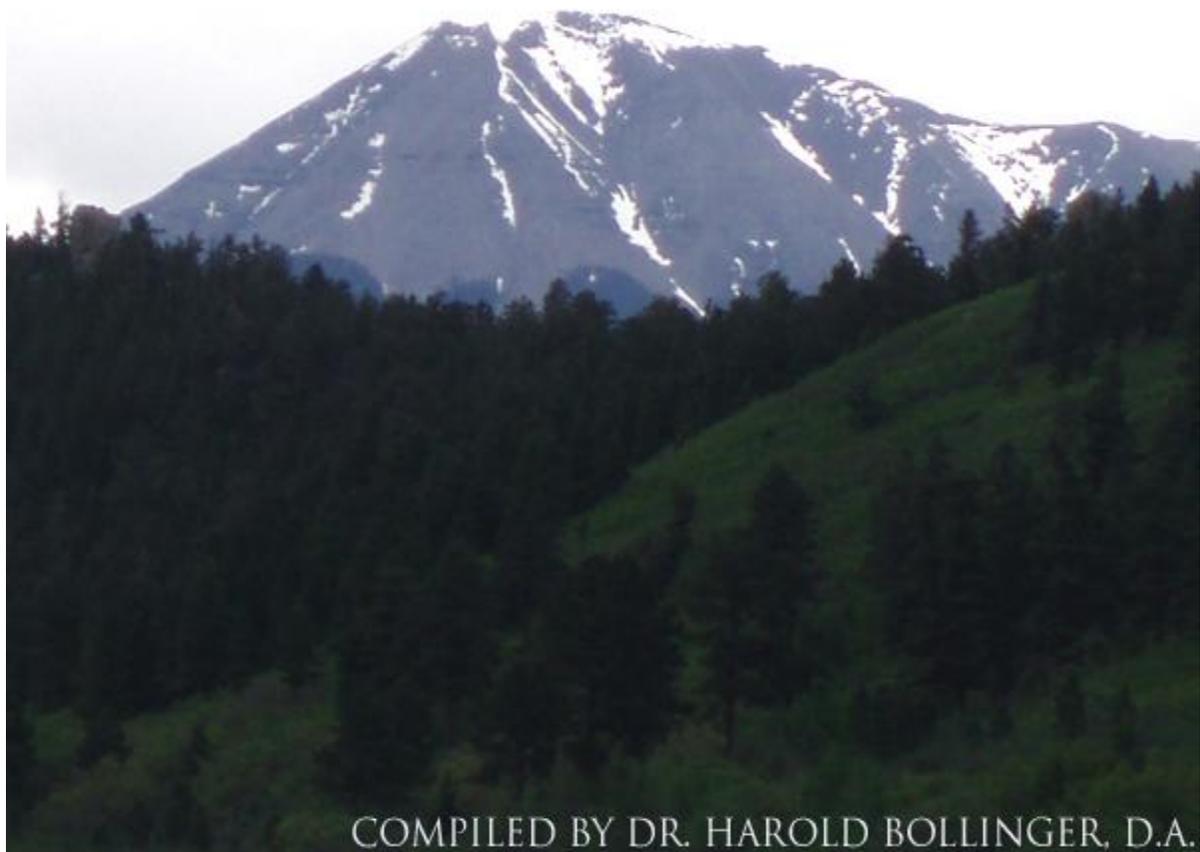


# INTEGRITY

## THE KEY TO LEADERSHIP



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## Forward

### Proverbs 10:9

People with integrity have firm footing, but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall.

The foundation of leadership is integrity. You can lead only those who trust you.

When you lose people's trust, you've lost everything. The right to lead is earned, and it's earned by being trustworthy. The most damaging sin a leader can commit is to betray the trust of those who trust him.

### 2 Cor. 1:12

We can say with confidence and a clear conscience that we have been honest and sincere in all our dealings. We have depended on God's grace, not on our own earthly wisdom. That is how we have acted toward everyone, and especially toward you.

In this large and diverse Corinthian church, the believers favored different preachers.

Because there was as yet no written New Testament, the believers depended heavily on preaching and teaching for spiritual insight into the meaning of the Old Testament.

Some followed Paul, who had founded their church; some who had heard Peter in Jerusalem followed him; while others listened only to Apollos, an eloquent and popular preacher who had had a dynamic ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:24; Acts 19:1).

Although these three preachers were united in their message, their personalities attracted different people. At this time the church was in danger of dividing. By mentioning Jesus Christ ten times in the first ten verses, Paul makes it clear who it is all preachers and teachers should emphasize. God's message is much more important than any human messenger.

Paul wondered whether the Corinthians' quarrels had "divided" Christ. This is a graphic picture of what happens when the church (the body of Christ) is divided.

With the many churches and styles of worship available today, we could get caught up in the same game of "my preacher is better than yours!" To do so would divide Christ again.

But Christ is not divided, and his true followers should not allow anything to divide them. Don't let your appreciation for any teacher, preacher, or author lead you into intellectual pride. Our allegiance must be to Christ and to the unity that he desires.

Integrity includes both internal and external commitment. As you review the Scriptural understandings. Make your determination to be a workman that needs not to be ashamed.

# Chapter 1

## What is Integrity?

Christian leaders are called to be holy and to maintain a life of purity.

Integrity is the quality of sound moral principles, to be righteous, honest and sincere in I all things

God looks for leaders who live holy lives that are accountable to God and the body of Christ. Such lives through lives of integrity glory God.

They do not become stumbling blocks, but encourage growth in God's people.

**Throughout the Old Testament, emphasis is placed on a life of integrity. God is speaking to Solomon**

### 1 Kings 9:4-5

As for you, if you will follow me with integrity and godliness, as David your father did, always obeying my commands and keeping my laws and regulations, then I will establish the throne of your dynasty over Israel forever. For I made this promise to your father, David: 'You will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.'

**God was upholding David Because of his integrity.**

### Psalm 41:11-13

I know that you are pleased with me,

For you have not let my enemy triumph over me. You have preserved my life because I am innocent; you have brought me into your presence forever. Bless the Lord, the God of Israel, who lives forever from eternal ages past. Amen and amen!

### **God watches over his saints:**

#### **Proverbs 2:6-8**

For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of good sense to the godly. He is their shield, protecting those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of justice and protects those who are faithful to him.

### **Wisdom comes in two ways:**

It is a God-given gift and also the result of an energetic search.

Wisdom's starting point is God and his revealed Word, the source of "knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6).

In that sense, wisdom is his gift to us. But he gives it only to those who earnestly seek it. But because God's wisdom is hidden from the rebellious and foolish, it takes effort to find it and use it.

The pathway to wisdom is strenuous. When we are on the path, we discover that true wisdom is God's and that he will guide us and reward our sincere and persistent search.

God gives us wisdom and victory but not for drifting through life or acting irresponsibly with his gifts and resources. If we are faithful and keep our purpose in life clearly in mind, he will keep us from pride and greed.

**Integrity is trusting in the Lord without wavering.**

**Psalm 26:1-3**

Declare me innocent, O Lord, for I have acted with integrity;

I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. Put me on trial, Lord, and cross-examine me. Test my motives and affections.

For I am constantly aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth.

By understanding the meaning of integrity, we understand the vital importance of a believer to maintain a holy and faithful life.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Examples of Integrity**

**Jesus Christ is the greatest example of integrity.**

#### **Hebrews 7:26**

He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has now been set apart from sinners, and he has been given the highest place of honor in heaven.

#### **John 19:30**

When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

#### **Job**

- Brilliant planner and strategist
- Fearless fighter and resourceful commander
- Confident leader who did not hesitate to confront even the king
- Helped reconcile David and Absalom
- Masterminded the conquest of Jerusalem

#### **Joseph, the son of Jacob**

- Rose in power from slave to ruler of Egypt
- Was known for his personal integrity
- Was a man of spiritual sensitivity
- Prepared a nation to survive a famine

## **Daniel**

- Although young when deported, remained true to his faith
- Served as an adviser to two Babylonian kings and two Medo-Persian kings
- Was a man of prayer and a statesman with the gift of prophecy
- Survived the lions' den

## **Joseph, Stepfather of Jesus**

- A descendant of King David
- Jesus' legal and earthly father
- A person sensitive to God's guidance and willing to do God's will no matter what the consequence

## **Barnabas**

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- One of the first to sell possessions to help the Christians in Jerusalem
- First to travel with Paul as a missionary team
- Was an encourager, as his nickname shows, and thus one of the most quietly influential people in the early days of Christianity.

## **Moses**

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- Egyptian education; desert training
- Greatest Jewish leader; set the exodus in motion
- Prophet and lawgiver; recorder of the Ten Commandments
- Author of the Pentateuch

## **Deborah**

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- Fourth and only female judge of Israel
- Special abilities as a mediator, adviser, and counselor
- When called on to lead, was able to plan, direct, and delegate
- Known for her prophetic power

## **Esther**

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- Her beauty and character won the heart of Persia's king
  - She combined courage with careful planning
  - She was open to advice and willing to act
  - She was more concerned for others than for her own security
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## **Abraham**

- . His faith pleased God
- Became the founder of the Jewish nation
- Was respected by others and was courageous in defending his family at any cost
- Was not only a caring father to his own family, but practiced hospitality to others
- Was a successful and wealthy rancher
- Usually avoided conflicts, but when they were unavoidable, he allowed his opponent to set the rules for settling the dispute

## **The Hebrew Children with Daniel**

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- Stood with Daniel against eating food from the king's table
- Shared a friendship that stood the tests of hardship, success, wealth, and possible death
- Unwilling to compromise their convictions even in the face of death
- Survived the fiery furnace

## **Hezekiah**

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- Was the king of Judah who instigated civil and religious reforms
- Had a personal, growing relationship with God
- Developed a powerful prayer life

## **David**

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- Greatest king of Israel
- Ancestor of Jesus Christ
- Listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11
- A man described by God himself as a man after his own heart

## **Samuel**

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- Used by God to assist Israel's transition from a loosely governed tribal people to a monarchy
- Anointed the first two kings of Israel
- Was the last and most effective of Israel's judges
- Is listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11

## **Paul**

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- Transformed by God from a persecutor of Christians to a preacher for Christ
- Preached for Christ throughout the Roman empire on three missionary journeys
- Wrote letters to various churches, which became part of the New Testament
- Was never afraid to face an issue head-on and deal with it
- Was sensitive to God's leading and, despite his strong personality, always did as God directed
- Is often called the apostle to the Gentiles

## **Chapter 3**

### **Commitment to Integrity**

#### **1. Integrity means treating people fairly and honestly.**

##### **Leviticus 19:35-36**

"Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight, or volume. Your scales and weights must be accurate. Your containers for measuring dry goods or liquids must be accurate. I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

##### **Deut. 25:15**

Yes, use honest weights and measures, so that you will enjoy a long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

##### **Proverbs 16:11-13**

The Lord demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standard. A king despises wrongdoing, for his rule depends on his justice. The king is pleased with righteous lips; he loves those who speak honestly.

#### **2. Integrity is giving your word and keeping it.**

##### **Exodus 8:28-32**

"All right, go ahead," Pharaoh replied. "I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the Lord your God in the wilderness. But don't go too far away. Now hurry, and pray for me."

"As soon as I go," Moses said, "I will ask the Lord to cause the swarms of flies to disappear from you and all your people. But I am warning you, don't change your mind again and refuse to let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord."

So Moses left Pharaoh and asked the Lord to remove all the flies. And the Lord did as Moses asked and caused the swarms to disappear. Not a single fly remained in the land! But Pharaoh hardened his heart again and refused to let the people go.

### **3. Integrity will protect you.**

#### **Psalm 25:21**

May integrity and honesty protect me, for I put my hope in you.

#### **Proverbs 2:7-8**

He grants a treasure of good sense to the godly. He is their shield, protecting those who walk with integrity. [8] He guards the paths of justice and protects those who are faithful to him.

### **4. Integrity is more valuable than riches.**

#### **Proverbs 28:6**

It is better to be poor and honest than rich and crooked.

### **5. The Lord will test and judge your integrity.**

#### **1 Chron. 29:17**

I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives,

and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.

## **6. The Lord hates lies and lack of integrity.**

### **Zech. 8:16-17**

But this is what you must do: Tell the truth to each other. Render verdicts in your courts that are just and that lead to peace. Do not make evil plots to harm each other. And stop this habit of swearing to things that are false. I hate all these things, says the Lord."

## **7. It may be difficult to maintain your integrity.**

### **Job 2:9**

His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die."

## **8. Your character can be corrupted by bad company**

### **1 Cor. 15:33**

Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for "bad company corrupts good character."

## **Chapter 4**

### **Accountability**

#### **Proverbs 11:14**

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

A good leader needs and uses wise advisers. One person's perspective and understanding is severely limited; he or she may not have all the facts or may be blinded by bias, emotions, or wrong impressions. To be a wise leader at home, at church, or at work, seek the counsel of others and be open to their advice. Then, after considering all the facts, make your decision.

#### **Proverbs 15:22**

Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established.

People with tunnel vision, those who are locked into one way of thinking, are likely to miss the right road because they have closed their minds to any new options. We need the help of those who can enlarge our vision and broaden our perspective. Seek out the advice of those who know you and have a wealth of experience. Build a network of advisers. Then be open to new ideas and be willing to weigh their suggestions carefully. Your plans will be stronger and more likely to succeed.

#### **Proverbs 24:6**

For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counselors there is safety.

In any major decision we make concerning college, marriage, career, children, etc., it is not a sign of weakness to ask for advice. Instead, it is foolish not to ask for it. Find good advisers before making any big decision. They can help you expand your alternatives and evaluate your choices.

### **Proverbs 27:17**

Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

There is a mental sharpness that comes from being around good people. And a meeting of minds can help people see their ideas with new clarity, refine them, and shape them into brilliant insights. This requires discussion partners who can challenge each other and stimulate thought—people who focus on the idea without involving their egos in the discussion; people who know how to attack the thought and not the thinker. Two friends who bring their ideas together can help each other become sharper.

### **2 Cor. 12:19**

Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? We speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

Although Paul asked nothing of the Corinthian believers, some doubters were still saying that Paul must have been crafty and made money from them somehow. But Paul again explained that everything he did for the believers was for their edification, not to enrich himself.

### **Ephes. 5:21**

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

When we submit to God, we become more willing to obey his command to submit to others, that is, to subordinate our rights to theirs. In a marriage relationship, both husband and wife are called to submit. For the wife, this means willingly following her husband's leadership in Christ.

For the husband, it means putting aside his own interests in order to care for his wife. Submission is rarely a problem in homes where both partners have a strong relationship with Christ and where each is concerned for the happiness of the other.

### **Col. 3:9-10**

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Lying to one another disrupts unity by destroying trust. It tears down relationships and may lead to serious conflict in a church. So don't exaggerate statistics, pass on rumors or gossip, or say things to build up your own image. Be committed to telling the truth.

What does it mean to "put on the new self"? It means that your conduct should match your faith. If you are a Christian, you should act like it. To be a Christian means more than just making good resolutions and having good intentions; it means taking the right actions. This is a straightforward step that is as simple as putting on your clothes.

### **James 5:16**

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Christ has made it possible for us to go directly to God for forgiveness.

But confessing our sins to each other still has an important place in the life of the church.

- (1) If we have sinned against an individual, we must ask him or her to forgive us.
- (2) If our sin has affected the church, we must confess it publicly.
- (3) If we need loving support as we struggle with a sin, we should confess that sin to those who are able to provide that support.

In Christ's kingdom, every believer is a priest to other believers (1 Peter 2:9).

The Christian's most powerful resource is communion with God through prayer. The results are often greater than we thought were possible. Some people see prayer as a last resort to be tried when all else fails. This approach is backward. Prayer should come first. Because God's power is infinitely greater than ours, it only makes sense to rely on it—especially because God encourages us to do so.

### **Hebrews 10:25**

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.

To neglect Christian meetings is to give up the encouragement and help of other Christians. We gather together to share our faith and to strengthen one another in the Lord. As we get closer to the "Day" when Christ will return, we will face many spiritual struggles, and even times of persecution. Anti-Christian forces will grow in strength. Difficulties should never be excuses for missing church services. Rather, as difficulties arise, we should make an even greater effort to be faithful in attendance.

## **Chapter 5**

### **How to keep your integrity as a leader**

#### **Deepen your reverence for God.**

God put you in the position you're in today.

#### **Psalm 75:6**

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

God promotes one and deposes another." Great leaders realize that they are stewards. They realize that it's not their world, their church, their business; they are just the manager, the steward. Promotion comes from God, not from other people.

You also much realize that God is holding you accountable.

Perhaps one of the reasons leaders try to get away secret sin it is that they don't fear God.

The Bible says, "Obey your spiritual leaders and be willing to do what they say. For their work is to watch over your souls and God will judge them on how well they do."

This ought to put the fear in leaders. God is going to judge us. There is no authority without accountability. The Bible says clearly that Pastors are accountable to God, as are all leaders in God's kingdom.

As a leader you are called to be accountable before God. Where there is a deep reverence for God, there will be integrity before Him.

#### **Develop a love for people.**

There is a law of leadership that states, worldly leaders focus on what they can get while leaders must focus on what they can give.

## **Psalm 78:72**

So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.

Although David had been on the throne when this psalm was written, he is called a shepherd and not a king. Shepherding, a common profession in Biblical times, was a highly responsible job. The flocks were completely dependent upon shepherds for guidance, provision, and protection. David had spent his early years as a shepherd (1 Samuel 16:10-11). This was a training ground for the future responsibilities God had in store for him. When he was ready, God took him from caring for sheep to caring for Israel, God's people. Don't treat your present situation lightly or irresponsibly; it may be God's training ground for your future.

### **To be an effective leader, you must have love for people.**

Leaders who consistently abuse their powers are those who don't love people.

Paul said, "Because of our love for you we were ready to share with you not only the Good News but even our own lives. You were so dear to us!"

### **Discipline yourself for eternal rewards.**

If you're going to be a leader, instead of having more privileges as your influence grows, there becomes less space for personal privileges. There's a leadership law that states, losers focus on their rights while leaders focus on their responsibilities.

### **Protect your integrity at all costs**

If you lose it, little else matters as a leader.

## Chapter 6

### Moral Integrity

#### Titus 2:6

Young men likewise exhort to be sobered minded.

This advice given to young men was very important. In ancient Greek society, the role of the husband/father was not viewed as a nurturing role, but merely as a functional one. Many young men today have been raised in families where fathers have neglected their responsibilities to their wives and children. Husbands and fathers who are good examples of Christian living are important role models for young men who need to *see* how it is done.

Believers must be grounded in the truths of the Bible—then the powerful oratory of false teachers, the possible devastation of tragic circumstances, or the pull of emotions won't sway them. Learn the Bible, study theology, apply Biblical principles, and *do* what you learn.

Having people of all ages in the church makes it strong, but it also brings potential for problems. Paul gave Titus counsel on how to help various groups of people. The older people should teach the younger by words *and* by example. This is how values are passed on from generation to generation. Does your church carry out this basic function?

Self-control was an important aspect in early Christianity.

The Christian community was made up of people from differing backgrounds and viewpoints, making conflict inevitable. Christians existed in a pagan and often a hostile world.

To stay above reproach, men and women needed wisdom and discernment to be discreet, and to master their wills, tongues, and passions so that Christ would not be dishonored. How's your self-control?

Women who were new Christians were to learn how to have harmony in the home by watching older women who had been Christians for some time. We have the same need today. Younger wives and mothers should learn to live in a Christian manner—loving their husbands and caring for their children—through observing exemplary women of God.

If you are of an age or position where people look up to you, make sure that your example is motivating younger believers to live in a way that honors God.

**No one is above temptation.**

**1 Cor. 10:12**

If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin.

In a culture filled with moral depravity and sin-inducing pressures, Paul gave strong encouragement to the Corinthians about temptation.

He said: (1) wrong desires and temptations happen to everyone, so don't feel you've been singled out; (2) others have resisted temptation, and so can you; (3) any temptation can be resisted because God will help you resist it.

God helps you resist temptation by helping you (1) recognize those people and situations that give you trouble, (2) run from anything you know is wrong, (3) choose to do only what is right, (4) pray for God's help, and (5) seek friends who love God and can offer help when you are tempted.

**Running from a tempting situation is your first step on the way to victory.**

### **2 Tim. 2:22**

Run from anything that stimulates youthful lust. Follow anything that makes you want to do right. Pursue faith and love and peace, and enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

To say, "I have conquered the problem", may open the door to temptation.

### **Proverbs 16:18**

Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall.

Proud people take little account of their weaknesses and do not anticipate stumbling blocks. They think they are above the frailties of common people. In this state of mind they are easily tripped up. Ironically, proud people seldom realize that pride is their problem, although everyone around them is well aware of it. Ask someone you trust whether self-satisfaction has blinded you to warning signs. He or she may help you avoid a fall.

### **Jeremiah 17:9**

"The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"

**Keep a close watch on your spiritual temperature.**

Be aware of your own level of commitment on a daily basis. It's very important that we watch our manners.

### Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.

Our heart—our feelings of love and desire—dictates to a great extent how we live because we always find time to do what we enjoy.

Solomon tells us to guard our heart above all else, making sure we concentrate on those desires that will keep us on the right path. Make sure your affections push you in the right direction. Put boundaries on your desires: don't go after everything you see. Look straight ahead, keep your eyes fixed on your goal, and don't get sidetracked on detours that lead to sin.

### **You must discipline your body.**

#### 1 Cor. 9:27

I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

Paul emphasizes a life of strict discipline. The Christian life involves both freedom and discipline. The goals of Paul's life were to glorify God and bring people to Christ. Thus he stayed free of any philosophical position or material entanglement that might sidetrack him, while he strictly disciplined himself to carry out his goal. For Paul, both freedom and discipline were important tools to be used in God's service.

Winning a race requires purpose and discipline. Paul uses this illustration to explain that the Christian life takes hard work, self-denial, and grueling preparation.

As Christians, we are running toward our heavenly reward. The essential disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and worship equip us to run with vigor and stamina. Don't merely observe from the grandstand; don't just turn out to jog a couple of laps each morning. Train diligently—your spiritual progress depends upon it.

At times we must even give up something good in order to do what God wants. Each person's special duties determine the discipline and denial that he or she must accept. Without a goal, discipline is nothing but self-punishment. With the goal of pleasing God, our denial seems like nothing compared to the eternal, imperishable reward that will be ours.

**Moral integrity in the ministry cannot be over stressed. Be faithful.**

### **3. If you're married, maintain your own marriage.**

The greatest insurance for moral integrity is a happy home life. It's important that if we're married, we make sure that our marriage is growing and developing. Like the old saying, "The grass is not greener on that side of the fence and the grass is not greener on this side of the fence. The grass is greener where you water it." It's very important that we maintain our own marriages.

### **4. Develop healthy outlets for emotional and sexual energy.**

Satan loves to play on pent-up emotions. I've talked with people who don't have healthy ways to express their emotions and release that energy. Many times, immorality is rampant among them, because they're burning out.

**Don't let evil get the best of you.**

**Romans 12:21**

Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.

**5. Guard your mind.**

**James 1:14-15**

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Temptation comes from evil desires inside us, not from God. It begins with an evil thought and becomes sin when we dwell on the thought and allow it to become an action.

Like a snowball rolling downhill, sin grows more destructive the more we let it have its way. The best time to stop a temptation is before it is too strong or moving too fast to control.

People who live for God often wonder why they still have temptations. Does God tempt them? God *tests* people, but he does not *tempt* them by trying to seduce them into sin. God allows Satan to tempt people, however, in order to refine their faith and to help them grow in their dependence on Christ. We can resist the temptation to sin by turning to God for strength and choosing to obey his Word.

It is easy to blame others and make excuses for evil thoughts and wrong actions. Excuses include (1) it's the other person's fault; (2) I couldn't help it; (3) everybody's doing it; (4) it was just a mistake; (5) nobody's perfect; (6) the devil made me do it; (7) I was pressured into it; (8) I

didn't know it was wrong; (9) God is tempting me. A person who makes excuses is trying to shift the blame from himself or herself to something or someone else. A Christian, on the other hand, accepts responsibility for his or her wrongs, confesses them, and asks God for forgiveness.

### **Make full proof of your ministry.**

#### **2 Tim. 4:5**

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

To keep cool when you are jarred and jolted by people or circumstances, don't react quickly. In any work of ministry that you undertake, keeping your head makes you morally alert to temptation, resistant to pressure, and vigilant when facing heavy responsibility.

As he neared the end of his life, Paul could confidently say he had been faithful to his call. Thus he faced death calmly, knowing that Christ would reward him.

### **Exercise self-control.**

#### **1 Peter 1:13**

So think clearly and exercise self-control. Look forward to the special blessings that will come to you at the return of Jesus Christ.

The imminent return of Christ should motivate us to live for him. This means being mentally alert ("prepare your minds for action"), disciplined ("self-controlled"), and focused ("set your hope fully"). Are you ready to meet Christ?

## **2 Cor. 10:5**

With these weapons we break down every proud argument that keeps people from knowing God. With these weapons we conquer their rebellious ideas, and we teach them to obey Christ.

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## **Romans 13:14**

But let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you, and don't think of ways to indulge your evil desires.

**Remind yourself regularly of the damaging consequences of moral failure.**

There wouldn't be any temptation if there wasn't some kind of pleasure in it. Even God says there is pleasure in sin, but it's just for a season. You have your kicks, then you also have your kickbacks.

## **James 1:15**

"Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Temptation comes from evil desires inside us, not from God. It begins with an evil thought and becomes sin when we dwell on the thought and allow it to become an action. Like a snowball rolling downhill, sin grows more destructive the more we let it have its way. The best time to stop a temptation is before it is too strong or moving too fast to control.

See Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Cor. 10:13; and 2 Tim. 2:22 for more about escaping temptation.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Core Values**

#### **LOVE**

##### **John 3:16**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

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We extend acceptance and the love of Jesus Christ, without partiality, to every person.

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#### **SERVANTHOOD**

##### **Mark 10:43-44**

But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, [44] and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all.

We serve with humility and love, placing appropriate value on others and ourselves.

#### **INTEGRITY**

##### **Proverbs 11:3**

Good people are guided by their honesty; treacherous people are destroyed by their dishonesty.

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We function with integrity in our relationships with others and with God.

## **TIMING**

### **Eccles. 3:1**

There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven.

We seek God's timing in our decisions and actions.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

### **1 Peter 4:10**

God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you.

We practice good stewardship in a spirit of faith, responsibly managing all the resources God has given us.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Philip. 4:9**

Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and heard from me and saw me doing, and the God of peace will be with you/

We lead by example, serving and empowering others.

## **INNOVATION**

## **Isaiah 42:9**

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Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens."

We seek creative and innovative strategies to carry out our mission and pursue our vision.

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## **EXCELLENCE**

### **1 Thes. 4:10**

Indeed, your love is already strong toward all the Christians in all of Macedonia. Even so, dear brothers and sisters, we beg you to love them more and more.

We pursue excellence in all we do, enabled and sustained by God's grace and power.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **2 Tim. 3:16**

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right.

We hold ourselves accountable to the ultimate authority of the Bible and embrace its principles of conduct.

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## Chapter 8

### Honesty

In studying the integrity of leaders, Robert Clinton study indicated that 70% of all leaders will not finish well.

**Some, like Demas have deserted the work of the Lord.**

#### **2 Tim. 4:10**

Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus has gone to Dalmatia.

Paul was virtually alone and probably lonely. No one had been there at his trial to speak in his defense (2 Tim. 4:16), and Demas had left the faith (2 Tim. 4:10). Only Luke had returned (2 Tim. 4:11).

Demas had been one of Paul's co-workers (Col. 4:14; Philemon 1:24), but he had deserted Paul because he "loved this world." In other words, Demas loved worldly values and worldly pleasures. There are two ways to love the world. God loves the world as he created it and as it could be if it were rescued from evil. Others, like Demas, love the world as it is, sin and all.

**Some have their mind on earthly things.**

### **Philip. 3:19**

Their future is eternal destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and all they think about is this life here on earth.

Paul criticized not only the Judaizers but also the self-indulgent Christians, people who claim to be Christians but don't live up to Christ's model of servanthood and self-sacrifice.

These people satisfy their own desires before even thinking about the needs of others. Freedom in Christ does not mean freedom to be selfish.

It means taking every opportunity to serve and to become the best person you can be.

Christians will one-day experience all the special privileges of our heavenly citizenship, because we belong to Christ. Let us not be so tied to this life that we would be sorry to see Christ return.

**Some fall because they are disqualified.**

### **2 Cor. 7:10**

For God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation. We will never regret that kind of sorrow. But sorrow without repentance is the kind that results in death.

“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation” refers to the sorrow for our sins that results in changed behavior. Many people are sorry (“worldly sorrow”).

Compare Peter's remorse and repentance with Judas's bitterness and act of suicide. Both disowned Christ. One repented and was restored to faith and service; the other took his life.

It is difficult to be confronted with our sin, and even more difficult to get rid of sin. Paul praised the Corinthians for clearing up an especially troublesome situation. Do you tend to be defensive when confronted? Don't let pride keep you from admitting your sins.

Accept correction as a tool for your growth, and do all you can to correct problems that are pointed out to you.

**Honesty with self and others is an absolute requirement for Christian leaders.**

### **Acts 24:16**

Because of this, I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and everyone else.

**God chose Abraham because of his honesty.**

### **Genesis 18:19**

I have singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the Lord and do what is right and just. Then I will do for him all that I have promised."

Abraham knew that God is just and that he punishes sin, but he may have wondered about God's mercy. Abraham seemed to be probing God's mind to see how merciful he really was. He left his conversation with God convinced that God was both kind and fair. Our prayers won't

change God's mind, but they may change ours just as Abraham's prayer changed his. Prayer helps us better understand the mind of God.

### **God chose trustworthy men.**

#### **Exodus 18:21**

But find some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as judges over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten.

Moses was spending so much time and energy hearing the Hebrews' complaints that he could not get to other important work.

Jethro suggested that Moses delegate most of this work to others and focus his efforts on jobs only he could do. People in positions of responsibility sometimes feel they are the only ones who can do necessary tasks; but others are capable of handling part of the load.

Delegation relieved Moses' stress and improved the quality of the government.

### **Never Accept a Bribe**

#### **Deut. 16:19-20**

You must never twist justice or show partiality. Never accept a bribe, for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and corrupt the decisions of the godly. [20] Let true justice prevail, so you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

## **Allow Justice to Prevail**

### **Deut. 25:15-16**

Yes, use honest weights and measures, so that you will enjoy a long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you. [16] Those who cheat with dishonest weights and measures are detestable to the Lord your God.

## **Speak the Truth**

### **Psalm 24:3-5**

Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.

They will receive the Lord's blessing and have right standing with God our savior.

Swearing by what is false means telling lies under oath. How greatly God values honesty!

Dishonesty comes easily, especially when complete truthfulness could cost us something, make us uncomfortable, or put us in an unfavorable light. Dishonest communication hinders relationships. Without honesty, a relationship with God is impossible.

If we lie to others, we will begin to deceive ourselves. God cannot hear us or speak to us if we are building a wall of self-deception.

## **God hates seven things.**

### **Proverbs 6:16-20**

These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

A proud look, a lying tongue, and  
hands that shed innocent blood,  
A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,  
feet that be swift in running to mischief,  
A false witness that speaketh lies, and  
he that soweth discord among brethren.

My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.

## **Those who live with God have been honest and fair.**

### **Isaiah 33:15-16**

The ones who can live here are those who are honest and fair, who reject making a profit by fraud, who stay far away from bribes, who refuse to listen to those who plot murder, who shut their eyes to all enticement to do wrong. [16] These are the ones who will dwell on high. The rocks of the mountains will be their fortress of safety. Food will be supplied to them, and they will have water in abundance.

These sinners realized that they could not live in the presence of the holy God, for he is like a fire that consumes evil. Only those who walk righteously and speak what is right can live with God. Isaiah gives

examples of how to demonstrate our righteousness and uprightness: we can reject gain from extortion and bribes, refuse to listen to plots of wrong actions, and shut our eyes to evil. If we are fair and honest in our relationships, we will dwell with God, and he will supply our needs.

**Small matters and big matters are treated the same.**

**Luke 16:10**

"Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won't be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities.

Our integrity often meets its match in money matters. God calls us to be honest even in small details we could easily rationalize away. Heaven's riches are far more valuable than earthly wealth. But if we are not trustworthy with our money here (no matter how much or little we have), we will be unfit to handle the vast riches of God's kingdom. Don't let your integrity slip in small matters, and it will not fail you in crucial decisions either.

**Fix your thoughts on truth.**

**Philip. 4:8**

And now, dear brothers and sisters, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

What we put into our minds determines what comes out in our words and actions. Paul tells us to program our minds with thoughts that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. Do you have problems with impure thoughts and daydreams?

Examine what you are putting into your mind through television, books, conversations, movies, and magazines. Replace harmful input with wholesome material.

Above all, read God's Word and pray. Ask God to help you focus your mind on what is good and pure. It takes practice, but it can be done.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Pride will destroy integrity**

#### **Psalm 10:4**

These wicked people are too proud to seek God.

They seem to think that God is dead.

#### **Psalm 18:27**

You rescue those who are humble,

but you humiliate the proud.

**Psalm 25:9**

He leads the humble in what is right,  
teaching them his way.

**Psalm 101:5**

I will not tolerate people who slander their neighbors.  
I will not endure conceit and pride.

**Psalm 149:4**

For the Lord delights in his people;  
he crowns the humble with salvation.

**Proverbs 3:34**

The Lord mocks at mockers, but he shows favor to the humble.

**Proverbs 8:13**

All who fear the Lord will hate evil. That is why I hate pride,  
arrogance, corruption, and perverted speech.

**Proverbs 18:12**

Haughtiness goes before destruction; humility precedes honor.

## **Isaiah 57:15**

The high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, the Holy One, says this: "I live in that high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I refresh the humble and give new courage to those with repentant hearts.

## **Jeremiah 9:23-24**

This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man gloat in his wisdom, or the mighty man in his might, or the rich man in his riches. [24] Let them boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the Lord who is just and righteous, whose love is unfailing, and that I delight in these things. I, the Lord, have spoken!

Humbling ourselves means recognizing that our worth comes from God alone. To be humble involves working with his power according to his guidance, not with our own independent effort. Although we do not deserve God's favor, he reaches out to us in love and gives us victory, despite our human shortcomings.

## **Chapter 10**

### **How do we finish well?**

#### **1. Listening and Learning**

##### **Proverbs 1:5**

Let those who are wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. And let those who understand receive guidance

##### **Matthew 11:29**

Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls.

## **Proverbs 9:9**

Teach the wise, and they will be wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn more.

Learn from your critics; this is the path to wisdom. Wisdom begins with knowing God. He gives insight into living because he created life. To know God is not just to know the facts about him, but to stand in awe of him and have a relationship with him. Do you really want to be wise? Get to know God better and better.

## **2. Convictions and Characters**

### **Let God examine your character**

#### **Psalm 139:23-24**

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

### **Speak the things you have seen and heard**

#### **Acts 4:20**

We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard."

## **3. Legacy and ultimate contributions**

## **Joshua stands strong**

### **Joshua 14:10**

"Now, as you can see, the Lord has kept me alive and well as he promised for all these forty-five years since Moses made this promise—even while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Today I am eighty-five years old.

## **Receive sound teaching**

### **2 Tim. 1:13-14**

Hold on to the pattern of right teaching you learned from me. And remember to live in the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. [14] With the help of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard what has been entrusted to you.

## **Depend on Reliable Leaders**

### **2 Tim. 2:2**

You have heard me teach many things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others.

## **Become a Christian model**

### **2 Tim. 3:10**

But you know what I teach, Timothy, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith and how long I have suffered. You know my love and my patient endurance.

Sin has consequences, and no one will get away with it forever. Live each day as if everyone will one day know your actions.

Now is the time to change anything you wouldn't want revealed later.

#### **4. Intimate relationship with God**

##### **Seek after God**

###### **Psalm 27:4**

The one thing I ask of the Lord— the thing I seek most—  
is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,  
delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his Temple.

##### **Receive a willing spirit.**

###### **Psalm 51:12**

Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

##### **Your hearts delight shall be granted.**

###### **Psalm 42:1-2**

As the deer pants for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.

I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and stand before him?

The writer begins his psalm extolling the joys of obeying God and refusing to listen to those who discredit or ridicule him. Our friends and associates can have a profound influence on us, often in very subtle ways. If we insist on friendships with those who mock what God considers important, we might sin by becoming indifferent to God's will. This attitude is the same as mocking. Do your friends build up your faith, or do they tear it down? True friends should help, not hinder, you to draw closer to God.

God doesn't judge people on the basis of race, sex, or national origin. He judges them on the basis of their faith in him and their response to his revealed will. Those who diligently try to obey God's will are blessed. Their happy condition is like healthy, fruit-bearing trees with strong roots.

There are only two paths of life before us—God's way of obedience or the way of rebellion and destruction. Be sure to choose God's path because the path you choose determines how you will spend eternity.

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