

## The Larry Principle

### **Ready:**

“It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.” – Matthew 20:26-28

**Set** Larry, at only 13 years old, impacted my life. At the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, we have a tradition that has occurred at every camp for more than 55 years. On the last night, we have open mic session when athletes come forward and share how camp has impacted their lives. It is always the highlight of the entire week of camp. I will never forget an FCA Leadership Camp I was directing several years ago when Larry got up to share at the open mic night. After a terrific week of training middle school and high school students on how to impact their campus for Christ, it was now time to hear how God had worked in their hearts towards leadership. Service projects, leadership workshops, hands-on training, inspiring speakers and powerful worship had marked the week. Larry was a five-foot tall 7th grader from inner-city Kansas City, and he was a hit with the campers. He was funny, loveable, charming and outspoken. His contagious laugh and raspy voice made Larry stand out from the others, and he became the camp favorite. The open mic session had already gone 30 minutes too long, but Larry stood up to be the last in line to share. Larry was never short of words, but when he leaned into the microphone with his raspy voice, he only shared a single transformational leadership statement. This one sentence hit me between the eyes! Larry said ... “If you ain’t serving, you ain’t leading!” He turned around, walked off the stage and sat down. Larry, the Great Theologian, had spoken. I was in awe. I have read hundreds of leadership books and articles, listened to tons of leadership talks and podcasts, written devotions about leadership and I had just heard the ultimate leadership challenge – from a 7th grader! It has since become my personal definition of leadership. Larry’s words still ring in my ears. Larry had just communicated in seven words one of the most profound things I had ever heard on leadership. Larry’s insight has changed the way I lead and serve. God used Larry in my life. It’s all about serving, not leading. Everybody wants to be a leader, but not a servant. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Life’s most urgent and persistent question is ‘What are you doing for others?’” As a result, whenever I have the blessing to speak at one of FCA’s Leadership Camps, I usually say to the young leaders at the beginning of camp, “Welcome to Servant Camp!” We don’t call them that, because no one would show up. When Billy Graham’s late wife, Ruth, stated to the president of Wheaton College that the university trained leaders, he replied, “No, not leaders, but servants.” We need to go into training to become servants, not leaders. Our devotion and desire should consume us to serve with everything we have. Do you have a fire burning within you to serve? Are you impacting your team by your serving? Don’t be fooled. You may think you are you leading, but if you’re not serving, you are not really leading. Let the Larry Principle burn in your heart: “If you ain’t serving, you ain’t leading!”

**Go** 1. How would you describe your leadership style? 2. What would others say about your leadership style? Be bold enough to ask a couple close teammates, friends or co-workers

what they think. 3. How does the Larry Principle impact you? 4. How did Jesus serve? Read John 13:1-15. How can you serve your team in that way?

**Workout** Mark 10:45 Luke 17:10 Galatians 5:13

**Overtime** “Father, I ask for a heart to serve. Teach me Your ways. It is hard to serve others with a pure heart. Forgive me for the times when I serve with the wrong motive. I desire to serve at full-strength. Use me for Your Kingdom work. Amen.”



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