

**THE ART OF UNCONVENTIONAL LEADERSHIP**  
By Rick Boxx

Leadership. There are many perspectives on what a conventional leader looks like, but years of experience have taught me that if we are serious about living out our faith in today's marketplace, what is required is unconventional leadership. Here are some examples:

**1) Unconventional priorities.** A boss once asked me to sign off on certain legal documents that were illegally modified so our company could collect more money from a customer. For a moment, out of fear of losing my job, I begrudgingly accepted my boss' demand. But then, God's Spirit reminded me that He sees everything, and my loyalty should be to God first.

Even at the risk of losing my job, I told my boss I would not honor his request. He was not happy but respected my stand and never asked me to do anything unethical again.

An Unconventional Leader learns and believes that loyalty to God first, can result in God's favor and wisdom. Proverbs 21:21 teaches, "One who pursues righteousness and loyalty finds life, righteousness, and honor."

**2) Unconventional respect.** In the workplace conflict is inevitable. I have worked in places where leaders raged in anger at others to handle conflict, while others became passive aggressive, never sharing their feelings truthfully. But I have also experienced leaders who have handled conflict well. It usually begins with their mindset and humble heart.

These talented leaders begin with the desire to value, appreciate, and respect the other parties involved, first. Then, these leaders determine what truths need to be shared. Finally, they consider how to deliver that truth clearly, but in love.

An Unconventional Leader believes appreciating and respecting others in truth and love delivers a greater impact. In Ephesians 4:15, the apostle Paul wrote, "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."

**3) Unconventional purpose.** When you ask entrepreneurs why they started their businesses, most will say it was to make money. That's not why Ryan Fee started Camel Culture. While volunteering at a refugee settlement, he and his wife learned what Somali refugees miss the most about their homeland are their camels and their camel's milk. Out of compassion for these refugees, the Fees started a business of selling camel's milk to them. The Fees were surprised by the great demand for their product.

An Unconventional Leader believes that approaching business with a higher purpose in mind results in far more than just profits. Jesus Christ taught, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

There are other examples I could cite, including people who have endured great opposition due to their spiritual convictions. These Unconventional Leaders believe resolve, courage, and a high view of ethics are required to stand against a corrupt and immoral world. They understand

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what Proverbs 10:9 teaches: “Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.”

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### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. If you were to describe the most common approach to business leadership that you have observed, what would that be?
2. From your understanding, is there a significant difference between how the Bible presents leadership and how leadership is typically practiced in the everyday workplace? Explain your answer.
3. What are some of the challenges in attempting to live out biblical principles of leadership in the 21st century workplace?
4. From a practical perspective, what does it mean to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”?

In the next part of that verse, Jesus Christ said, “and all these things will be added to you.” Does this mean if we hold unwavering to biblical principles, success is guaranteed? Why or why not?

### Challenge For This Week

This week might be a good time for some personal soul-searching. Can you think of a time – or times – when you took a stand for what you knew was right, even knowing you might face negative ramifications as a result?

It is said it is best to determine in advance how to respond when confronted with a compromising situation, rather than waiting until a crisis arises and then deciding what to do. Set aside some time this week to meet and pray with a trusted friend (or friends) for the courage to remain true to your faith and biblical principles when difficult circumstances arise.

### NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:  
Daniel 1:8; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Colossians 3:23-24; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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