

YOUNG AND IN CHARGE

*Setting the Example in Leadership Before the World Thinks
You're Ready*

Eric Schram

The Legitness Company · Anchorage, Alaska

Contents

A Note on Scripture

Foreword

Introduction: Before the World Thinks You're Ready

Part One — The Foundation

1. The Call Before the Crown

You Don't Need a Title to Lead

2. Rooted

Knowing Who You Are Before You Lead

Part Two — The Call

3. Don't Let Them Look Down

Overcoming Doubt, Criticism, and Being Underestimated

Theological Interlude: What Paul Actually Said

Mining the Full Depth of 1 Timothy 4:12

Part Three — The Five Pillars

4. Speak Like a Leader

Pillar One: Logos — The Private Discipline of Words

5. The Voice That Leads

Pillar One: Logos — Building Public Influence

6. Walk Like It's Real

Pillar Two: Anastrophē — Conduct

7. Love as a Weapon

Pillar Three: Agapē — The Pillar That Holds Everything

8. Faith That Builds Fire

Pillar Four: Pistis — Believing and Living Faithfully

9. Purity Is Power

Pillar Five: Hagneia — Body, Relationships, Boundaries

10. Clean Motives

Pillar Five: Hagneia — The Interior Life

Part Four — The Long Game

11. You're Not Meant to Lead Alone

Building the Relational Ecosystem

12. Serving Before You're Seen

Faithfulness in Obscurity

13. The Enemy Within

Pride, Ambition, and the Dark Side of Gifting

14. When It Falls Apart

Handling Failure, Criticism, and the Dark Nights

15. The Mantle of Responsibility

Carrying the Weight Without Being Crushed

16. Now, Not Later

The Urgency of Obedience

Closing & Resources

Conclusion: Set the Example. Start the Movement.

Acknowledgments

About the Author

Appendix: A 16-Week Small Group Study Guide

Notes

Scripture Index

Recommended Reading

Before the World Thinks You're Ready

The story that started everything — and why it belongs to you too

“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 (NIV)

Signal Hill

I was twenty years old, and I was afraid.

The prayer walk was over. I had spent the last hour circling the park at Signal Hill — a hilltop community space overlooking the sprawl of Long Beach, California — trying to talk myself into something I wasn't sure I was ready for. The city lights were just beginning to flicker on in the early evening, and the whole scene was quiet and large in the way that California sunsets can be, the kind of quiet that makes your own thoughts sound louder than they normally do.

Earlier that week, my campus minister had asked me to step into a small group leadership role in our college ministry. It wasn't a huge assignment by any visible measure — a handful of college students, a weekly gathering, some ministry leader responsibility for a small group of peers. But to me, at twenty, with no formal training and a persistent suspicion that I didn't really know what I was doing, it felt enormous. It felt like the kind of thing that was meant for someone else. Someone older. Someone more prepared. Someone with more experience and fewer doubts and a better answer to the question that kept surfacing as I walked: Who am I to lead?

I was heading back to my car, ready to call my campus minister and explain, kindly but firmly, that they had the wrong person — when one of the other college leaders called out to me from across the parking lot. He was a couple of years older than me, someone I genuinely respected, and

we fell into conversation the way you do when you're not quite ready to leave a place. The topic came up naturally. He asked if I'd given them an answer yet. I told him the truth.

"I'm too young, man," I said. "I don't have the experience. I don't know enough. They should ask someone else."

He was quiet for a moment. Then he said something I have never forgotten.

"God already knew all that. He knew you were young. He knew you didn't have the experience. And He still didn't stop them from asking you. If He wanted someone else, He would have sent someone else. The question isn't whether you're ready. The question is whether you're willing."

He paused, then added: "There's a difference between sitting on the bench and playing in the game. You can't get better at playing from the bench."

I drove home. I sat with it. I prayed — haltingly, honestly, still afraid. And then I called my campus minister and said yes.

PART ONE • THE FOUNDATION
CHAPTER 1

The Call Before the Crown

You Don't Need a Title to Lead

“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” —1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

The Field Where Kings Are Made

Jesse of Bethlehem had seven sons. Seven. And when the prophet Samuel arrived at his door with a horn of oil and a message from God — “I have chosen one of your sons to be king” — Jesse did not think to call the youngest one in from the fields. He lined up the seven who were present, the seven who looked the part, the seven who would have seemed plausible. Seven sons, and the eighth one wasn't even in the room.

This detail is not incidental. It is the whole point of the story.

David was not overlooked by accident. He was overlooked because everyone in that house — his father, his brothers, the prophet Samuel, and if we're being honest, probably David himself on his more uncertain days — operated according to the world's metric of readiness. The world's metric says: the one who looks most qualified is the one most qualified. And David, the youngest, the smallest, the one who smelled like sheep and spent his days in obscurity arguing with lions over the welfare of lambs — David did not look like a king.

God's metric is different. “The Lord does not look at the things people look at,” Samuel declared when he was tempted to anoint the eldest son based on appearance alone. “People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

The heart. Not the résumé. Not the credentials. Not the age, the experience, the established reputation, or the family position. The heart.

The story continues.

This is only the beginning of *Young and In Charge* — a chapter-by-chapter journey through the five qualities the Apostle Paul charged to young Timothy: speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.

It weaves the depth of the original text together with the hard-won, practical wisdom of how real leadership is built — from the inside out, and made to last a lifetime rather than a season.

Speech · Conduct · Love · Faith · Purity

You are not too young. You are precisely what the world needs, right now.

Young and In Charge

Eric Schram · The Legitness Company