

7 Must-Have Skills of Highly Effective Godly Leaders

Ron Kelleher

In my years working with executives, I found that only a few were as effective as they thought they were. And sadly, many of the Christian leaders were not as Godly as they pretended to be. The issue among Christian leaders is that many compromised their beliefs to be viewed as more effective.

Why do some leaders think to be highly effective in today's secular business world, they cannot also stand for God? Is being highly effective and Godly as a leader a mutually exclusive concept? I got my answer this week as I was reading the story of Daniel. Recall, as a teenager, Daniel was captured and exiled to Babylon along with thousands of other Israelites. Over time, Daniel rose to prominence, serving not one but four rulers.

How could Daniel serve four pagan rulers effectively, yet also remain true to his faith? What was his secret? The answer lies in seven must-have skills Daniel demonstrated that, taken together, made Daniel not only effective as a leader but also Godly!

Here they are, seven must-have skills for effective, Godly leaders gleaned from Daniel and his friends while captive in Babylon.

1. Leaders Must Not Compromise to Get Ahead

In chapter 1 of Daniel, we see Daniel and his friends refusing to eat the king's rich food, asking instead for a simple diet. By honoring God in their diet, they set an example for the Israelite exiles. As a result, God gave Daniel and his friends physical health and superior intellect and wisdom.

2. Leaders Must Depend on God

In chapter 2 of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that no one could interpret. In anger, Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the astrologers and wise men killed unless one came forward to interpret his dream.

Daniel stepped forward, asking the king for time to interpret the dream. Daniel depended on God to provide the interpretation. The next day Daniel delivered the interpretation of the dream to Nebuchadnezzar. In doing so, Daniel took no credit for himself but gave God credit for the power to interpret the dream.

3. Leaders Must Remain Faithful to God in Difficult Situations

In chapter 3 of Daniel, the king makes a gold statue and orders everyone to bow down and worship the golden statue. The punishment for refusal was death in the fiery

furnace. Daniel's friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow to the statue, determined to honor God even in the face of death.

Because of their faithfulness, God saved them from the fire. The result of their faithful witness was King Nebuchadnezzar praised God and promoted the men to a high position in the empire.

4. Leaders Must Care Enough to Speak Truth to Power

In chapter 4 of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar has another dream and needs Daniel to interpret it. The dream demonstrates that God has allowed Nebuchadnezzar to become great, yet he has not repented of his sins and worshipped God. Daniel bravely tells the king to repent or face the consequences of God's judgment.

A similar situation arises in chapter 5. The new king, Belshazzar, dishonors God by desecrating holy vessels taken from the Temple of God. A mysterious message appears on the palace wall that none of the astrologers could interpret, so Daniel was brought before the king. Before he interprets the writing, Daniel lectures the king on his impropriety in not humbling himself before God.

The result of Daniel speaking truth to power was Belshazzar prompted Daniel to the third-highest rank in the entire kingdom.

5. Leaders Must Remember God is in Control

In chapter 6 of Daniel, his enemies conspire to remove him from power by accusing him of being disloyal to King Darius. Darius signed a decree that everyone should pray only to the king for a month. Daniel refused and was thrown into the lion's den as a form of punishment.

God protected Daniel by shutting the mouths of the lions overnight. The king, grateful to find Daniel healthy and unharmed in the morning, threw Daniel's enemies into the lion's den where they died.

6. Leaders Must Empathize with God's People

In chapter 9 of Daniel, he recognizes Israel's people's faithlessness while expressing confidence in God's faithfulness. As the leader of God's people in Babylon, Daniel humbled himself, fasted, and prayed on behalf of the people. On behalf of the people, he asked God to forgive their sins and restore them to Jerusalem.

7. Leaders Must Take the Long View

In chapters 10-12 of Daniel, we see the eternal battle of good and evil being played out on the world's stage. Daniel receives revelations from God, assuring him that the people of Israel who remain faithful will survive this exile and future persecution and invasions. God will vindicate His people and reward them with eternal life while His enemies will receive eternal punishment.

The 7 Must-Have Skills

The skills demonstrated by Daniel and his friends in exile will be must-have skills for any leader who wants to be an effective and Godly leader!

To summarize the must-have skills:

1. We must be leaders who do not compromise our faith to get ahead in the secular world.
2. We must have complete confidence in God and depend on Him and His power in our lives.
3. We must remain faithful to God through every trial, no matter how difficult the situation.
4. We must care enough to speak God's eternal, unchanging truth to power regardless of the consequences.
5. We must remember that God's power is unlimited. He, not us, is in control of every sphere of life.
6. We must care enough about God's people to humble ourselves before God on their behalf.
7. We must take the long view. We are in the world but not of this world. We know God reigns supreme.