

True Leadership: Character Counts

Introduction: stories of major public trust failures. Enron, Bernie Madoff, other leaders and preachers.

Premise: Character is how you behave when no one is watching.

There can be no compromise in the area of character. Character counts.

What did Jesus call the Pharisees

Matthew 23:23-27

Jesus point was clear – our inner lives determine our outward behavior.

Character shows our Moral strength and integrity. It matters in church leadership, in our homes, and in our personal lives.

How was 1 Timothy and other letters distributed in the first century. They were hand copied and read aloud to the churches.

Context for 1 Timothy 3

Overview

The leaders in the church need to be above reproach

Specifically, who is he writing to? Elders, Bishop and Deacons

The chapter ends with the mystery of Godliness.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

¹The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Therefore an overseer^l must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,^l sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Politicians aren't qualified, simply because they want the job.

Story of senators who visited Belshaw Elementary.

I certainly hope our leaders in the church will behave with character! Along with instructions to be well thought of by outsiders Elders must be above reproach, so that no one can speak against them the husband of one wife, not polygamous with divided loyalties sober-minded, able to manage his thoughts so that he can lead self-controlled, not violent or quick to say hurtful words respectable, someone the body can look up to hospitable, able to care for the church, and for strangers able to teach, preaching is important, but does the listener remember.

If you don't remember any of this today, then I haven't taught, I've only spoken.

not a drunkard – everyone drank wine, the water wasn't always safe to drink, but they often watered down the wine, and that way the water was safer. They would have had to consume a LOT of wine that way to get drunk. And to be a habitual drunk – a drunkard – would have taken a lot of effort and money. Not violent but gentle, that topic keeps coming up, hmm not quarrelsome: they had to be people looking for solutions, not just to be right not a lover of money. Being motivated by money will destroy your testimony.

He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

Good point.

Not a recent convert. Have to know what they are talking about and understand the mechanics of the church.

Well thought of by outsiders.

Story of nearly tanking my dad's career.

1 Timothy 3:8-13

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued,^[c] not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹ Their wives likewise^[d] must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Dignified – honest, well spoken, not wild

Not Double tongued – not liars

They must not be Addicted to Alcohol. In today's world I would say any drugs that are used for entertainment. Again - no alcoholics or drunks or drug addicts.

Not greedy for dishonest gain. They should not cheat others.

They need to be believers, having accepted Jesus and understanding the gospel.

These men and women need to be tested, watched carefully to ensure their testimony is solid.

Spouses also need to be dignified; not gossips, but serious thinkers,

Faithful in all things.

Deacons may not be polygamous

Managing their households well.

Being a deacon will solidify your faith in Christ.

Both of these positions require a commitment to Christ. You have to be above reproach. Honest, above reproach, totally committed to Christ.

Advertisement for Deacons and elders.

The point: Character Counts

It is a starting place.

We are all supposed to live that way.

We are a Holy Priesthood.

1 Peter 2:1-5

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Job of a Priest

Vodou

Remember: Satan does not need you to worship him, he just needs to distract you enough that you don't worship God!

1 Peter 2:9-12

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

We are part of a royal priesthood. Lets check the boxes here.

1-we speak to and hear from God

2-we have access to God through the Holy Spirit and through the scriptures

3-we are judged by the outside world, often attacked for what we believe

4-our life is under a microscope. Evildoers will be watching us, looking for us to mess up, so that they can expose us as charlatans and cheats.

They want us to fail! That way their attempts will look better. We cannot let that happen. Not to put down the non-believer, but to lead them to salvation despite their doubt!

Paul closes with a reflection on the Mystery of Godliness and ends with a hymn or poem.

1 Timothy 3:14-16

¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. ¹⁶ Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:

He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory. His righteousness and divine identity

seen by angels: Angels announced His birth ([Luke 2:9-14](#)), strengthened Him in Gethsemane ([Luke 22:43](#)), and proclaimed His resurrection ([Matthew 28:5-7](#)).

Proclaimed among the nations: From Pentecost onward, the apostles carried the good news of Jesus to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and "to the ends of the earth" ([Acts 1:8; 2:5-11](#)). The mission remains active today, rooted in Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

Believed on in the world: First-century churches sprang up across Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and beyond ([Romans 1:8; Colossians 1:6](#)). The global church—every tribe, tongue, and people—testifies that the gospel is both true and powerful

(Revelation 7:9-10).

Taken up in glory: After forty days of resurrection appearances, Jesus ascended bodily into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). He sits at the Father's right hand, interceding for believers and reigning until every enemy is subdued (Hebrews 1:3; 10:12-13; 1 Corinthians 15:24-25). His glorious ascension assures us that He will return in the same way, completing the redemption He began (John 14:3; Philippians 3:20-21).

Summary

**I heard Character described as
Who you are when nobody is looking.**

Look at our leaders

We are a new creation, our past life should not bar us from service.

2 Corinthians 5:17,

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

We are a new creation

We are a royal priesthood

Leaders held to a high standard.

How does that affect me?

People watch you and are waiting for you to fail. Our leaders especially are held to a high standard in order to glorify and honor Christ.

Finally, in

Philippians 1:27-28 New International Reader's Version

²⁷ No matter what happens, live in a way that brings honor to the good news about Christ. Then I will know that you remain strong together in the one Spirit. I will know this if I come and see you or only hear about you. I will know that you work together as one person. I will know that you work to spread the teachings about the good news. ²⁸ So don't be afraid in any way of those who oppose you. This will show them that they will be destroyed and that you will be saved. That's what God will do.

Prayer