

## A MODEL OF INTEGRITY

### Titus 1:7-8

Twisted sayings:

“Do as I say, not as I do!”

“Why pray when you can worry?!!”

“Do unto others before they do unto you!”

“I could care less!”

“Talk loud enough, and people won’t notice what you do!”

Seminary Prof who always spoke loudest when evidence was weakest!

I learned much from my parents and my grandparents that *still* affects my life.

One saying I heard frequently, that I doubt I will ever erase from my mind:

***“What you do speaks so loud I can't hear what you say!”***

**[ WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? ]**

**People are more convinced by our *lifestyle*, than by our *sermons*!**

If people see something desirable in our lifestyle, they are more likely to be attracted to our Savior.

If we’re going to speak to a world with lots of religion that has little impact on life, we’re going to have to model a lifestyle that demonstrates the impact sound doctrine makes!

**SOUND DOCTRINE MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A SOUND LIFESTYLE.**

That’s why Paul told Titus to **straighten out what was still crooked**, by appointing blameless leaders – Leaders people can model lives after.

Leaders who demonstrate by their lifestyle  
what an authentic Christian looks like!

**GOOD TESTIMONY REQUIRED OF TRUE  
LEADERS 1:6-9**

It's not enough just to *want* to be a leader.

God has established prerequisites.

Essential prerequisite for leadership is NOT a spiritual gift, nor even leadership skills, though those are important.

Prerequisite for leadership—the non-negotiable, indispensable requirement —is **CHARACTER: *an elder must have a good reputation—***

**Leaders must be blameless; Not perfect but "*without a stain*"--no basis for someone who opposes truth to accuse them and reject message.**

\* *Blameless with respect to their home and family life* 1:6

\* *Blameless with respect to their personal character* 1:7-8

\* *Blameless with respect to their use of God's Word* 1:9

Comment heard many times: "*No one can perfectly fulfill what's required, so how DO we properly apply this passage!*"

I want to set the record straight.

I am convinced every member of our Elder Board in SLC fulfilled every one of these requirements.

***Either our leaders will be the kind of people God requires, or we won't have leaders.***

I am committed to being this kind of leader, or getting out of the ministry.

The requirement ISN'T *PERFECTION*. It's *BLAMELESSNESS*.

Personal requirement for leader, summarized in 1 word: *INTEGRITY*

First area: godly leaders should be blameless IN THEIR HOME 1:6

Leaders should be above reproach in our home and family life

*We aren't talking about BLAME. We're talking about credibility.*

If people are to follow their leaders' into godly lifestyle, they must see fruit of that lifestyle in the lives of our children—otherwise, they'll never follow our example.

--In their personal lives 1:7-8

**LEADERS SHOULD BE ABOVE REPROACH IN OUR PERSONAL ATTITUDES**

TWO NEW WORDS describe elders.

"Elder" --person, respected as leader because of *maturity and experience*.

1. "**OVERSEERS**" – reference to role *watching over* and protecting flock.
2. **Blameless**, as those "*entrusted with God's work*" (NIV) "**STEWARDS**" (NAS)

Elder isn't OWNER of flock. Doesn't belong to us!  
Flock belongs to God.

He's accountable to the owner for how he tends the flock.

Primary basis of evaluation: *faithfulness*.

Owner entrusts flock, along with resources necessary to care for them, into hands of trustworthy administrators, responsible to use them wisely.

Steward uses what master places in his hands for *master's* benefit; NOT personal gain.

All he has received comes from God and must be used for His profit.

They have to be trustworthy (blameless).

**[ WHAT DOES A BLAMELESS PERSON LOOK LIKE? ]**

**Emphasis on attitudes**

**Importance seen when you think of church leaders you know—**

*What impression do you get when you think of leaders you've observed?*

*Do you think of men of God who walk with Him and want to please him?--not always right, but godly?*

Or, are you more impressed by: one who is always angry? . . . another who is self-centered and proud? . . . a third who always has to have things his way?!!

Personal traits either confirm or deny message we want to communicate.

***"What you do speaks so loud I can't hear what you say!"***

Christ warned people to respect leaders because they occupy positions of authority given by God.

They shouldn't *imitate* them because *they didn't practice what they preach* (Matt. 23:1-4).

Before pagan world claiming to seek God, His people must stand out because of a distinctive lifestyle. That's why *sound doctrine has to be confirmed by sound conduct.*

God's people have to live in a way that won't give an excuse to those who don't want to believe in Christ.

## **NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS WE SHOULD AVOID**

### **1:7**

Everyday we cross paths with people who are unpleasant, disagreeable and offensive .

Such people demonstrate negative traits we ought not imitate. Such traits harm our testimony in the neighborhood.

Therefore, *EVERY* Christian ought to avoid these; *especially* leaders among God's people.

We must *avoid those personal characteristics that make us an offense to others.*

### ***FIVE CHARACTERISTICS to avoid:***

1. **NOT ARROGANT** --self-willed (overbearing) Lit., "pleasing himself"

Considers self better than others "More spiritual"

"He wouldn't do what others do!" (Pharisees--Lk. 18:11-12)

Self-willed person always has to have his way.

Right way to do things is *HIS* way!

Can't stand for others to disagree with him

Early writer describes it: one whose character is composed of "equal parts of *conceit, arrogance, and contemptuousness.*"

Leadership brings prestige and power, leaders are tempted to use these to get their own way and feed their vanity.

While church is to respect and follow leaders, that's not blank check from God for leaders to be dictators!

*"Consider others better than ourselves and seek what is best for them"*--not what we like best (Phil. 2:3-4)

2. **NOT ANGRY** --**Quick-tempered--"short fuse"**—blows up easily

Quickly loses self-control due to anger with others  
Hotheaded person will speak and act without thinking--hurting people and damaging the church's work and reputation.

*"Man's anger doesn't produce God's righteousness"* (Jas. 1:19-20)

Known as an angry person

***"Temper is such a wonderful thing; it's a shame we lose it so often!"***

We should be known as patient and self-controlled  
--forgiving those who offend us (Eph. 4:31-32; Matt. 18:21-22, 32-35)

3. **NOT ADDICTED** To wine (given to drunkenness)--not known as heavy drinker

Not addicted to anything that controls our life (Eph. 5:18)

Leaders God used were controlled by Spirit  
(Acts 2:4; 4:31)

Control by Spirit contradicts control by alcohol or  
other substances

Terminology goes beyond *drunkenness*. It refers to “*sitting  
alongside of wine.*”—People who regularly have a drink in  
hand, though not actually *drunk*.

Warning isn't against ever taking a drink

People for whom a drink is more important than a brother who  
may be turned away from following them because of that  
drink are also excluded!

**4. NOT ATTACKING** --pugnacious (violent)--prone to  
"strike" others

Some strike with fists, others fight with words

(*Jer. 18:18 (LXX) "Let's wound him with the tongue!"*)

— Always fight about something — always “beating  
up on” somebody.

Verbal attack can hurt worse than physical attack!

Wounds are deeper.

Staff member: “*Whoever said, ‘Sticks and stones will break my  
bones, but words can never hurt me!’ didn’t understand human  
nature.*”

Leaders should be peacemakers--not fighters

James warns: evaluate use of tongue before we present  
ourselves for leadership (3:2-8)

5. NOT AFTER MONEY--fond of sordid gain (not PURSUING dishonest GAIN)--greedy for more for ME! *Lit., inappropriate desire to earn more for ME, not for God*

Even those who claim to know God often seek more possessions

Known for taking advantage of people or situations for money.

Cretans especially known for this trait. Plutarch: *“Cretans stick to money like bees to honey.”*

Money more important than honesty and honor--weren't concerned what profit might cost them.

*Aren't you glad that attitude died with 1st C. Cretans?*

Spiritual leaders must not seek the same materialistic goals.

Avoid desire to earn more for our own benefit!

**Don't turn ministry into a “money-making” business.**

*“This is a non-profit operation. We didn't plan it that way, that's just the way it worked out!”*

It's God's *plan* that *the church* be a “non-profit” operation.

When people go into ministry for money it becomes contaminated.

God's plan: church operates to serve; NOT to make a buck!

God's Word isn't against wealth. *Desire* for wealth corrupts 1 Tim 6:17-19

The desire for money, or things, or even power and influence, can take a higher priority than the desire to please God.

Godly leaders seek His glory before *ANYTHING* else.

***GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD AVOID NEGATIVE PERSONAL TRAITS THAT OFFEND OTHERS***

Stott: 5 negatives relate to 5 areas of strong temptation: pride, temper, drink, power, money

Areas which manifest what happens when the flesh is in control.

Review list of personal characteristics we should avoid to remain above reproach.

**Which of these traits do you find in your life?**

**What changes are necessary for you to become example God wants you to be?**

What do we need to do about it?

***Ask God to produce the change that is needed in your life.***

***POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS WE SHOULD IMITATE 1:8***

6 positive traits point to what we look like when the Spirit is in control!

Imitate personal characteristics that make us attractive to others:

Christian life doesn't consist of list of rules and prohibitions to be obeyed.

It isn't negative and legalistic.

It consists in a *character transformation* that conforms us to the image of God.

– attitudes that are pleasing to God.

**Fruit of the Spirit vs. “fruit” of the flesh (Gal. 5:22-23)**

**6 POSITIVE CHARACTER TRAITS TO IMITATE:**

(Correct negatives seen)

**1. BE HOSPITABLE (“*love strangers, foreigners*”)--enjoy**

having guests in the house

NOT ability to make guests feel at home when you wish they were there!

NOT having company tonight that invites us next week. *“Invite and you shall be invited back!”*

Our Lord warned the Pharisees about that kind of hospitality.  
Luke 14:12-14

Instead of seeking more for self, leaders should *seek what’s best for others.*

Opposite of neg. #1--pleasing self--opening home and heart to others

– Motivated by love for others.

– Willing to share what God has given with others.

Lit., Paul calls him a *“lover of the foreigner”* or *“lover of strangers”*

*“Lover of . . .”* Defines major controlling desire of one identified.

– dominant mindset controls way of thinking

– what we’re living for

\* Some are *lovers of money* 1 Tim. 1:9-10

\* Some are *lovers of pleasure* 2 Tim 3:4

\* Some are *lovers of self* 2 Tim. 3:2

\* Some are *lovers of their spouse* Tit. 2:4

Authentic leaders should be

\* *Lovers of strangers*

\* *Lovers of that which is good*

In contrast to people who live for self, pleasure, or possessions, leaders should live for others.

*Talking about attitude, NOT action.*

It's possible to care for others from a sense of *duty*, not from the heart.

Godly people *desire* to help others. It comes from the heart.

*What's my attitude about my things?*

Do I *want* to share with others?

We can use hospitality as evangelistic/assimilation tool.

Some people have ministry to guests by seeking out one visitor, or family, every Sunday and inviting them to lunch.

Can you imagine how our guests would respond if people started to demonstrate that kind of hospitality regularly?

## 2. LOVE WHAT IS GOOD

Another *attitude*--desire to do what's good. NOT legalistic obedience to rules

-desire to do what is right and pleasing to God.

The opposite of this trait found in 2 Tim. 3:3: "*haters of that which is good.*"

## 3. BE SENSIBLE (self-controlled; live wisely)--SEE THINGS FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE (Rom. 12:3)

Basic idea: *discernment*.

Evaluates circumstances and his own value from God's point of view.

In hard times he doesn't focus on circumstances, but on God's plan.

Doesn't evaluate people on external appearance, but on heart condition—as God does.

For leaders there's **no more important characteristic than ability to understand God's will** and interpret events in light of it.

4. **BE JUST** (Upright)--**Proper relationship with *other people*.**

Last 3 go together--describe *one who does what is right*.

First is to do what is right *regarding others*.

A person who is just obeys laws of his people and treats others well.

Daniel was that kind of person.

Others examined life closely to accuse him of something, but couldn't find a thing!

He was faithful in every sense of the word (Dan. 6:4-5).

5. **BE HOLY** --devout--**Proper relationship with God**

Does what's right *in relation to God*

Focuses on God's perspective and His standards.

*"Be ye holy; for I am holy."*

Practical holiness in daily living--a life free from sin and evil.

6. **BE SELF-CONTROLLED** --proper relationship with *myself*--a disciplined life

Does what's right *in relation to self*.

Controls desires--uses them for God's glory.

Controls his life to achieve priorities

Good (self) administrator – self-disciplined person.

Paul compares Christian life to preparation for a race.

Those who run in race, have to submit to training program,  
strict control of life--to run well.

They make their body their slave so they can win the prize  
(1 Cor. 9:24-27).

That's the way a Christian leader controls his life also.

**GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD IMITATE POSITIVE CHARACTER TRAITS THAT ATTRACT OTHERS**

*Do you fulfill the requirements?*

*What's missing?*

People in pews and on the street are struggling  
with these issues.

Godly example demonstrates not that we're  
more deserving of God's grace, but that He  
who's in us is more powerful than he who's in  
the world.

God is able to free us from slavery to sin and  
selfishness.

*How about asking God for His power to overcome  
weak spots?*

Bob Moeller: "Challenge of Ministry to Baby-Boomers."  
Perpetually-young Baby-Boomers about to turn 40.

“While perhaps no other generation has enjoyed as many material comforts, ... they’re not at peace with themselves. Highest incidence of divorce, drug abuse, and abortions are found among this age group--idealists that wanted to do good for society in 60s, are now materialists, wanting to do well for themselves in 90s.”

### 3 KEYS to reaching them:

1. **Preach and model unselfishness.** Neurosis of baby-boomers: preoccupation with self. They have come to the realization that when self is all you care about, self is all you’re left with.
2. **Preach and model commitment.**
3. **Preach and model holiness.**

Moeller’s counsel **sounds like Paul’s counsel to Titus.**

I am struck with two things about his analysis:

1. He *brings together our practice and our preaching.* We have to model what we preach!
2. *2 keys straight out of Titus: unselfishness and holiness.*

3rd: *commitment*, arrives next Sunday.

***The Message: “It’s important that a church leader, responsible for the affairs in God’s house, be looked up to—not pushy, not short-tempered, not a drunk, not a bully, not money-hungry. He must welcome people, be helpful, wise, fair, reverent, have a good grip on himself. . . .”***

That’s what godly people ought to look like!

How about us?

What do our neighbors see when they look at us?

What do our families see? What do our kids see?

*Do they see the image of Christ in us?*  
*If we're going to reach this generation we're going to*  
*have to **PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH!***  
*we're going to have to **MODEL INTEGRITY!***