

I have been a manager for a large corporation, taught undergraduate and graduate management courses, and been assigned responsibility for developing managers at a large federal agency. As a result of my interest in the subject I have read a number of books on the subject of servanthood, or stewardship, and--in my opinion--John Sullivan's book is the best. Why do I believe [\*Servant First!\*](#) is a book that deserves to be read?

In the first half of his book, John builds a sound foundation by addressing the best of existing management theory. I have known John Sullivan for several years and he is in his element here. John has also been a manager and he has also taught management for years. He knows the breadth, depth, and current state of management study--with at times its shortcomings and shallowness--and he is an excellent communicator. His balanced treatment of this initial section can probably only be truly measured for its scholarship by someone who has read widely in the field, but it does not take a scholar to understand and appreciate what John is writing about. He is clear, practical, and to the point.

Then, in the second half of the book, John turns with great insight and enthusiasm to directly address his thesis. "One needs to start with the attitude of a servant if one is to successfully serve others, and the teachings of Jesus Christ provide some great insight into this task that should be understood--not ignored or disregarded." John is as capable in his Biblical scholarship as he is in the field of management study. This is no simplistic cookbook written for the amateur. In this short book, John has provided his reader with a very lucid, succinct summary of management thought taken from a distinctly Christian perspective.

John is consistently logical, and his book has an organization that neither presumes too much, nor bores the reader. By the time one finishes "Servant First," one has a good picture of both the challenges and contributions of a servant ethic that attempts to emulate the teachings of Jesus Christ. One doesn't have to be a Christian to learn important principles from this book, but if one is a Christian there is a special insight into this process of developing one's servanthood that can be gained because of one's experiences and difficulties in attempting to serve--with competence.

I recommend it without reservation for the practitioner, the scholar, or the beginning student. I also recognize that it may have value for those working within churches. The experienced manager will find that there is contained in this book a timeless, classical wisdom written with an understanding of the modern world of the twenty-first century. It is a passionate message that one can only hope will find root in contemporary soil.

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