

# The purpose of personal power

Written by Bill Perkins

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In his book, *Transforming Leadership*, Leighton Ford observes, "Next to truth, the power question is the most important issue for the leader. And it is precisely in relation to power that the leadership of Jesus stands in the greatest contrast to popular understandings of leadership."

In his essay, "Leadership and Power," John Gardner defines power as "the capacity to ensure the outcome one wishes and to prevent those one does not wish." In light of that definition, Ford concludes that no one ever had at his or her disposal greater power than Jesus. He could calm the raging storm, cast out demons, open blind eyes, or curse a fig tree and have it wither. Yet, Jesus consistently used his power to serve others (Matt. 20:28; John 13:1-17). And he has called us to do the same thing (John 13:15).

That's easy enough to say, but how do we put it into practice? The Apostle Paul urges us to treat others as members of their own family. He said, "Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity" (1 Timothy 5:1-2). Leaders use their influence to help those in need. While Paul's instructions apply to the church, they would work just as well in the marketplace, classroom or neighborhood.

As a leader, in whatever capacity, we must follow the Lord's example and respectfully serve those under our charge. Indeed, I think we should go beyond that and serve everyone we encounter with respect and kindness.

*(Transforming Leadership, Leighton Ford, InterVarsity Press, pp. 140-159)*