

## **Add Value to Others**

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I just attended the annual “Catalyst Conference.” Maybe you’ll go with me next year—Thursday and Friday, October 9 and 10, 2008.

The Catalyst Conference is designed for young leaders. I’m an old guy when I’m sitting in the crowd. But inspiration is not reserved for the young—I left inspired!

All of the speakers are Christian leaders. Some serve in full-time Christian ministry. Others are leaders in secular roles, fulfilling their responsibilities following Christian principles.

John Maxwell and Andy Stanley started the annual gathering of young Christian leaders eight years ago. They may have spoken at each year’s event—I know they presented at the three I attended.

This year, Andy Stanley, Erwin McManus, Dave Ramsey, and Reggie Joyner (other presenters) gave a special “Catalyst Lifetime Award” to John Maxwell for his impact as a teacher of leaders. I looked up the books Maxwell has written—I lost count somewhere beyond thirty.

Emotionally touched, Maxwell said he could not recall having prayed as hard over any previous presentation as he did for his remarks this year. He said that as he ages, he becomes less certain of many things. Yet some awarenesses become even more certain.

One of those things is the topic he chose to address: “Intentionally add value to people every day!” He said that Jesus did that, giving a new sense of hope to many. If Jesus is our role model, then we are to serve those we influence every day.

Maxwell offered four thoughts about how to add value to others.

**Start by valuing others.** Jesus valued people. While the Pharisees and Sadducees were having their ministerial meetings, Jesus was serving tax collectors and hookers, the poor, and the sick. Jesus knew their hearts. He knew they needed a grace-filled reconciliation with their creator.

**Add value to self.** Leaders who add value to others are constantly seeking growth experiences. They discover their spiritual gifts and cultivate them. Leaders seek to improve the methods by which they can serve. They give away the insights and perspectives they’ve gained.

**Listen to what other people value.** Leaders care enough to ask. They have listened and learned what’s important to each person in their sphere of influence. They offer compassion. They celebrate successes. They recognize the uniqueness of each person and his or her situation.

**Do the things God values.** Maxwell is deeply aware of those things that have eternal consequences. Holding back the tears, Maxwell acknowledged, “Soon my life will pass. Only what I do for Jesus will last. If you value people, and if you want to add value, pray with them.” And then he prayed over the 11,000 leaders gathered in the Gwinnet Center arena.

We humans are selfish, so we tend to put the focus of our attention on ourselves. It is easy (and sinful) for leaders to use their position, opportunity, or insights for themselves or against others. If we are not intentional and conscious about adding value to people, our “human nature” will tend to take from people.

We are blessed with leadership responsibilities so that we may serve, not that we may be served! This is a perspective quite different from that advocated by much of “the real world.” Yet I have found those leaders who understand and live the concept to be hugely effective. Consider trying it!

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*If you want to know more about the Catalyst Conference, contact Dennis Hooper at (478)-988-0237 or at [dhooper2@juno.com](mailto:dhooper2@juno.com). Or look up [www.catalystconference.com](http://www.catalystconference.com) on the internet.*