

Discussion Guide

STEADFAST

The Leadership Journey and Model of
DAVID S. DOCKERY

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Introduction

1. Where is God currently inviting you to lead with greater conviction, humility, or courage?
2. How did Dockery use the Great Commandment and the Great Commission to shape his leadership style? How do you see those two teachings in your leadership style?
3. Dockery's leadership was repeatedly tested by adversity—doctrinal conflict, institutional crisis, natural disaster, and uncertainty. When you face pressure, what does it reveal about the foundation of your faith and character?
4. What practices help you remain “steadfast and immovable” in seasons of trial?

Chapter 1

1. Dockery chose to graduate alongside his Black classmates rather than join the boycott—knowing how it would cost him. How does that story inspire or convict you?
2. During his early college years, Dockery didn't reject his faith; he simply neglected it. When have you had a similar experience with your faith? Is your faith currently shaping your daily decisions or merely staying in the background?
3. Discuss Dockery's role as team manager. How did that experience influence his future leadership? How is God using an unseen or “unimportant” role in your life to prepare you for something else? What is your attitude toward serving in these types of positions?
4. Where is God asking you to live with deeper conviction right now? What would it cost you to say yes?

Chapter 2

1. It's not always easy to know the difference between your own wants and God's call. How did the Dockerys discern God's call? How do you discern God's call in your life?
2. The Dockerys made choices that were often unpredictable as they moved around the country, yet they felt called to follow God's lead. Where is God asking you to step outside what's familiar, comfortable, or expected, just because you trust His call?
3. Discuss Dockery's devotion to his work in Brooklyn: quiet study, raising children, and pastoring his congregation. Once again, it seems that God had him in a season of preparation. How do you respond to similar “ordinary” seasons in your own life?
4. If God interrupted your current plans with an unexpected call, how would you respond?

Chapter 3

1. At Southern Seminary, Dockery was given the nickname “Hagarite.” Discuss what that nickname implied. Why is it important that Dockery did not succumb to pressure from his colleagues to compromise his convictions? How do you respond in similar situations when softening your beliefs would help avoid tension?
2. What does standing courageously for truth look like? Does upholding the gospel involve being defensive, offensive, or some combination of the two?
3. How did Dockery navigate both the joy and trauma of the day he was approved as Dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary? What is your experience holding two opposing emotions at the same time?
4. Why did Dockery remove himself from consideration for the Southern Seminary presidency? When have you made a difficult decision because it served the greater good, even though it was not your personal preference?

Chapter 4

1. Read through Dockery’s inauguration speech at Union University. What key points stand out to you? How would you describe the vision he outlined?
2. How did Dockery’s vision align with the Great Commandment? How does the Great Commandment serve as a foundation for your life’s priorities?
3. Dockery invited to campus and engaged with leaders and thinkers who believed differently from him. Why was it important to do so? How do you treat others who have differing beliefs?
4. Summarize Dockery’s holistic vision for Union University. Why was it important to champion academic excellence, spiritual vitality, and social responsibility?

Chapter 5

1. Regarding the tornado that devastated Union University, the author writes, “Dockery knew well that leadership was not the art of evasion, but the resolve to stand firm in the face of difficulty. With that in view, he understood that prayer was the only right next step.” What does it mean to you that Dockery’s first instinct in the middle of crisis was to pray?
2. When you experience a crisis, what is your first step and what does that reveal about you and your faith?
3. What challenge in your life is God using right now to sharpen your leadership skills and deepen your trust in him?
4. Dockery had declined an earlier invitation to serve as President of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School because he felt he needed to stay at Union following the tornado. Years later, when Union was in a stable place, he accepted a new position at Trinity. How do you discern God’s leading in similar situations? When have you made a change at the right time? When have you over-stayed in a position because you were comfortable and feared change?

Chapter 6

1. Discuss Dockery's handling of the women's basketball team wanting to kneel during the national anthem. How did his leadership inspire you? When you face similar situations, what is your first reaction?
2. Where might God be calling you to demonstrate conviction through compassion?
3. Dockery's sudden heart attack was described as a "brush with mortality." How does illness, physical limitations, or chronic pain or condition influence the way you pursue success?
4. In this chapter, how do you see the Great Commandment and the Great Commission at work in Dockery's leadership?

Chapter 7

1. After surviving a heart attack, Dockery began thinking in terms of the "final quarter" of his life. If you were living in the "final quarter" of life, what priorities would you shift? What really matters and what will last beyond this life?
2. Through the International Alliance for Christian Education, Dockery worked to unite diverse institutions around shared confessional commitments rooted in historic Christian orthodoxy (such as the Nicene Creed). How do you pursue unity and collaboration with other believers? What is holding you back from creating and maintaining new relationships?
3. Once again, Dockery navigated a stressful position at Southwestern to lead with wisdom and integrity. When have you stepped into a similar role? How did you make plans for leadership amid the chaos?
4. The name of this chapter is "Consecration." What would it mean for your life to be defined as consecrated to Christ's mission, regardless of your circumstances?

Chapter 8

1. Throughout his writing on Scripture, especially in *The Doctrine of the Bible*, Dockery consistently defends the full truthfulness and authority of the Bible. If someone were to observe your daily decisions, habits, and priorities, how would they describe the role of the Bible in your life?
2. Dockery wrote that one must be intellectually engaged to love God well. What does it mean to you to love God with all your mind? What are some practical ways to love God well with your mind?
3. Dockery's leadership was based on Scripture, specifically the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. He regularly engaged in the "ordinary" habits of faith (Bible study and prayer, for example) to submit to God's leading. What is foundational to your leadership style, and what does that state of preparation look like in your life?
4. Describe Dockery's legacy of leadership. How does it inspire you? Convict you?

Chapter 9

1. Dockery believed that every Christian leader must develop a theology that informs practice. Is your faith simply something you affirm, or does it truly transform the way you live? What practical steps could you take to help make your faith transformational?
2. Discuss how Dockery balanced both theological convictions and compassionate outreach. How do you hold both truth and love as a leader?
3. Dockery's leadership centered on leaving institutions equipped for gospel impact long after his tenure. How may God be calling you to do the same in your leadership roles?
4. Where are you building something that will outlast you?

Chapter 10

1. When you strive to do something with excellence, what is really motivating you? Is it recognition, fear of failure, comparison, or genuine devotion to Christ?
2. Dockery focused first on defining purpose. Do you know your purpose? Where might you be pursuing success without first embracing your identity in Christ and God's call?
3. How can you pursue high standards without neglecting humility, health, and community?
4. How do you balance leadership that is both Christ-centered and excellence-driven? How does Dockery inspire you?

Chapter 11

1. How would your leadership look different if you were to develop a deeper level of trust in God, rather than relying on your own competence?
2. Discuss Dockery's description of leadership as a symphony. How do you see your leadership? Is it a symphony, or would you choose a different metaphor?
3. How important is it to build trust among a variety of groups, not just those with whom you agree?
4. What is a practical way you could deepen trust in at least one relationship in your life?

Chapter 12

1. How did Dockery's prioritizing the Great Commandment and the Great Commission make his leadership effective?
2. What does it mean to lead with purpose?
3. How can individuals, within their own spheres of influence, focus their efforts on advancing God's mission?
4. Dockery's leadership helped build bridges among different Christians, creating unity for the sake of the gospel. How does your leadership do the same? What is the value in bringing differing voices and view points together?

Chapter 13

1. Dockery's model of leadership is rooted in his devotion to his Christian faith and a biblical worldview. How does your worldview and faith ground your leadership?
2. How do you respond to Paul's description of leadership as stewardship?
3. How would you describe a "theological vision" of leadership? How do you see it in your leadership style?
4. What about Dockery's leadership model do you find most impactful for your life?
5. Where are you building something that will outlast you?

