specific reasons as to why it is imperative for an individual in leadership to make prayer a central factor in his or her life. The first reason is that prayer builds patience. When a leader decides to stop working and begins praying about the situation, this focuses his or her attention on God rather than on the situation. It also forces him or her to give the situation to God and allow God to be in control of it. Secondly, praying lets a leader develop a clearer understanding of the situation. It helps leaders see the problem from God's viewpoint. The third reason is that prayer relieves anxiety and worry over whatever is troubling the leader. Lastly, if leaders pray about a problem it deepens their faith, dependency, and trust in God (Swindoll, 41). Swindoll states, "Nehemiah was quick to call for help. His favorite position when faced with problems was the kneeling position. How about you?" (Swindoll, 42).

John C. Maxwell ties in trusting in God in *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*. A leader must have discernment in order to know what to do when faced with an issue. Godly leaders cannot be afraid of problems. Maxwell states, "Smart leaders believe only half of what they hear. Discerning leaders know *which* half to believe" (44). Another key trait that Maxwell emphasizes is that of being a generous leader. Generosity seems like an easy trait to have, but when pressed with different financial obligations it can become extremely difficult to keep trusting that the Lord will provide when these responsibilities seem too difficult to keep up with. Maxwell gives a list to follow to become a leader that gathers things for others rather than for himself.

1. "Be Grateful for Whatever You Have" - In order to be generous, you first have to be content with what you already have (61).
2. "Put People First" - Generosity not only has to be in the form of money but can importantly be expressed by simply putting others first. This can be shown through giving others your time and attention whenever it is needed (62).
3. "Don't Allow the Desire for Possessions to Control You" - Having a strong desire to own and control many earthly items gives these things the power to govern your thoughts, which may then control your actions (62).
4. "Regard Money as a Resource" - Money can be a great resource; however, it can also easily become a horrific ruler. As your money increases or decreases it is vital to use it as a resource, but not allow it to become a priority in your life (62).
5. "Develop the Habit of Giving" - Giving can be hard, so people should set a goal to start giving and start giving now. Leaders cannot form a healthy habit if they never decide to finally step up and start today (63).

Individuals in leadership positions will be encountered with various hard moments during their time as a leader. This can either make or break the leader and one of the main factors is where he or she places trust. Those who put their trust in earthly items will never be able to truly be fulfilled, but leaders who focus on God will never be let down.

III. Perseverance

Nehemiah serves as an illustration of a leader striving for success no matter the circumstance. Early in chapter two, we see this perseverance as Nehemiah is carefully planning all the details for the rebuilding of the wall. He does not wait until it might be too late to organize the materials, but instead thinks ahead to ensure that everything in the project moves smoothly and is ultimately successful. After the completion of the wall, Nehemiah does not take a break and reward himself for a job well done, but immediately focuses on other matters that need to be done. Mervin Breneman states, "He also continued strong leadership after the building project was finished. He realized that a great success can still be followed by a great failure. He had apparently also not allowed his focus to be on the project instead of on the Lord" (215). This shows Nehemiah's character and his willingness to do the work that God has for him. At the end of the book the people begin to have numerous problems again, and Nehemiah shows how important it is to have continual reform. If a leader is not pushing his or her followers to grow and improve, they will not only be at a standstill but also will start to lose interest and decline. Stephan Dray says that godly men and women are not content when they achieve a goal, but they know that faithful work must continue to advance (Dray, 68).

Charles R. Swindoll explained how Nehemiah faced impossible circumstances, but continued to be a God-fearing leader through them all. He had to face the hardship of being physically far away from Jerusalem and the people he cared about. Along with that distance, he was under the rule of an unbelieving boss, who had complete control of his life. Nehemiah had to act in such a way that would be respectful to his boss, but not sacrifice his faith. Nehemiah also displayed a unique trait that is important for leaders to follow. When

Nehemiah was commanded with various tasks, he would not rush into them, but would take the time to consider what the best way to act was. Lastly, against all odds Nehemiah was able to go and fulfill what the Lord required of him (30).

Through all of these circumstances, Nehemiah had to face discouragement, and Swindoll gives five techniques for how he was able to deal with it. First, Nehemiah encouraged the people to come together to realize that they had the same goal and together they could achieve it more efficiently than on their own. As the work was getting more difficult and the people were growing weary, Nehemiah led them to focus their attention on the Lord and to rely on Him for strength. He also shared with the people that they needed to keep stability in their thoughts and actions. Although God is all powerful, He directs us to stand and fight for our faith in times of hardship. Next Nehemiah brings the people together as a supporting group, so that when they have to face a fight, they are not fighting alone. Lastly, Nehemiah overcame the discouragement by not only being a servant to the people but also teaching them to be servant leaders as well (89-95). Through these practices, Nehemiah and the people were able to fight discouragement and reach their goal.

In *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, there are various qualities that relate closely to the type of perseverance we have seen in Nehemiah. Three qualities that especially stand out are commitment, courage, and passion. If you want people to follow you as a leader, then your personal commitment is essential. Maxwell gives three thoughts that display the true nature of commitment, with the first being that a truly committed leader has his or her heart fully invested in the goal. If you wish to have the project all lined out and perfect before you are willing to commit to it, you find yourself without anyone to lead. "Commitment always precedes achievement," states Maxwell (19). In addition to

commitment, another quality of successful leaders is courage. Although this characteristic may be desirable to many, when it comes down to it, it is more difficult to achieve because in order to be courageous you must face something you are terrified of. Courageous leaders must be willing to risk what they have in order to reach their ultimate goal (40). When you encounter a leader who is truly passionate about a vision or goal that passion becomes contagious. Seeing a truly passionate person can push others to want to join the cause. Maxwell explains, “When a leader reaches out in passion, he is usually met with an answering passion” (81).

IV. Servant Leadership

One extremely important quality that Nehemiah possesses is servant leadership.

Nehemiah did not take the role of a commanding leader, but instead led the people through his actions. His motives were set to benefit others and please the Lord, not himself. In chapter two we see that Nehemiah started as a noble servant to the king, and as his position changed he kept that servant attitude no matter what he was doing. Chapter five verse sixteen, tells us that Nehemiah was devoted to this project even if it was at a personal expense. He was not in it for a financial gain, but to do what the Lord had asked of him. In the article "Lessons in Leadership and Management from Nehemiah" Joseph Maciariello explains that being a servant leader is out of the ordinary for humans since we live in a broken world. Being able act like a servant takes true focus on our part while God's part is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (399).

To show how important servant leadership is, Charles R. Swindoll begins *Hand Me Another Brick* by stating, "Being a leader is an enviable calling. It appears glamorous and glorious – but it is more often lonely and thankless. As we shall see, the best leaders are actually servants." (Swindoll, xii). If followers feel like their leader wants what is best for them, it gives them an added motive to work hard to achieve the outcome. Swindoll emphasizes how being in a leadership position is more about being an influencer than it is about bossing others around. Being able to influence others is about bettering individuals in their overall character, behavior, and development (16). Being focused on the well-being of your followers will not only improve them, but will also benefit you, the leader. Maxwell recognizes how difficult it is for people to handle advancement and says, "The right kind of leaders, when promoted, know how to handle the honor" (Maxwell, 113). When promoted

we do not need to exalt ourselves, but we should remember instead that the achievement was given to us by God and give him all of the glory.

Servant leaders have countless godly traits that make them the type of individuals that people respect and admire. This truth is echoed in *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, as one of the qualities Maxwell gives is servanthood. He begins this section by stating, “You’ve got to love your people more than your position” (133). This sentence although short and simple, accurately describes the servant leadership we have seen in Nehemiah’s life and work. Maxwell shares what it takes to be a true servant leader.

1. “Puts Others Ahead of His Own Agenda” - By doing this you show others that you care about their needs and desires above your own (136).
2. “Possesses the Confidence to Serve” - How we serve others is based on how we feel on the inside and in order to treat others well we need to be confident in who we are (136).
3. “Initiates Service to Others” - Humans will normally work if they are ordered to, but the way to differentiate a servant leader is that he or she sees a service opportunity and takes it without hesitation and without expecting a reward in return (137).
4. “Is Not Position-Conscious” - When it comes to getting the job done, a person’s rank or position does not matter. What does matter is their work ethic and their dedication (137).
5. “Serves Out of Love” - Considering all the traits, arguably the most important is that a genuine servant leader does everything out of love for those he or she is serving (137).

There are various types of leaders in all different organizations that lead in unique ways, but a leader with a servant's heart is normally the type of person that others want to follow. Nehemiah was able to achieve the goal God gave him with the help of others. Through his actions he showed the people that he not only wanted what was best for them but also deeply and sincerely loved them.

Business Application

Through these top four leadership characteristics and the qualities found in *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, it is inspirational to see what a remarkable leader Nehemiah was. Upon studying these behaviors, it can seem impossible to be able to develop them in one's own life in order to become an extraordinary leader like Nehemiah. However, Austin Samuelson found a way to be a Nehemiah type Christian leader in today's business world. Austin and Ashton Samuelson are the founders of Tacos 4 Life restaurants. After graduating from Ouachita Baptist University, they moved to Los Angeles, California, where Austin worked in real estate and Ashton taught at a private Christian school. While in southern California, Austin and Ashton heard the statistic of how many kids were dying of starvation a day and the horrifying number greatly bothered them both.

After moving back to Arkansas, Austin knew that he wanted to find a way to do something about this problem and God helped him find a way to do that. The couple opened Pizza 42 in Conway, Arkansas, which has now evolved into Tacos 4 Life. The Samuelsons have created a successful business that is not only focused on their customers, but more importantly on God and their purpose of feeding as many kids as possible. Although it has not been easy, Austin shared that all businesses have to endure difficult times of uncertainty and risk. This uncertainty pushed Austin and Ashton closer to God, causing them to put their trust in the Lord and take one faith step after the other in order to keep moving forward. After reflecting on his personal journey Austin said, "God's word is a light unto our feet, not a spotlight that you can see far ahead but one step at a time. You have to have trust to take that one step without knowing what's ahead (2017)."

Tacos 4 Life practices servant leadership by flipping the leadership pyramid upside down. Ironically, this put Austin, the President of the company, at the bottom of the pyramid. Austin's goal is to help Tacos 4 Life managers be successful, so that they can then work to make those they lead be successful and so on. The main goal is to do what you can to help the person you lead be successful. By being a servant leader, it demonstrates to your followers that everything points upward to God, rather than to yourself. The Samuelson's business is centered on God with the purpose of feeding starving kids so that they can be enriched by God's love. Everything the staff does is focused on sharing God's love.

Austin and Ashton have undergone many trials but have continued with perseverance and will continue to endure whatever is thrown at them. When asked what advice Austin would give to those entering the business world as Christian leaders, he stated, "Work hard and with excellence so that people want you on their team. Do not give Christians a bad name, but instead love people well and make them wonder what makes you so kind (2017)." Even though it is easy to be influenced and fearful of what others think of you, it is not what you say that will impact those around you the most, rather it is how you live in the business environment. Actions ultimately speak louder than words and it is often easier to follow a leader who is leading by example. Austin said, "Remember that everything points back to God. As individuals we are all created differently, to go into different fields and we should use what he has called us to do to glorify God. We need to strive to be excellent in what we do to honor God and those around us. Anyone can use work to worship (2017)." And ultimately, that is what Tacos 4 Life is for the Samuelsons, it is an opportunity to worship and serve God through their business.

Conclusion

Being a successful leader or even an individual that others desire to follow is something many people aspire to achieve. Even though it may seem difficult to attain this quality, with a hard-working spirit and a dedicated heart, anyone can reach this goal. Charles R. Swindoll describes three traits that will assist an individual in becoming this type of unique leader. First, becoming a leader takes time, time to be able to truly understand and comprehend what is occurring. Next, it is vastly important to be around the right people since those you associate with influence who you really are. Finally, a unique leader has the right attitude by having an open mind and a willingness to learn (154). In addition to these three traits, one needs to understand that there will be bumps in the road, as seen in Nehemiah's story, but unlike unsuccessful leaders, successful leaders stay focused on the goal. Have confidence in your journey because God is on that bumpy road right beside you every step of the way.

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