

Leadership #4: The Character of a Leader

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER

1. Character is the foundation on which the leader's life is built.

"Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap." (1 Tim. 3:2-7)

Almost all of the qualifications Paul lists for leaders are related to character. (Only one, *able to teach*, refers to the leader's skill.)

2. Character is self-leadership.
 - Once you lead yourself well, others may want to follow.
 - Character is shown through the actions of a person under pressure.
3. Character is the sum total of the principles and motives that control a person's life.
 - Character is who you are when no one is looking.
 - Character is who you are; reputation is who people think you are.

GROWING IN CHARACTER

1. Growing in character requires diligence and faith.

"Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge;

and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. (II Peter 1:5-10)

- Diligence to read the word.
- Diligence to seek accountability.

2. Growing in character requires dependence on Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Abide in me... for apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control... Galatians 5:22-23

3. Growing in character requires relationships.
 - Most character qualifications apply to the way we relate to others.
 - In leadership, we lead people (not organizations, programs, or institutions).

4. Growing in Testing.

*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the **testing** of your faith produces perseverance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be **mature and complete, lacking nothing**. (James 1:2-4)*

*We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces **perseverance**; perseverance, **character**; and character, hope. (Ro 5:3-4)*

- There is no growing without testing.
 - If you don't pass the test you get to do it again!
- There is no mature leadership without testing.
- There is no lasting leadership without testing.

SOME BENEFITS OF A CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER

*For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to **make certain** about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will **never stumble**. (2 Peter 1:8)*

1. Power to Overcome Temptation.
2. Alertness to Make Wise Decisions. (I Timothy 1:18–19)
3. Boldness to Witness. (I Peter 3:15–16)

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready always to give an answer** to every man that ask you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ”*

4. Freedom to Resolve Conflicts and Build Relationships. (Acts 24:16)

CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP

1. Character communicates CREDIBILITY.
 - Leadership begins with character because leadership operates on the basis of trust. If people don't trust you, they won't follow you.
2. Character harnesses RESPECT.
3. Character creates CONSISTENCY.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What difficult circumstances in your life might God be trying to build your character?
2. How does understanding this change your attitude and perspective toward your situation?

HOMEWORK:

Complete the following self-evaluation (1 being very bad and 10 Excellent)

1. Do you struggle with impure thoughts?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. You can control your temper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Your friends and family frequently mention a character problem you have.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. People tend to trust you.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Do you have a good testimony at your work?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Do you consider yourself generous?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. Do you have a regular devotional time?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Do you have close Christian friends with whom you can be transparent?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. Do you consider yourself a prideful person?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Did you grade yourself below 5 in any of these areas? Which area do you need to grow the most? What practical steps can you take to grow in that area?