

Book Review: [Dying to Lead](#) by Carrie Cavanaugh

Having met Rob McKenna, he seems too young to have the abundance of wisdom exhibited in his book, [Dying to Lead: Sacrificial Leadership in a Self-Centered World](#). The theme of servant leadership is nothing new, but Rob manages to sort through all that servant leadership means in an insightful and thought provoking way.

The chapters are relatively short, the perfect length for a busy Christian leader. The substance of the chapters, despite their brevity, are deep. Rob isn't afraid to look at what the Bible teaches about leadership even if it is contrary to what most people think of as strong leadership. Each chapter is concluded by a couple of complementary questions, which make it impossible to simply read through the book without letting it reach down deep inside you and help you examine your real motives, insecurities and dreams. These questions are worth their weight in gold as they will help any reader to be honest with themselves and those under their authority.

Rob exemplifies great wisdom in balancing out the heft of his chapters and supporting questions with an often comical introduction of some sort. Rob has a great sense of humor. But these introductions are just fun and games, they gracefully lead the reader into the topic of the chapter by making some truth evident in the irony of the introduction. Although Rob isn't shy about pointing out how hard it is to lead, he also succeeds in making the process of learning about the biblical model of leadership a fun one.

At the conclusion of the book, Rob has included a simple

survey where you, and others you trust, can rank you on 23 sacrificial leadership characteristics. This is a nice summary of all that the book addressed and a wonderful next step after reading the last page as you start learning about your strengths and weaknesses as a leader. Rob won't allow anyone to get by with being a passive reader of his book!

Rob covers a number of important leadership issues and I'd like to share some of the passages that stood out to me.

If you took the chance to believe that God loves you just the way you are . . . what would you do differently today?

In the forward Rob lays out what he believes it the "key question for you as a leader." He asks, "If you took the chance to believe that God loves you just the way you are, that He sacrificed all for you through His Son's death on the cross, that your every breath matters to Him, and that He is present with you in every moment of your life, what would you do differently today? How would that impact what you do and who you are in the new moment?" I think this is a great question to be asking in a world that asks so much of leaders and spits them out the first mistake they make. I appreciate that Rob addresses the leader as a person, not just a role

because as he admits, a leader could one day find themselves without anyone to lead. What they do then depends on where they find their identity. And as Rob's questions here anticipate, that identity affects your leadership today as well.

Later in the book, Rob explains, "God wants to use you for His purposes in spite of you" (p.32). Rob asserts that all leaders have their limitations and consequently their legitimate doubts. But those things shouldn't hold us back from being what God calls us to be. He points to examples such as Moses, who felt inadequate to speak to Pharaoh, but God had chosen him and proved in the end that He could accomplish great things through him, limitations and all.

In the chapter entitled, "Is God Showing Up", Rob asks, "What if I believed that Jesus Christ was present in each and every moment of my day?" He then lists all the things that constitute his day, including the influential, as well as the mundane and disappointing. Rob admits that it is easier for him to see how God is working in other people's lives, but we need to recognize that every detail of our life is something that God is using for His eternal purpose.

These are just a sampling of the wealth of issues discussed in [Dying to Lead](#). I'd encourage Christian leaders to get a copy and meditate on one chapter a week. And be sure to discuss what you learn and how you live up to the standards laid out with someone you trust.