

# LeaderPrep

## Teen Edition

*LeaderPrep: Teen Edition*

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*Guiding Today's Leadership  
Growing Tomorrow's Leaders*

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THE ANCHORED INSTITUTE

*LeaderPrep: Teen Edition*

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Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®.

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DEDICATION

*To the next generation of leaders—  
may you lead with courage, serve with humility,  
and stay anchored in what matters most.*

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## INTRODUCTION

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# Why This Book?

### **You are not too young to lead.**

I know that might not be what you've heard. Maybe adults treat you like you're not ready for real responsibility. Maybe you've been told to wait your turn, pay your dues, wait until you're older. Maybe you've started to believe that leadership is something that happens "someday"—after you graduate, after you get a job, after you grow up.

That's a lie. Not an intentional one, usually—just a cultural assumption that leadership requires age. But it's still wrong.

#### **ANCHORED IN TRUTH**

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

— Ephesians 2:10

God didn't create you to sit on the sidelines until some arbitrary age. He prepared good works for you—present tense, not future tense. You have a calling now, not just "someday."

This book exists because I believe teenagers deserve better than what most leadership resources offer. You deserve content that respects your intelligence, challenges your thinking, and gives you practical tools you can use immediately.

## What Is Leadership?

Let's start with a definition: **Leadership is influence toward a worthy goal.**

Every word matters:

- **Influence**—affecting how others think, feel, or act
- **Toward**—direction, movement, purpose
- **Worthy**—not any goal, but one worth pursuing
- **Goal**—a specific outcome, not just vague activity

Notice what's missing from this definition: title, position, age, experience. Those things can amplify leadership, but they don't create it.

## How to Use This Book

This book is designed to work either as a 12-chapter read-through or as a weekly study course. Each chapter builds on the previous ones, creating a complete leadership foundation.

Throughout, you'll find:

- **Anchored in Truth** boxes—Scripture that grounds each concept
- **Real Talk** sidebars—practical stories and examples
- **Pull quotes**—key ideas worth remembering

Don't just read—apply. The ideas in this book only matter if you use them.

*Leadership isn't something that happens "someday."  
Your calling is now.*

## CHAPTER 1

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# The World Needs You

The headlines are full of leadership failures.

Politicians who serve themselves instead of the people. Business executives who cut corners and harm their employees. Community leaders who talk big but deliver nothing. Religious figures who preach one thing and live another.

You've seen it. We all have. And it's created a crisis—not just of trust, but of supply. There's a leadership vacuum, and it's getting worse.

That's where you come in.

*There's a leadership vacuum. That's where you come in.*

## Young Leaders in Scripture

The Bible is full of young people who led:

- **David** was a teenager when he faced Goliath while the adult soldiers cowered
- **Josiah** became king at 8 and launched major reforms at 16
- **Daniel** was a teenager when he was taken to Babylon and began influencing an empire
- **Mary** was likely a young teen when she said yes to bearing the Messiah
- **Timothy** was young enough that Paul had to tell people not to look down on his youth

### ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.*

— 1 Timothy 4:12

Your age isn't a disqualifier—it's an opportunity. You can set an example in how you speak, how you act, how you love, how you trust God, and how you live with integrity. That's leadership.

## **Born or Made?**

You might be thinking: "But I'm not a natural leader. Some people are just born with it, and I wasn't."

The answer is: **both, but mostly made.**

Yes, some people have natural advantages—charisma, confidence, quick thinking. But research consistently shows that leadership is primarily a skill set, and skills can be learned. The most important leadership qualities—integrity, discipline, empathy, communication, strategic thinking—are all developable.

### **REAL TALK: The Research Is Clear**

Studies of leadership development consistently show that while some traits may be partially innate, the vast majority of leadership effectiveness comes from learned skills and practiced behaviors. A person with high natural ability but no training will be outperformed by someone with moderate ability and excellent training.

In other words: **trained beats untrained, even when untrained has more natural talent.**

## CHAPTER 2

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# Your Mind Is the Battleground

Before you learn a single leadership technique, before you study any framework or practice any skill, there's something more fundamental you need to address: What's going on in your head?

Everything you do as a leader—every decision, every conversation, every risk you take or avoid—flows from how you think. Your mindset isn't just one factor among many. It's the foundation that shapes everything else.

*Your mindset isn't just one factor among many. It's the foundation that shapes everything else.*

## Two Ways of Thinking

Psychologist Carol Dweck, after decades of research, identified two fundamental mindsets that shape how people approach challenges, effort, and growth.

**A fixed mindset** believes that basic qualities like intelligence, talent, and character are fixed traits. You either have them or you don't. You're either smart or you're not. You're either talented or you're not.

**A growth mindset** believes that basic qualities can be developed through effort, good strategies, and input from others. Intelligence can grow. Skills can be developed. Character can be built.

The difference sounds subtle, but it changes everything.

## The Power of "Yet"

One of the simplest ways to shift from fixed to growth thinking is a single word: yet.

- "I'm not good at math" → "I'm not good at math *yet*"
- "I can't speak in public" → "I can't speak in public *yet*"
- "I don't understand this" → "I don't understand this *yet*"

That one word transforms a statement of limitation into a statement of possibility. It acknowledges current reality while keeping the door open for growth.

**ANCHORED IN TRUTH**

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

— Romans 12:2

The Greek word Paul uses is metamorphoo—where we get "metamorphosis." It's the same word used for a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. Total transformation from the inside out. And how does this happen? By the renewing of your mind.

## CHAPTER 3

# Think Like a Servant

Now that you understand the growth mindset, we need to talk about what kind of leader you're growing into.

Because here's the uncomfortable truth: you can have a growth mindset and still become a terrible leader. Some of history's worst leaders believed they could grow and improve. They were driven, ambitious, constantly learning. And then they used that power to manipulate, exploit, and destroy.

A growth mindset is necessary, but it's not sufficient. You also need the right orientation: Are you becoming a leader who takes, or a leader who gives?

## The Ultimate Example

The night before Jesus was crucified, something remarkable happened. He and his disciples gathered for what we now call the Last Supper. In that culture, when you arrived for dinner, a servant would wash your feet—dusty and dirty from walking unpaved roads in sandals. It was the lowliest job in the household.

But at this meal, there was no servant to do the washing. And none of the disciples volunteered. They were too proud, too concerned with their own status.

Then Jesus stood up.

### ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*

— John 13:14-15

Jesus—the Son of God, Creator of the universe, King of Kings—wrapped a towel around his waist and washed dirty feet. The one with all the power took the lowest position.

*The one with all the power took the lowest position.*

This is servant leadership: using your position, influence, and abilities to lift others up rather than push them down. It's strength expressed through service. It's authority deployed for others' benefit.

## CHAPTER 4

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# Own Your CAPES

Life isn't fair.

Some people are born into wealthy families; others into poverty. Some have natural athletic ability; others struggle with coordination. Some grow up in stable homes with loving parents; others face trauma and dysfunction from their earliest memories.

You didn't choose your parents, your birthplace, your natural abilities, or the era you were born into. These things were handed to you—your "birth dossier," the starting conditions of your life.

You have a choice: spend your energy complaining about what you can't control, or focus on what's always within your power.

## The CAPES Framework

I call these things your CAPES—like a superhero cape. Because when you master these five elements, you have powers that no circumstance can take away.

**C — Choices.** Every moment of every day, you make choices. What to focus on. How to respond to what happens. What to do next. Your choices accumulate into your life.

**A — Attitude.** Your attitude is your posture toward circumstances—whether you approach them with hope or despair, courage or fear, gratitude or bitterness.

**P — Perspective.** Perspective is how you interpret what happens. The same event can be a catastrophe, a setback, a lesson, or an opportunity—depending on how you look at it.

**E — Effort.** How hard you try. How much you invest. No one can make you try harder—and no one can stop you from trying harder.

**S — Stewardship.** What you do with what you've been given. You didn't choose your talents, circumstances, or resources. But you do choose how you use them.

**ANCHORED IN TRUTH**

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.*

— Colossians 3:23

*No circumstance can take your CAPES from you.*

## CHAPTER 5

# See Before You Solve

Most people don't actually see what's in front of them.

They glance, assume, categorize, and move on. Their brain fills in gaps based on expectations rather than observation. They see what they expect to see, not what's actually there.

Leaders can't afford this. Leaders need to see clearly—to notice what others miss, to gather accurate information before making decisions, to understand situations as they actually are rather than as they assume them to be.

## The OIL Method

I use a simple framework called OIL to train observation:

**O — Observe.** See what's actually there—without judgment, without interpretation, without rushing to conclusions. Just look. Notice. Gather raw data with your senses.

**I — Interpret.** Only after observing do you ask what your observations mean. What patterns emerge? What explanations are possible? Generate multiple possible interpretations—don't lock into one explanation too quickly.

**L — Learn.** Apply what you've discovered. How does this observation change your understanding? Your approach? Your decisions? What will you do differently because of what you now see?

### ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*Ears that hear and eyes that see—the LORD has made them both.*

— Proverbs 20:12

God gave you the capacity to observe. The question is whether you'll develop and use it.

### REAL TALK: The 30 Observations Challenge

Pick any object—a pen, a coffee mug, a leaf. Now write down 30 observations about it. Not interpretations—observations. Not "it looks old" but "there's a

scratch 2 inches from the top." Most people struggle to get past 10. Training yourself to reach 30 builds the observation muscle.

## CHAPTER 6

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# Plan It

Everyone has wishes. Few have goals.

"I wish I was in better shape." "I wish I got better grades." "I wish I had more friends." Wishes are easy. They require nothing of you except imagination.

Goals are different. Goals require commitment, specificity, and action. Goals are wishes that have grown up.

## The SAMPLE System

I've developed a system for setting goals that actually work. I call it SAMPLE, because good goals serve as samples of the future you're building:

**S — Simple.** If your goal requires a paragraph to explain, it's too complicated. A good goal can be stated in one clear sentence.

**A — Applied.** A goal that stays in your head fades away. Write it down. Put it where you'll see it. Schedule time for it. Integrate it into your actual life.

**M — Measurable.** You need to know whether you're making progress. Measurable goals have numbers, deadlines, or clear markers.

**P — Personal.** The goal has to be yours. Not your parents' goal for you. Not what you think you should want. Your genuine desire.

**L — Living.** Goals aren't set once and forgotten. They're reviewed regularly and adjusted when circumstances change.

**E — Expanding.** Good goals stretch you. They require you to grow, to develop new capabilities, to become more than you currently are.

### ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.*

— Proverbs 21:5

*Goals are wishes that have grown up.*



## CHAPTER 7

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# Do It

There's a massive gap between knowing what to do and actually doing it.

You can have the right mindset. You can see clearly. You can set perfect SAMPLE goals. And still accomplish nothing.

This gap isn't about intelligence. Smart people fall into it all the time. It isn't about information. You probably already know what you need to do. The gap is about activation—what gets you from knowing to doing.

## The Doit Family

I call my activation tools the "Doit Family"—seven mental triggers that move you from intention to action:

**Doit Now** — If something takes less than two minutes, do it immediately. Don't add it to a list. Don't "get to it later." Just handle it.

**Doit Not** — Some things shouldn't be done at all. Learn to eliminate, not just prioritize. Every yes is a no to something else.

**Doit Nightly** — Review your day and prepare for the next one before bed. Five minutes of evening planning makes tomorrow dramatically more productive.

**Doit Notched** — Break big tasks into small pieces. You don't eat an elephant in one bite. Giant projects create paralysis; notches create progress.

**Doit Nevertheless** — Do it even when you don't feel like it. Motivation is unreliable. Act on commitment rather than feeling.

**Doit Next** — Always know your next action. Vague commitments stall. "Work on the project" leaves you unsure where to start. "Write the first paragraph" is clear.

**Doit Nobly** — Do it with excellence. How you do anything is how you do everything. Work as if it matters—because it does.

ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.*

— Ecclesiastes 9:10

*Knowledge without action is just trivia.*

## CHAPTER 8

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# Finish It

Most people focus all their energy on the main event—the presentation, the game, the project, the conversation. They prepare for it, execute it, and then... stop.

But projects have three phases, not one. And most people only plan for the middle.

### The Bow-Tie Method

Picture a bow-tie. The center knot is the main event. But a bow-tie has two wings extending from that center, one on each side.

Those wings represent what happens before and after the main event. And they're just as important as the event itself.

**Pre-Event:** What needs to happen before? Preparation, resources gathered, people informed, contingencies planned. Poor preparation leads to poor execution, no matter how talented you are.

**Event:** What happens during? Execute the plan, stay present, adapt as needed, handle surprises calmly.

**Post-Event:** What needs to happen after? Debrief and evaluate, thank people, clean up and close out, document lessons learned.

#### ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.*

— Ecclesiastes 7:8

How something ends matters as much as how it begins. Leaders who finish well leave better impressions and achieve better outcomes.

*How you finish something shapes how people remember everything that came before.*

## CHAPTER 9

# Speak Up

Leadership is influence. And influence travels through communication.

You can have brilliant ideas, impeccable character, and flawless plans—but if you can't communicate them, your leadership is crippled. The ability to express your thoughts clearly, to listen well, and to connect with others through words is one of the most important skills you can develop.

## The Foundation: Listening

Most people, when they think about communication skills, think about speaking. But the foundation of good communication is actually listening.

Why? Because you can't respond well to what you didn't understand. Because people trust those who listen to them. Because listening is how you gather information for good decisions.

But here's the problem: most people don't actually listen. They wait for their turn to talk. While you're speaking, they're formulating their response, not absorbing your message.

### ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.*

— James 1:19

Quick to listen. Slow to speak. This ancient wisdom runs counter to our culture of hot takes and instant reactions. But it's the path to genuine connection.

## Speaking Clearly

Once you've listened well, you need to express yourself clearly:

- **Know your point** before you open your mouth. If you can't say it in one sentence, you're not ready to say it.
- **Be concise.** Use as few words as needed, but not fewer.
- **Use concrete language.** "Friday at 5 PM" is clearer than "soon."

- **Adapt to your audience.** Know who you're talking to and adjust accordingly.
- **Check for understanding.** Don't assume your message landed.

*Most people don't listen to understand. They listen to reply.*

## CHAPTER 10

# Stand Up

Fear of public speaking is nearly universal. Some surveys rank it as the number one fear—above death, heights, and spiders.

But here's what I discovered after years of struggling with this fear myself: Fear of public speaking is almost always fear of yourself.

Think about it. What are you actually afraid of?

- What will they think of me?
- What if I mess up?
- What if I look stupid?
- What if I forget what to say?

Notice all those "I"s? The focus is entirely on yourself. And that's the problem.

## The Shift

The shift that changes everything: **Focus on your message and your audience instead of yourself.**

When you're consumed with serving your audience—with giving them something valuable, helping them understand, making their lives better—you forget to be afraid. Self-consciousness disappears because you're not thinking about yourself.

### ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

— 2 Timothy 1:7

### ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*The LORD said to him, 'Who gave human beings their mouths?... Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.'*

— Exodus 4:11-12

Even Moses felt inadequate. God's response wasn't to make Moses a polished speaker—it was to promise to help him. Your job is to show up. God can work through imperfect messengers.

*When you believe in your message more than you fear  
the spotlight, you find your voice.*

## CHAPTER 11

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# Lead Your Life First

We've spent this book building your leadership toolkit. Mindsets. Frameworks. Skills. All essential.

But here's the truth that underpins everything: **You cannot lead others beyond where you've led yourself.**

Skills without character collapse under pressure. Influence without integrity corrupts. Competence without conviction wanders aimlessly.

This chapter is about the foundation beneath everything else: who you are when no one is looking.

## Character Comes First

Leadership literature often focuses on skills—how to delegate, how to motivate, how to manage. Skills matter. But skills are only as reliable as the character that wields them.

Consider two leaders with equal skill:

- One is honest; the other cuts corners when convenient
- One keeps promises; the other makes excuses
- One serves the team; the other serves themselves
- One is the same in public and private; the other has two faces

Over time, the second leader fails. Maybe not immediately—sometimes character defects take years to surface. But eventually, the foundation cracks.

## Get Right With Your Creator

This book comes from an explicitly Christian perspective. The Christian worldview says: You were created by a good God who loves you. You bear His image. You're fallen but redeemable. Life has transcendent meaning and purpose.

When your foundation is the Creator Himself, you have:

- **Accountability**—An audience of One who sees everything

- **Purpose**—Work that matters beyond this life
- **Standards**—Ethics grounded in something higher than opinion
- **Identity**—Worth that doesn't depend on performance
- **Hope**—Confidence that transcends circumstances

**ANCHORED IN TRUTH**

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

— Proverbs 9:10

*You cannot lead others beyond where you've led yourself.*

## CLOSING

# Now Go Lead

You've made it to the end. And that means something.

Most people don't finish things. Most people start books they don't complete, set goals they abandon, make commitments they forget. The fact that you're reading these final pages puts you in a minority.

But this isn't really an ending. It's a beginning. Everything you've learned is only valuable if you use it. The real work starts now.

## Your Commission

**Lead where you are.** You don't have to wait for a title. You don't need permission. Start with your sphere—your friends, your family, your team, your class, your job.

**Lead with what you have.** Stop waiting for more resources, more experience, more time. Use what's in your hands today.

**Lead as who you are.** Don't try to be someone else's version of a leader. God made you with a unique personality, gifts, and perspective.

### ANCHORED IN TRUTH

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*

— Joshua 1:9

God said these words to Joshua as he was about to lead Israel into the Promised Land—a young leader facing an enormous task. The same words apply to you.

Be strong. Be courageous. Don't be afraid. Don't be discouraged.

Not because you're capable enough on your own—you're not. No one is. But because **the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.**

## A Blessing for the Journey

*May you have the courage to lead when it's hard.*

*May you have the humility to serve when it's costly.  
May you have the wisdom to see clearly and act rightly.  
May you have the discipline to do what needs doing.  
And may you always stay anchored in the One who made you.*

**Now go lead.**

— *The Anchored Institute* —

## **FRAMEWORK QUICK REFERENCE**

### **CAPES — What You Always Control**

Choices • Attitude • Perspective • Effort • Stewardship

### **OIL — See Before You Solve**

Observe • Interpret • Learn

### **SAMPLE — Goals That Work**

Simple • Applied • Measurable • Personal • Living • Expanding

### **DOIT FAMILY — Turn Intention to Action**

Doit Now • Doit Not • Doit Nightly • Doit Notched • Doit Nevertheless •  
Doit Next • Doit Nobly

### **BOW-TIE — Think the Full Picture**

Pre-Event → Event → Post-Event

## **ABOUT THE ANCHORED INSTITUTE**

The Anchored Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to equipping the next generation with evidence-based faith and practical leadership skills.

We believe teenagers deserve to be treated as intelligent people capable of examining evidence, thinking critically, and leading effectively.

### **Our Programs:**

- **EVIDENCE** — 52-week apologetics curriculum
- **LeaderPrep** — Leadership development for teens and adults
- **SPEAK** — Public speaking and communication training
- **Theo Scout** — AI tutor for apologetics education

[www.anchored-institute.org](http://www.anchored-institute.org)