

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (Philippians 2: 3–7).

Our church once used the slogan, “Saved to Serve.” This slogan speaks to my personal understanding of my walk with God and how it shapes who I am in all aspects of life, including as a leader.

I profess to be a child of God. I pray each day to be in His will and that through the actions of this body He will be glorified. I work to give all of me back to Him.

The birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus shares God’s love for each of us and also brings great clarity to how we should love each other. Through His great love, God sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. I strive to be the best in all that I do as a husband, father, grandfather, son, sibling, friend, professor, administrator, by dedicating my life to the Father each day. I pray that His will, not mine, be done and that He uses me to share just how good the fruit of the spirit can be in ones’ life.

More specifically, I look at the good in an individual, at the gifts provided to them and begin relationships from this premise. Each relationship is built on a desire to serve others in ways that lead to the sharing of my faith. During this process the depth of my own understanding of God deepens.

My walk with God also informs and controls the way I lead. The role of leadership is indeed one of service. It is working to clear pathways to facilitate the work of others. Christ has provided a pathway leading back to the Father. The Holy Spirit provides guidance along this pathway, for those who seek God’s way. The foundation of my desire for leadership is anchored by service to others and on the goal to provide influence, direction and be a part of a community of believers that leads us to a more fulfilling life. While we can bring personal understanding to what we mean by a more fulfilling life, we know that this life is indeed empty when God is not in the center.

God was in the center of my father’s life. My father’s life has provided me with an earthly model to follow. I will share some brief thoughts of my father in closing.

I wrote something to honor my father when he went home to be with God. This is, in part, what I said. “I don’t know how my father lived his early days. I do not know much about the type of person he was, though I have heard some stories.

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But, I do know the person he became. Galatians 5:22 best describes for me the spirit that shone through this body of Eugene Thomas.”

But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...

My father was a planter and harvester of the seeds of the spirit. He was full of love. My father shared his joy and faith in God with everyone that came around him. He did this not just in words but also in his actions. God used my father in ways that brought glory to Him. My father’s walk with God also brought his family closer to the Lord. Indeed, he helped each of us become planters and harvesters of the seed of the spirit. I hope and pray that the same can be said of me at my home going.

Other individual live by a variety of faiths, based on a religion, science, greed, the desire to win, or just themselves. It is the premise of this book that leadership should be focused on serving others in inclusive ways. Leadership should, as a primary task, help to create pathways that allow others to complete the work at hand and to do so including all voices in the process.

This is the premise that guides the words presented in this book.

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