

One of my favorite books on leadership and one I first read several years ago is *Boundaries for Leaders* by Dr. Henry Cloud. His premise is simple, “Results, Relationships, and Being Ridiculously in Charge.” As pastors and church leaders, we may not always feel like we are in charge, but in many ways we are. At least, we oversee our own vision for our lives, our ministry and the church or ministry to which we are called.

Some of the ideas in the book:

Leadership matters — disciplines such as casting a vision, shaping the future, developing strategy, engaging the right talent in the right places, fostering innovation and agility, execution and much more. All these leadership competencies must be in place for a vision to become reality.

As a leader, you always get what you create and what you allow. Everybody out there is always trying to figure out the right plan. They meet, they argue, they worry and they put all their energy into trying to come up with the right plan. But the truth is that there are many right plans and there are many ways to get there. *The real problem is getting the people to do what it takes to make the plan work.* That is where you win or lose. *It’s always about the people. It’s about leading the right people, to do the right things, in the right ways, at the right times.*

- As you focus on the plan — how can you add focus and how do you lead the people to execute the plan?
- What kind of culture, team or organization have you created or allowed?
- How do you and your team need to be different from what you are?
- How do you hold yourself and your team accountable for the results you are getting?
- What does it mean for you to be “ridiculously” in charge?

The core of leadership is “getting the vision to have tangible results in a real world.”

Goal Selection: Choose goals based on priority, relevance, experience and knowledge of current realities while anticipating consequences and outcomes.

Planning and Organization: Generate steps and a sequence of linear behaviors that will get you there, knowing what will be needed along the way, including resources and create a strategy to pull it off.

Initiation and Persistence: Begin and maintain goal-directed behavior despite intrusions,

distractions or changes in the demands of the task at hand.

Flexibility: Exercise the ability to be adaptable, think strategically and solve problems by creating solutions as things change around us, shifting attention and plans as needed.

Execution and Goal Attainment: Exhibit the ability to execute the plan within the limits of time and other constraints.

Self-Regulation: Use self-observation to monitor performance, self-judgment to evaluate performance and self-regulation to change to reach the goal.

Am I attending to what is important? What do I have in place to ensure my team is attending to what is crucial? Am I helping those I work with to attend to what is important and crucial? Are the vision and strategy clearly communicated in a way that allows everyone to attend, and move towards it? Do they know what they control directly affects the vision and strategy?

As pastors and church leaders, the demands and distractions of the church can easily take us in the wrong direction or influence us and our church to tread water and find ourselves going nowhere. Taking the time with Bible in hand, heart open to God and mind ready to refocus on the questions asked. The ideas given in books like this can help us envision a new future for our ministry and our churches. It's worth taking the time to do the work.