



COLLABORATIVE BOOK CLUB

Study Guide & Journal

Canoeing the Mountains

Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory

Tod Bolsinger



INTRODUCTION

Collaborative Book Club



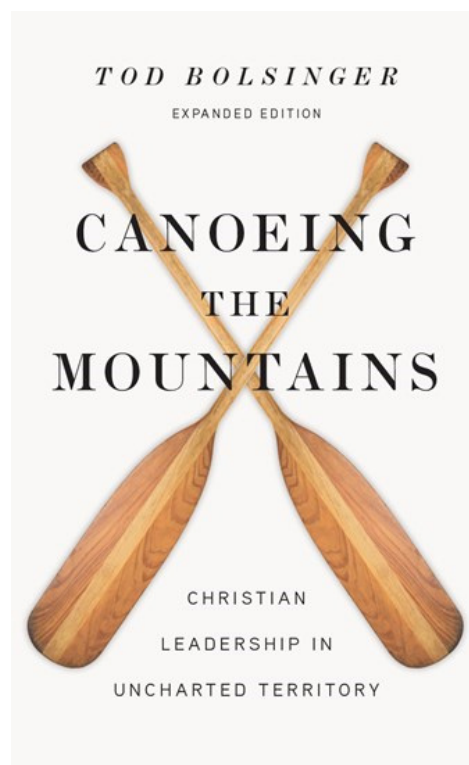
We're so thankful you're joining us for [Canoeing the Mountains](#) this season! In his book, Tod Bolsinger opens with Lewis and Clark reaching the Rockies, with no river to the Pacific, and every skill that got them that far suddenly is not enough to get them the rest of the way. As an EdLeader, you may have hit your own "Rocky Mountains" moment in leadership.

As we prepare for the [November 12th Collaborative Event](#), we want to encourage you to purchase a copy of *Canoeing the Mountains* and begin reading it with the Collaborative community. This book has radically shaped us and continues to shape us. It names things we'd felt but hadn't had words for; it stretched our faith as much as our leadership, reminding us that the discomfort of not having a map isn't a sign we're failing; it's often a sign we're finally doing the real Kingdom work.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."
(Proverbs 27:17) That's our prayer for this journey, that we'd sharpen one another as we read, reflect, and learn to lead off the map, together, trusting in the King of Kings each step of the way.

Onward & Upward, friends,

Angela, Amanda, & Joanna



Purchase [Canoeing the Mountains](#) from Amazon at this link. Or, scan the QR Code.



Understanding Uncharted Territory



Bolsinger opens with Lewis and Clark discovering the Rockies; no river to the Pacific, and all their canoeing skills suddenly useless. Where have you hit your own “Rocky Mountains,” a moment when your training or experience didn’t prepare you for what was in front of you?

What’s the difference between a technical problem and an adaptive challenge in your context right now? Which one have you been treating as the other?

Whose “map” (assumptions, playbook, past success) are you still operating from that may no longer fit the terrain?

Aha:

What’s one idea, story, or line from this section that named something you’re already experiencing in your leadership?

Application:

Where in your current role does this section’s content show up right now; a specific team, decision, or relationship?

Wondering:

What question did this section raise that you don’t have an answer to yet?

Notes



The On-the-Map Skill Set



What competencies made you successful enough to be trusted with leadership, and which of those same strengths might now be a liability off the map?

Bolsinger talks about becoming a “chief learning officer” of your own system. What’s something you’d need to unlearn or relearn to lead well right now?

Where have you (or your team) mistaken activity or effort for actual progress on an adaptive challenge?

Aha:

What’s one idea, story, or line from this section that named something you’re already experiencing in your leadership?

Application:

Where in your current role does this section’s content show up right now; a specific team, decision, or relationship?

Wondering:

What question did this section raise that you don’t have an answer to yet?

Notes



Leading Off the Map



“Getting on the balcony” means stepping back from the dance floor to see the bigger pattern. What would you see about your current situation if you could get on the balcony this week?

Adaptive work means giving the work back to the people who need to do it, rather than solving it for them. Where are you currently doing work that isn't yours to do?

How do you personally regulate distress, your own, and your team's, when the way forward is unclear?

Aha:

What's one idea, story, or line from this section that named something you're already experiencing in your leadership?

Application:

Where in your current role does this section's content show up right now; a specific team, decision, or relationship?

Wondering:

What question did this section raise that you don't have an answer to yet?



A large rectangular area filled with a grid of small, light green dots, intended for handwritten notes.

Relationships and Resistance



Resistance to change is often a sign the work is real, not a sign you're doing it wrong. Where have you experienced resistance recently, and what might it be telling you?

Bolsinger emphasizes that transformational leadership is a team sport, built on trusted relationships. Who are your “expedition partners” right now, and who’s missing?

Has anyone’s resistance (or your own) caused you to shrink back from necessary change? What would it look like to hold steady instead?

Aha:

What’s one idea, story, or line from this section that named something you’re already experiencing in your leadership?

Application:

Where in your current role does this section’s content show up right now; a specific team, decision, or relationship?

Wondering:

What question did this section raise that you don’t have an answer to yet?

Notes



A large grid of small dots for taking notes, covering the majority of the page below the header.

Transformation



What would it mean for you (not just your organization) to arrive in “new land” changed by this journey?

Bolsinger frames this as becoming an explorer, not just a manager of what already exists. Where do you need more courage than competence right now?

Looking back across all five parts, what’s one shift, in mindset, practice, or relationship, you want to carry forward from this book?

Aha:

What’s one idea, story, or line from this section that named something you’re already experiencing in your leadership?

Application:

Where in your current role does this section’s content show up right now; a specific team, decision, or relationship?

Wondering:

What question did this section raise that you don’t have an answer to yet?

Notes

