
MONDAY MANNA
Jun 9, 2025**VISIONARY LEADER'S SECRET: SHOWING UP IN THE MOMENT**
By Chris Simpson

Visionary leadership is a term that gets thrown around a lot these days. In a fast-moving, globalized world, leaders are expected to anticipate the future, set bold directions, and shape organizations that thrive in a rapidly changing marketplace. Richard Stearns, former CEO of World Vision, once said, "A leader must define the current reality, articulate a desired future, identify a way forward, and personally 'own' the vision." And he is right – without vision, leadership becomes reactive rather than proactive. The best leaders see not only what is but also what could be.

And yet, this presents a hidden danger: Leaders so consumed by the future can easily lose sight of the people right in front of them. There is a paradox at the heart of leadership: to truly shape the future, one must **be fully present in the now**.

The apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." That is not a command to those with flexible schedules or abundant free time – it is an essential trait of Christian leadership. If leaders are too absorbed in strategy, too fixated on long-term outcomes, they will fail to notice the joys and sorrows of those they are called to serve. And when people feel unseen, they disengage. They will not follow a leader who appears distant, even if that leader has a compelling vision for the future.

This is where many leaders stumble. They believe their primary calling is to cast vision – to inspire, to strategize, to set bold goals. But the Bible suggests **leadership is not merely about direction – it is about presence**. Colossians 3:14 reminds us to "put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." Love is not just a virtue to cultivate in personal life; it is the glue that holds together an organization, a team, a community.

And love, at its core, requires presence. Showing up in the moment. **Leaders who truly lead well do more than articulate the mission; they walk alongside their people.** They listen before they speak. They notice the exhaustion in an employee's voice. They recognize the quiet victories worth celebrating. They see people, not just productivity.

Jesus Christ embodied this. As the ultimate visionary leader, He did not simply arrive with a grand vision of redemption – He walked among the people. He touched lepers. He dined with sinners. He wept at Lazarus' tomb. He did not merely announce salvation; He lived among those He came to save.

Here is the irony: a leader too obsessed with the future may never actually get there. People do not follow vision alone. They follow those who know them, who love them, who walk with them. The best leaders are not only visionaries; they are shepherds.

To lead well is to love well. And to love well is to be fully present. Leadership is not just about taking people somewhere; it is about being with them on the way. And in doing so, we reflect

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Christ, the ultimate servant-leader, who did not remain distant but entered our world, walked our streets, and called us to something greater. If we want to lead like Him, we must learn to do the same.

© 2025. Christopher C. Simpson is dedicated to fostering a bold and triumphant Christian faith within the global marketplace, driven by a deep conviction in the Gospel's transformative power. Before becoming President of CBMC International, Chris dedicated 28 years to a distinguished career in the public sector – as a Commanding Officer in the U.S. Marine Corps; and serving in the U. S. Secret Service, responsible for protecting seven American presidents and leading elite teams in complex, high-stakes international missions. With his wife Ana, a native of Nicaragua, and their three children, Chris resides in Boca Raton, Florida.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How can a leader balance the tension between casting a vision for the future and being fully present with the people he or she leads?
2. Paul instructs us in Romans 12:15 to "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." What practical steps can leaders take to cultivate and demonstrate genuine empathy and engagement in their daily leadership?
3. Jesus modeled leadership by walking among His people rather than leading from a distance. What are some modern leadership habits or mindsets that can unintentionally create distance between leaders and their teams?
4. The article states, "A leader who is too obsessed with the future may never actually get there." How have you seen this play out in leadership, either in your own experience or in others? What are ways to ensure that vision does not come at the expense of presence – not being readily available to people when needed?

Challenge for This Week

If God has placed you in a leadership role, whether it is as CEO of a company, a vice president, manager of a department, or leader of a small team, how would you evaluate yourself in terms of "showing up in the moment"?

Are you too preoccupied with goals and objectives, striving toward the future, that you ignore or neglect the people who work around you every day? It might be helpful to ask a friend, a trusted advisor, or an accountability group to help in assessing how effective you are as a leader in demonstrating your concern and care for their needs. If you find yourself deficient in this respect, what steps might you take to be "fully present in the now"?

NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 27:23-27; Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:26-27; Ephesians 6:7-9; Philippians 2:3-4