

SESSION 5: WILLINGNESS TO GROW WITH INTEGRITY

Welcome & Review Last Week's Homework/LIFE Starters: 15 minutes

Session #5 Teaching: Willingness to Grow with Integrity: 10 minutes

There are many Biblical practices that help you grow spiritually, such as consistent exposure to God's Word through personal study and listening to preaching. We need to worship corporately and pray regularly. **But is this enough?** Is the Christian life like a spiritual checklist? What happens to our consistencies when we face new challenges? What happens to our morning prayer time when we have an infant who wakes at 5 AM every morning? How do we learn to love a new coworker who seems to be so different from the person they replaced? How do we adjust to constant new circumstances?

Sadly, many Christians leaders want to make the spiritual life a simple, step-by-step process. We live in a culture obsessed with quick fixes and instant gratification, and this obsession can easily affect the way we approach the spiritual life. But when we reflect on our growth in the Christian life, we recognize that growth in **integrity rarely comes quickly or painlessly**. Rather, God works in us over extended periods of time and through diverse circumstances. Each season provides new challenges and new resources for growth in integrity. Consider, for example, the apostle Paul's experience in learning contentment. He claimed he had learned to be content "in any and every situation" (**Philippians 4:11-12**). In order to fully develop contentment, he had to learn how to be content in seasons when he had plenty, as well as in seasons when he had little. Each of these seasons provided unique challenges and unique opportunities for growth. Though it may be possible for us to learn the virtue of contentment through experience in only one season of life, it develops more fully when learned in a variety of circumstances. When we apply this principle to the whole of our pursuit of Biblical integrity, we realize that God constantly uses new life circumstances to develop Biblical leadership qualities in us while giving us a more complete image of Christ. In the many seasons of life, we will inevitably see times when we struggle in some area of our faith, even an area that we had previously considered a strength. This often occurs when we face an entirely new set of circumstances and we feel like we are starting all over again. Embrace the season of change and don't let the enemy make you think you are on a downward trajectory of FAILURE! Keep the perspective that any "failure" leads to success. You need to fail to WIN and be vulnerable enough as a leader to fail FORWARD, being open about your journey! Dealing with failure requires a consistent experience of God's forgiveness and the perseverance to press on. Obviously, failure is not God's desire for us, but He uses new circumstances, including failure, to develop our godly character. According to a new survey of Christian adults conducted by the Barna Group in conjunction with Brad Lomenick, president of the Catalyst conference, the primary answer is "integrity." More than half (64%) of Christians say integrity is one of the most important traits a leader must have and authenticity (40% listed this as a vital characteristic) and discipline (38%) are the next two.

Also, according to Barna, 82% of Christians believe the United States is facing a crisis of leadership because there aren't enough leaders. Much of what we have covered in this Leaders for Life Study are the areas that need improvement. Evangelical leaders are most similar to the broader Christian market in terms of their aspirations to improve as leaders: they want to grow in **courage** (27%), followed by a desire to **grow in terms of discipline** (17%), **vision** (15%) and **passion for God** (13%). God has us on a leadership journey to transform our entire lives from how we are at our initial salvation to a life marked by Christian maturity. If we expect to learn to live out godly character the way we learn concepts in a book, we foolishly ignore the crucial Truth that the fruit of the Spirit must develop over time in ALL our various life circumstances. By His grace, God works in us throughout the seasons of our lives, in successes and failures, teaching us crucial lessons about ourselves and about Himself, conforming us to the image of His Son.

Throughout our lives, to become the best servant leaders, we must:

1. Remain alert to the temptations that play into our weaknesses.

2. Experience grace in Christ when we fail.

3. Maintain the attitude of a diligent learner, so that the Lord may continue to mold us into His image for the rest of our lives.

Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes

- Do YOU live your Christian life like a spiritual checklist? What happens to your consistencies when you face new challenges? What happens to your morning prayer time when new circumstances come up in your life? How do we adjust to constant new circumstances?
- Share a time when living out YOUR integrity cause a delay or pain in your life.
- How would you describe the season of life you are in right now? What unique opportunities for growth does this season provide?
- Of the following 3 disciplines, what area is the biggest challenge for YOU?
 1. Remain alert to the temptations that play into our weaknesses.
 2. Experience grace in Christ when we fail.
 3. Maintain the attitude of a diligent learner, so that the Lord may continue to mold us into His image for the rest of our lives.

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

- What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes

SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 1

Read 2 Samuel 22:26-30

God demands our loyalty. He seeks people who put Him first above everything and everyone else in their life.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 2

Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-20

One of the rewards of integrity is pleasing the heart of God. We show our love to God through obedience!

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 3

Read Job 2

God singled out Job as an ideal example of a man of integrity. The Lord cherishes followers like Job who choose him and stick with him no matter what.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 4

Read Psalm 25

Integrity should be the hallmark of a Christian. Temptation is all around, but God is our rescuer and refuge. We can depend on God to be victorious in this life.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?
