

MSTAKES LEADERS MAKE DAVF KRAFT

"SHOULD BE REQUIRED READING FOR EVERY MINISTRY LEADER." PATRICK LENCIONI "As I speak and consult with all types of leaders around the world, I personally encounter these mistakes time and time again. The lessons in *Mistakes Leaders Make* are timeless, and this book should be required reading for every ministry leader. Keep it on your desk and read it at least once a year."

Patrick Lencioni, President, The Table Group; best-selling author, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* and *The Advantage*

"Far too often among those with strong theological conviction the idea of 'leadership' is filed under the banner of pragmatism and discarded instead of studied. I am grateful for men like Dave Kraft who hold strong biblical beliefs and still are deeply tapped into the leadership principles that are both biblical and essential for those who have been called to lead and shepherd the people of God as undershepherds. You can make these mistakes yourself or you can learn from those who have made the mistakes and avoid spilling your own blood."

Matt Chandler, Lead Pastor, The Village Church; President, Acts 29 Church Planting Network; author, *The Explicit Gospel*

"Some of our most teachable moments come when we have made a mistake. When we blow it, we are hopefully most vulnerable, most exposed, most humbled, and most teachable. Coach Dave Kraft has devoted his life to helping ministry leaders fully live out their calling and to finish well. Learn from his insights and experiences as you dive into this gem, *Mistakes Leaders Make*. It could provide you with some of the great learning without having to suffer the pain."

Daniel Harkavy, CEO, Building Champions; Founder, Ministry Coaching International; author, *Becoming a Coaching Leader*

"In Mistakes Leaders Make, Dave Kraft tackles the difficult problem at the center of many leadership tangles: the unsettling fact that many leaders don't want to admit that they make mistakes, or at least not serious ones. This book addresses some basic mistakes on a basic level. A lot of leadership teams would profit by reading this together."

Douglas Wilson, Senior Minister, Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho

"'Leaders are born, not made'... not necessarily. Individuals are placed in leadership and, unfortunately, often learn from their mistakes on-the-job. Some would say that experience is knowing you're making the same mistakes again! Allow me to encourage you to read this book so you don't have to learn every lesson the hard way."

Les Steckel, Veteran NFL Coach; Colonel USMCR (Ret.); President, Fellowship of Christian Athletes

"Dave Kraft's heart and passion definitely come out in this book! It's not just a read for your mind, but also your heart. *Mistakes Leaders Make* is not just for American leaders, but for leaders all over the world. It doesn't matter if you are a leader in New York or a leader in a village in a Third World country; the principles that have been written here span all times and cultures. I strongly recommend that this book should be translated into as many languages as possible so that many global leaders can benefit. All leaders either commit these mistakes or are tempted to. As they say, 'Prevention is better than a cure.' By reading this book, young leaders can be prepared to face these challenges and prevent themselves from falling into these same mistakes. If you lead, no matter how or where, this book is a must read!"

Ajai Livingstone Lall, Founder and CEO; Central India Christian Mission; Damoh, India

"Dave Kraft has given leaders a wonderful checklist of key pitfalls that can sneak up on you and destroy your leadership. Go through each area carefully and evaluate which mistake could be a stumbling block for you. Then follow the action steps that can help you walk forward in the leadership that God has called you to. This is a valuable tool for leaders in churches and ministries."

Dennis Blevins, United States Director, Church Discipleship Ministry (A Ministry of The Navigators), Professional Coach Mistakes Leaders Make Copyright © 2012 by Dave Kraft Published by Crossway 1300 Cressent Street Wheaton, Illinois 60187

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided for by USA copyright law.

Page 21: THE WHEEL ILLUSTRATION, © 1976 by The Navigators. Used by permission of NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO (www.navpress.com). All rights reserved.

Cover design: Patrick Mahoney and Matt Naylor

First printing 2012

Printed in the United States of America

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations marked MESSAGE are from The Message. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. The "NIV" and "New International Version" trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica. Use of either trademark requires the permission of Biblica.

Scripture references marked NLT are from The Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1986. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Ill., 60189. All rights reserved.

All emphases in Scripture quotations have been added.

Trade paperback ISBN: 978-1-4335-3249-8 PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-3250-4 Mobipocket ISBN: 978-1-4335-3251-1 ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-3252-8

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kraft, Dave, 1939– Mistakes leaders make / Dave Kraft. p. cm. Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index. ISBN 978-1-4335-3249-8 (tp) 1. Christian leadership. 2. Errors. 3. Fallibility. I. Title. BV652.1.K69 2012 253-dc23 2012007326

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.														
VP	22	21	20	19	1	18	17	16		15	14	1	3	12
15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY MARK DRISCOLL				
INTRODUCTION				
1	ALLOWING MINISTRY TO REPLACE JESUS	17		
2	ALLOWING COMPARING TO REPLACE CONTENTMENT	29		
3	ALLOWING PRIDE TO REPLACE HUMILITY	39		
4	ALLOWING PLEASING PEOPLE TO REPLACE PLEASING GOD	49		
5	ALLOWING BUSYNESS TO REPLACE VISIONING	59		
6	ALLOWING FINANCIAL FRUGALITY TO REPLACE FEARLESS FAITH	69		
7	ALLOWING ARTIFICIAL HARMONY TO REPLACE DIFFICULT CONFLICT	79		
8	ALLOWING PERENNIALLY HURTING PEOPLE TO REPLACE POTENTIAL HUNGRY LEADERS	89		
9	ALLOWING INFORMATION TO REPLACE TRANSFORMATION	99		
10	ALLOWING CONTROL TO REPLACE TRUST	105		
AFT	AFTERWORD			
NOTES				

INTRODUCTION

My dad was a locksmith for all the years I knew him. He died when he was fifty-two and I was twenty-four. It was a big loss for me. He collected quotes and had them strung across the counter in his business on a clothesline. One of them I remember well: "Show me a man who never made a mistake, and I'll show you a man who never made anything."

As leaders we all make mistakes—it's part of being human. Some mistakes are innocent and are no big deal. Others are serious and are a big deal. In this book we'll deal with the "big deal" kind.

Some potentially serious mistakes are ones we make only once or twice, and we recognize them, admit to them, deal with them, and then move on. Other serious mistakes are subtler, continue for years, and cause us to derail permanently. They can be compared to a slow leak somewhere in your home that is not discovered for a long time, or termites that have been in the structure of an edifice doing their slow but destructive work for years unnoticed—in due time the damage becomes obvious to everyone. Maybe a mistake has been present in your life for months, even years, slowing eating away, but you have not dealt with it because you've been unaware of it.

As you work your way through *Mistakes Leaders Make*, you might think:

1. He is describing my church, at least in part.

- 2. I know of a church like this.
- 3. I have a close friend who is on the staff of a church like this.

My prayer is that in reading this book you will have some *aha!* moments, have your blind eyes opened, and be led by the Holy Spirit to confess, repent, and be forgiven so you can learn before permanent damage is done. I also trust that you will be able to share the ideas in this book with other leaders you know so they can repent and let the truth of the gospel rule, before it is too late!

As leaders, we can have our "sweet spots," situations in which we function well and are fruitful and productive, experiencing God's favor and great joy. We can also have our "blind spots," where the termites are doing their slow but sure work, which causes defeat, discouragement, and derailment, and eventually leads to the knockout blow that sends us down to the canvas for the count, as we see (for example) in the life of King Saul.

Picture King Saul as the lead pastor of a modern-day, Biblepreaching, Jesus-loving, missional church, and you can visualize how most of the mistakes in his life and leadership would have impacted the church he led. King Saul of Israel could very well be the poster child for mistakes leaders make. He made more than his share of them.

A number of years ago I did a personal Bible study in which I compared David's leadership to Saul's. Here are a few of the observations I made based on Saul's actions and decisions recorded in 1 Samuel 13–15:

- Insecurity leads to motivation by fear of failure.
- Circumstances, not God's desires, control Saul's choices.
- Rationalization, not repentance, follows his sin.
- He loses the favor and respect of his son, Jonathan.
- He loses favor with God.
- He assumes the problem is with others, not himself, and he plays the blame game.
- He demonstrates inflexibility and won't admit when he is wrong.
- He seems to prefer popularity rather than obedience.

- He is unduly concerned for his honor and image.
- He refuses to take ownership of his decisions and failings.
- He feels that religious activity can compensate for partial obedience.

Now, King David was by no means perfect and sin free. The big difference was that David owned his sin (Psalms 32 and 51), and Saul did not.

In my first book, *Leaders Who Last,* I dealt with a number of things leaders *should do* to help them finish well, including:

- Drawing on the power of Jesus
- Having a purpose
- Living with passion
- Setting priorities
- Living and ministering at a healthy pace
- Being clear about calling and gifts

In *Mistakes Leaders Make*, the focus is on what *not to do*; this is a strong encouragement to avoid potentially fatal mistakes. We'll look at mistakes that almost ensure that we finish poorly or not at all, mistakes that "disqualify" us from the race that Paul alludes to: "But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others, *I myself should be disqualified*" (1 Cor. 9:27).

Most of these mistakes you will recognize either from past or present personal experience, or because you have seen them in a leader's life in some ministry context. None of them need permanently trip us up if we recognize them, confess them, and repent of them by calling them what they are: sin, derailers, and booby traps that keep us from being the people and the servants God created us to be.

Sometimes we recognize these mistakes because a faithful spiritual brother or sister, or a spouse, or a close friend points them out. We can receive insight from an article, a book, a sermon, a conference, or a seminar. God can open our eyes as we spend time in Scripture, prayer, and worship.

INTRODUCTION

These moments of insight can occur when we are alone for extended times to be refreshed by the Lord or in the context of relationships—as part of a community group or with an accountability partner with whom we have learned to be gut honest. These times enable us to see the mistakes for what they are, to own them, and to deal ruthlessly with them before significant damage is done. Sometimes we have that *aha!* moment, but sometimes it takes a longer period of time to see the mistakes for what they are.

Throughout this book, I will refer to the experience of Covenant Community Church (CCC). CCC is not a real church but a composite of churches I have worked with in forty-three years of ministry. Although the church is fictitious, the mistakes are not. I have either made these mistakes myself, been in ministries where they have occurred, or coached leaders who have experienced them personally in their ministry assignments.

We will explore how the leaders and ministry teams of CCC experience ten mistakes over the course of five to ten years and how these mistakes affected the lives of many people in the church community.

We will meet:

- Norm, Lead Pastor
- Jim, Executive Pastor
- Jason, Pastor of Discipleship/Community Groups
- Chris, Junior and Senior High Director
- Suzie, Children and Women's Ministry Director
- Bob, Elder who oversees finances
- Bryan, Worship Director
- Brent, Pastor of Counseling/Support Groups

Some of these leaders at CCC learned from their mistakes, dealt with them, and went on to have fruitful ministries. Others were not as fortunate.

One more thing before we jump into the life of CCC. As you read, don't let your first reaction be to take the splinter out of some-

body else's eye and overlook the log in your own eye. Search your heart and let Psalm 139:23–24 be your prayer as you move from chapter to chapter:

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

ALLOWING MINISTRY TO REPLACE JESUS

Man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols.—John Calvin

The first and greatest mistake, which in essence gives birth to all the other mistakes, is not allowing Jesus to have his rightful place in our life and ministry. We often start out well with him in the center, but over time the thrill of seeing him at work, the accolades from those we serve, the lasting fruit from our efforts, and the adoration and respect of our peers, mentors, and network of ministry friends gradually become more important than Jesus. Add to this mix our own sinful egos and selfish ambition (James 3:14) and we have a recipe for disaster.

We often don't see this mistake because our experience is like the proverbial frog in a pot of water. If you place a frog in a pot of boiling water, he will jump out. But if you put him in a pot of cool water and then heat up the water gradually, a cold-blooded frog's body will warm up as the water is warmed up, and he will sit quietly until he boils to death. Sin in our lives is often like slowly heating up the water. Our identity in and intimacy with Jesus slowly dissipates, and over time, the ministry begins to occupy center stage

in our affections, time, and focus. It is all downhill from there in a leader's life and ministry.

THE STORY

Norm was on the core team that originally planted Community Covenant Church (CCC) ten years ago. He knew from early on in ministry that a lead role was what he was both gifted for and passionate about. He had a vision for reaching the people in Northern California with the gospel that had so radically transformed his own life. It was clear to the sending church that Norm was the one to lead the new fledgling work.

Norm had always possessed a good work ethic (maybe too good), having grown up in a farming community in Kansas. Norm's dad pushed all his kids to work hard from early on. There was not much family time on the farm. Most of life revolved around keeping the farm in good shape and keeping the family afloat financially. Norm's mom made sure they all attended church regularly, and Norm's dad went along with that. But the family was never really close. While in college at Kansas State, Norm ran into a well-known campus organization, and a personal walk with Jesus became a reality for him. Prior to that, he had been a reluctant churchgoer, but he worked hard at everything he undertook and carried the farm ethic everywhere he went.

Seminary brought Norm from Kansas to the West Coast. After earning his MDiv, he served in several large churches before being sent out with a team to plant CCC. The expectations were high, his experience was solid, his love for people was genuine, and his heart was right—at least in the beginning!

Norm had attended some seminars and done some reading about teamwork based on the triperspectival concept of prophet, priest, and king, so the core team was a good blend of all three functions. Norm was the prophet, visionary, and goal setter, with a vision as big as all outdoors. He was complemented by a couple with strong pastoral gifts (priest) as well as another couple that knew how to put feet and hands on a vision (king).

They were off to a good start.

The three-couple launch team had a healthy blend of gifts. By God's grace, they did not make the mistake of having team members that were all gifted in the same way. Norm understood that a team needed to have a good combination of visionaries, caregivers, and implementers.

But as time went on, Norm made several other serious mistakes that were much more harmful not only to himself, but also to the staff and church family. No one imagined that what had started so well could get so bad, especially Norm himself.

The first few years went well. Norm was an engaging communicator as well as a catalytic visionary. Word spread quickly that this was a guy that you just had to hear. Community groups were formed to take care of new Christians and growing Christians who found their way to CCC. The community groups were doing a good job of being missional where they worked, lived, and played; coworkers and neighbors were invited to the groups, to social events, and to worship services. The growth was encouraging and steady.

New hires were added to the team as time went on. Norm's life coach was walking with him and helping him maintain an excellent balance between his ministry and family. Life was good!

Norm was well aware of fallen pastors who let ministry take over their lives (some were seminary friends that he stayed in touch with), and he was adamant that this was not going to happen to him. Godly ambition has an insidious way of morphing into selfish ambition. He didn't have to look far to see young, ambitiousbut-proud, and full-of-themselves leaders. Many of them kept close watch on each other's ministry and had a pecking order in their minds as they observed what was happening in each other's ministries.

Despite Norm's awareness of the danger of ministry becoming

the big *E* on the eye chart instead of Jesus himself, and despite the regular warnings from his life coach, the shift slowly and subtly began to take place.

It became evident in staff meetings. The staff felt that Norm was becoming increasingly more driven, more impatient with what was happening, and more dissatisfied with how fast things were happening—or not happening. They were spending less time in prayer and in giving thanks for what Jesus was obviously doing at CCC. They used to spend lots of time celebrating and enjoying each other and what they were called to do. They were truly friends in ministry and often spent time together outside of normal responsibilities. Now the staff felt as if they were business partners with all eyes on the bottom line instead of ministry partners with all eyes on Jesus. The ministry became increasingly about results and less about relationships.

Norm's normal attitude of delight in his staff and what they were doing drifted into demands as he pushed for more and more results and as he became increasingly obsessed with what was happening this year compared with what had happened the previous year. He never seemed satisfied and grateful for what Jesus was doing; he was always demanding more!

Similar things were happening at home. His wife, Jen, and the children began to notice a different demeanor. Norm could not seem to get his mind off of work—what was being done and what was not being done. Date nights with Jen slowing eroded and intimacy dissipated, and in their place came keeping up with e-mails and talking on the phone instead of having adequate time with the family and much-needed replenishing times for himself. Absorption with ministry seemed to drive the joy of the Lord from the family. Jen sensed something was wrong, but she was not quite sure what to do about it.

Norm's affection for Jesus was being replaced by achievement for Jesus, and he just didn't see it or seem willing to own it. People approached Norm about the mistake he was making, but he was quick to rationalize that everything he was doing was for God's glory, and he insisted that the church needed to grow and reach the community. It was clear to everybody but Norm that he had gone from being led to being driven.

A few more years went by. The staff eventually became tired of confronting Norm. Various pastors and support staff had one-onone conversations with him, but little changed. It was unfortunate and disheartening, but he was their lead pastor and good things were happening—they could all agree on that. But deep down, most of them were gravely concerned that their ministry was no longer about Jesus but about ministry success, and somewhere Jesus got left behind.

It was sad, everyone agreed, but what could they do? The staff and elders' approach was, "We'll just pray and live with the situation until Norm sees it for what it is." Ministry had become the engine that pulled the train of everything else in his life. He couldn't shut it off or seem to relax and enjoy much of anything anymore. His ministry had become his idol, and he valued ministry results more than Jesus himself.

Norm was giving his life and love to the work of the Lord while he neglected the Lord of the work. This mind-set in the lead pastor tinted everything else in the life of CCC: goals that were set, people that were hired, money that was spent, and treatment of the staff.

Allowing ministry to replace Jesus opened the Pandora's box that contained many other mistakes that over time infected the entire leadership team—with severe implications. The first stone had been cast into the water, and the ripples had begun.

PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE

Henri Nouwen once said that the main obstacle to loving God is service for God.¹ This is ministry idolatry—not agreeing with Jesus that he has the rightful first place in our affections. Ministry idolatry is becoming increasingly widespread in evangelical Christianity in

America, reaching epidemic proportions. It is showcased at network and denominational gatherings, where the focus and conversation is often not about Jesus but about us and what we are accomplishing and achieving. Leaders discuss the latest poster children for ministry success and their methods so we can all emulate them, buy their books, and attend their "how we did it" seminars and conferences.

"Idolatry creep" sneaks up on you because you can easily and quickly justify it by saying that everything you do is for the Lord, believing your motives are pure. We recognize this in businessmen who work obscene hours while insisting they do it all to benefit the family, when in reality it's all about them.

Leaders must guard against ministry becoming a mistress. A mistress is someone who takes the place that only your wife should occupy. Ministry must never take the place of Jesus himself in your heart and in your values. As 1 John 5:21 says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." The New Living Translation says, "Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts." Our hearts are idol factories, and ministry, for many leaders, is the king of idols.

We can start to rely on ministry instead of Jesus to meet deep needs in our own lives. I am convinced that many people move into leadership roles because of people needing them or because being in control satisfies something missing in their own sense of value or worth. I remember John Maxwell once saying, "If you need people you can lead people." One leader told me that the motivation for "his call" to ministry was the opportunity to resolve the problem of his own insecurities and feel better about himself. The Devil is out to snare Christian leaders, rendering them "ineffective or unfruitful" (2 Pet. 1:8), and if he can't achieve his purposes through obvious sin, he will achieve them by taking something that is admirable and good and turning it on its ear to cause us to stumble.

The apostle Peter, in his insightful chapter to leaders, says, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around

like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Our enemy can devour us through ministry by letting the ministry itself replace Jesus in our affections. Unfortunately, we are often quicker to recognize this happening in others than in our own lives.

I began my ministry with the Navigators in 1968 and enjoyed thirty-eight years of ministry with them before retiring in 2005 to come on staff at Mars Hill Church in Seattle. During my first few years with the Navigators, I began my drift into ministry idolatry. I had one of my first wake-up calls (I needed several of these before I could truly see what was going on in my life) in a visit with Tommy Adkins, who was a Nav staffer, friend, and mentor to me.

I had just finished a good visit with Tommy, and we were walking to my car parked in his driveway. Tommy had piercing blue eyes, and I was about to personally experience their piercing quality. When we got to my car, he said he wanted to share something with me. "This can't be good," I thought to myself.

Tommy grabbed a sheet from the notebook he was carrying and laid it on the hood of my VW. He then drew out an illustration that is familiar to all Navigators—the wheel. In the center of the wheel was Jesus.



Tommy focused those blue eyes on me and asked the heartstopping question, "Dave, what is in the center of your wheel [your life]?" I quickly told him that it was Jesus, to which he replied, "I don't think so."

Tommy asked if he could write what he perceived was the center of "my wheel," to which I answered yes. He then slowly wrote the word "men." In the Navigators, finding and giving yourself to faithful men was the centerpiece of our ministry philosophy. Founder Dawson Trotman, in a classic message he preached, asked, "Men, where is your man? . . . Women, where is your woman? Where is the man or the woman who is living today for Jesus Christ because of your life?"

Having men in the place of where Jesus should be was ministry idolatry—plain and simple and painful to admit. The good had become the idol in my life—not noticed by me but by Tommy. He was absolutely right! As we sing in a classic hymn: "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love."² Even today this sin is crouching in the dark waiting to devour me. I am not actually leaving the God I love, but rather I am tempted to push him to a marginalized place and put ministry in the center of my life, instead of keeping Christ enthroned there.

It is not my intention to give some kind of formula in dealing with each of the mistakes addressed in this book. There are no "four easy steps to deal with ministry idolatry." But I do want to share some things I am learning about dealing with each of the mistakes leaders make. Let me state again that I have made all these mistakes myself, and I have seen people in ministries, organizations, groups, and churches that I have been associated with make them.

So, how have I dealt with ministry idolatry?

For me the first step is realizing that this is a problem for me. I deeply desire to want to confess and repent when this sin comes to my attention, as opposed to making excuses and rationalizing. It should grieve my soul that I am allowing something to take the place of Jesus in my heart and affections. Like King David, I want to pray, "Against you, you only, have I sinned" (Ps. 51:4). My primary sin here is against God!

Most every day I make the issue of ministry idolatry a matter of prayer, asking for the power of Jesus through the Holy Spirit to occupy center stage in my life. For me, I find that ministry idolatry is an attitude, a mind-set, as opposed to an action. It begins with the way I look at things, the way I think.

Colossians 3:4 is helpful to me: "When Christ who is your life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory." Jesus is my life—not ministry, success, converts, disciples, developing leaders, being respected by my peers, etc. I need to keep being reminded of this truth. Paul says in Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." For me to live is Christ, not someone else or something else. I have several passages of Scripture memorized (in addition to those just mentioned) on ministry idolatry, including 1 John 5:21 and Revelation 2:4.

The Lord uses these Scriptures to get my attention and point out my sin. This is one reason I want to be consistent in my time in Scripture: to allow him to speak to my sinful heart. We used to say in the Navigators that God's Word will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from God's Word. Regularly reviewing key verses, meditating on them, and praying over them helps a good deal.

When the Lord makes it clear that I am starting to drift, I want to immediately own it, repent, confess, and ask for his help in agreeing with him that he is central. I want to be especially sensitive to others in my family or on the teams I am a part of when they bring this sin to my attention. One of my life values is to immediately respond to God's revealed truth, whether that truth comes directly to me through Scripture or through the rebuke of a family or team member.

Years ago I attended a pre-Billy Graham meeting in San Diego. The meeting was held at College Avenue Baptist Church, and the speaker was Grady Wilson, an original member of Billy's team. At the end of Grady's talk, he encouraged the listeners to ask questions. One of the questions was, how had Billy stayed humble all those years, experiencing so much success and notoriety?

Grady's reply was golden. He said that when the team first formed, they made a deal with Billy that if God would keep him anointed, they would keep him humble. What a great combination for ministry longevity—God's anointing and the rebuke of faithful friends! Pity the Christian leader with no friends or coworkers who care enough to confront him, especially in the area of ministry idolatry. Norm had these people, but to his ultimate regret, he didn't listen or pay attention to their warnings.

I need people around me who are not afraid to point their prophetic finger in my face (as Nathan did with David) and rebuke me when ministry is pushing Jesus out of the throne room in my heart. I don't want to be guilty of the sin of the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:4: "But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first."

Jesus, I want to love you more than I did when you first saved me, not less. By your Spirit and for your honor, make it clear to me when anything or anybody is taking your place in my heart. Help me not to make excuses, but to be quick to own my sin, confess, and repent. Surround me with people who are bold enough to be Nathans for me on the issue of ministry idolatry.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- 1. Memorize a few key passages on ministry idolatry, such as 1 John 5:21 and Colossians 3:4.
- 2. Who have you allowed to confront you when they see that you are pushing Jesus to the side and allowing ministry to sit on the throne of your life? Who is your modern-day Nathan?

- 3. What indicators can you look for to tip you off that you are pushing Jesus off the throne? For example: your thoughts, lack of Sabbath, being more driven than led, how you treat your staff, etc.
- 4. Do you have a Norm on your team? What might it look like for you to pastor him in seeing the "why" behind the "what" he is doing?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LEARN THIS THE HARD WAY...

Anyone involved in leadership knows that it's tough and mistakes are bound to happen. But some mistakes are more costly than others and can result in the end of effectiveness, the loss of important relationships, and disqualification from ministry.

Using the story of a fictitious church team to demonstrate the problems, principles, and practice of finding solutions, leadership expert Dave Kraft uncovers the top 10 critical mistakes leaders make and shows you how to avoid them so you can have ministry and relationships that last.

"As I speak and consult with leaders around the world, I personally encounter these mistakes time and time again. The lessons here are timeless."

PATRICK LENCIONI, President, The Table Group; best-selling author, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

"You can make these mistakes yourself or you can learn from those who have made the mistakes and avoid spilling your own blood."

MATT CHANDLER, Lead Pastor, The Village Church; President, Acts 29 Network

"Drawing from three decades in ministry and coaching ministry leaders, Dave Kraft has combined his best insights into this book."

MARK DRISCOLL, Founder and Pastor, Mars Hill Church, Seattle; author, Vintage Jesus

"Individuals are placed in leadership and, unfortunately, often learn from their mistakes on-the-job. Read this book so you don't have to learn every lesson the hard way."

LES STECKEL, Veteran NFL Coach; President, Fellowship of Christian Athletes

"Kraft tackles the difficult problems at the center of many leadership tangles. A lot of teams would profit by reading this together."

DOUGLAS WILSON, Senior Minister, Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho

DAVE KRAFT served with the Navigators for thirty-eight years before serving as a pastor at Mars Hill Church, Orange County. He now conducts Leaders Who Last seminars worldwide and helps several churches with leadership development. Kraft is also a professional coach with Ministry Coaching International, and the author of *Leaders Who Last*.

CHRISTIAN LIVING / LEADERSHIP

