

CHARACTER, PART ONE: MATURITY

Issue 3



HOW CAN LEADERS DEVELOP MATURE CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER?

Overview:

Many secular texts on leadership stress things like the charisma or the skills necessary to become a leader. When God instructs the church on the qualifications for leadership, it is the character qualities that are emphasized rather than any notion of giftedness. While things like communication skills, vision casting abilities, academic qualifications or even past success in Christian ministry can enhance the influence of a Christian leader, all of these take second place to Christian character when you examine what the New Testament has to say on this subject. In this issue we investigate what it means to be a person of mature Christian character.

Objectives:

To help Church Leaders:

- Appreciate the importance of character assessment in the process of identifying church leaders.
- Determine what it means to be a person of mature Christian character.
- Identify character weaknesses and find ways of correcting those flaws.

Possible Outcomes:

Church Leaders will:

- Understand personally the importance of a mature Christian character.
- Explore the implications of this issue of mature Christian character as it relates to the appointment of church leaders.

STEP 1: GRASP THE ISSUE**What are the main questions to be addressed?****Dimensions of the Issue**

In recent times the character of leaders in the church has come under increasing levels of scrutiny. Hardly a month goes by without some public figure being highlighted in the news media for some ethical or moral violation.

God's instructions in regard to the character requirements for leadership in the local church are laid out very clearly. When considering Christian leadership, the character of a person is given far more attention than academic qualification or an ability to communicate well. Does this then mean that unless we are people of Christlike character we are unfit to be used in church leadership? How godly is godly? Isn't it possible for a person to act in a godly manner and yet for their hearts to be far from God?

Sound Bites *(Sound Bites are statements designed to get you thinking about the issue. They may or may not reflect biblical wisdom.)*

"If I am so fragile that I have to have people watching over my shoulder all day, then I should not be anyone's pastor.... The character of a pastor comes from the inside."

—John MacArthur, Jr.

"The development of leadership character takes more than the practice of external disciplines, for it involves the heart, not just habits."

—Jack Hayford

"It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."

—Robert M. M'Cheyne

"We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another, unevenly. We grow partially. We are mature in one realm, childish in another."

—Anais Nin

"Sure character matters, but at the end of the day people will remember what I did, not who I was."

—Anon

"Every man has three characters—that which he exhibits, that which he has, and that which he thinks he has."

—Alphonse Karr

Sound Bites (continued)

“Characters do not change. Opinions alter, but characters are only developed.”

—Benjamin Disraeli

“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.”

—Abraham Lincoln

Case Study

A personal growth conference for Christians isn’t the place where you would expect to see a fight. Especially a fight between leaders.

But at just such a conference I faced the unexpected. A young Christian, I was just beginning to learn about leadership. Getting a chance to observe how mature Christians behaved was just what I needed. Or so I thought.

Midway through the meeting, a question over a delicate decision led to a debate. Debating descended to arguing and finally to an ugly division. It only took forty-five minutes for these Christians to come nearly to blows.

Before those gathered could resolve the issue, however, the signal came for the next part of the conference schedule—a worship service for all the conferees. We shuffled to an adjoining room. There the committee chairman, who had been as vitriolic as anyone in the previous meeting, grabbed the microphone. Smiling from ear to ear, he said, “Scripture tells us that the mark of a true Christian is love, so let’s all join hands and sing, ‘They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love.’”¹

Do you think that the Christians described above were fit for leadership? What other factors might you have to consider before drawing too many conclusions about the maturity of the leaders above? Are there other indicators of maturity problems in the case study?

Now that you have considered the *Dimensions of the Issue*, *Sound Bites* and *Case Study*, what are the main questions that need to be addressed in order to understand this issue?

¹ Bill Hybels, *Honest to God*, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990), 11.

STEP 2: STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

What does the Bible say about this issue?

Passages

1 Timothy 3:1-12

- What is the relationship between the desire to be an overseer (v. 1) and the list of character qualifications (vs. 2-7)?
- For each of the **inward character qualities** listed below, write out what they mean (using your own words), and say why each category is important in the life of a church leader.

“Temperate” (v. 2)

“Self-controlled” (v. 2)

“Hospitable” (v. 2)

“Not given to much wine” (v. 3)

“Not violent” (v. 3)

“Gentle” (v. 3)

“Not quarrelsome” (v. 3)

“Not a lover of money” (v. 3)

“Not a recent convert” (v. 6)

“Sincere” (v. 8)

“Not malicious talkers” (v. 11)

STEP 3: CONSULT OTHER SOURCES
What can we learn from other authors?

“Becoming a Spiritually Mature Leader,” by Gene Getz.

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“Addendum: Principles To Live By,” by Gene Getz.

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Becoming a Spiritually Mature Leader

By Gene Getz

Several years ago, I was conducting a men's conference in Chicago. I had been asked to speak about "spiritual maturity," using the apostle Paul's profiles in his pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus. I had developed Paul's outline at length in my book entitled *The Measure of a Man*, which formed the basis of that seminar.¹

As I discussed each quality outlined by Paul in these two powerful and dynamic biblical paragraphs, two distinguished-looking gentlemen who were sitting near the front kept giving me positive feedback, not only with their body language, but also verbally. "That's good, Gene!" one said. "Right on!" responded the other. "That is a great insight!" This was a new experience for me, and frankly, it felt good—particularly because I had never met these men before.

During the coffee break, I made my way to the table where they were sitting and introduced myself. I soon discovered that each held top-level management positions in one of the steel mills in a neighboring city. I also discovered they were new Christians, "neophytes" as Paul would call them—which explains why they felt free to interact with me publicly. They had not yet learned the "Christian rules" that undergird

"theological conferences." Frankly, I hoped they never would. They had a refreshing naiveté. It was encouraging to relate to men who had not yet imbibed some of our restrictive cultural traditions.

What affected and intrigued me the most, however, were their comments about Paul's maturity profiles. They readily admitted they had never heard much about Timothy and Titus. One man said, "Gene, I seem to remember hearing about Timothy, but this Titus guy—well, I've never heard of him."

ALL TRUTH IS GOD'S TRUTH!

At this point these businessmen really grabbed my attention! Though they had never read or heard these passages in the New Testament before attending that conference, they were experientially familiar with the characteristics of maturity outlined by Paul and why they were so important. That is why they were responsive to what I was sharing. They were affirming the importance and significance of each quality. Probably without knowing it, they were demonstrating that "all truth is God's truth"!

During that coffee break, they expanded on their public responses. "Gene," one said, "it's amazing how Paul's maturity profiles for leaders aligns with what we've learned by experience in our positions as upper-level managers." Even as new Christians they had learned that they only wanted to hire leaders for middle-management positions who had "good reputations"—the first

¹ Gene A. Getz, *Measure of a Man* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books). This book was first published in 1974, then was extensively rewritten and republished in 1995. It continues to be the basis for men's Bible study groups and is also used extensively as a discipling tool to prepare men for leadership roles in the church. The book is based on a timeless outline and Scripture taken from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

quality outlined by Paul in both letters (see 1 Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:5).

Furthermore, they said they did not want men in leadership positions who were unfaithful to their wives—the second requirement listed by Paul in both profiles. “If they cheat on their marital partners, they’ll also cheat the company,” one said. They readily affirmed that leaders who can not give good direction to their own families will never give proper direction to the people they are responsible for in their business positions. For Paul this was also a foundational qualification!

In essence, they told me during that fifteen-minute “break in the action” that Paul’s requirements for spiritual leaders in the church were the same requirements they had discovered pragmatically to be what they need to look for in a competent leader in their own corporate arenas.

A LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to help establish the church. Though the Christian community was well on its way as a growing and influential church in the broader Asian area, “certain men” had emerged and secured for themselves prominent leadership positions. Unfortunately, these men were anything but qualified to lead, both in terms of what they believed and taught and in the way they lived their lives. Not only were they teaching false doctrine, but they also demonstrated arrogant attitudes and actions (see 1 Tim. 1:3-7).

Some of these men went so far as to be guilty of blasphemy. Paul warned Timothy to avoid being influenced by these false teachers—to “fight the good fight” by “keeping faith and a good conscience” (vv. 18, 19). To do otherwise could lead to spiritual disaster, as it did in the lives of Hymenaeus and Alexander and others

who had “suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith” (v. 19).

Imagine the challenge Timothy faced! Here was a relatively young man, probably about thirty years of age, facing some men who were no doubt much older than himself, men who were already in influential positions and in the process of leading believers astray.

Problems such as these are not solved easily nor quickly, which helps explain Paul’s challenge to Timothy in his second letter. In that Epistle, Paul charged his younger colleague to “fan into flame” the gift God had given him and to never become intimidated by these powerful and influential leaders. He was to face the problem head on with a “spirit...of power and love and discipline” (2 Tim. 1:7).

Titus had a similar challenge on the island of Crete. Also a young man, Paul had left him in this pagan but fruitful mission field to establish the new believers that had come to Christ as a result of their church-planting efforts and to appoint godly leaders who could lead these new congregations (see Titus 1:5).

In some respects, Titus faced an even greater task than Timothy did in Ephesus. Many “rebellious” leaders—“empty talkers and deceivers,” to quote Paul—had already emerged and were “upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not to teach” (v. 11b). They “must be silenced,” wrote Paul (v. 11a).

Prior to this exhortation, Paul had outlined a list of qualifications to guide Titus in appointing leaders in the churches in Crete that is in essence very similar to the list in Paul’s first letter to Timothy (compare 1 Tim. 3:1-7 with Titus 1:5-9). Because of space limitations in this chapter, let’s concentrate on the characteristics outlined in 1 Timothy,

and include supplementary references to those listed in Titus.

BECOMING A CHRISTIAN LEADER

Paul wanted both Timothy and Titus to know in no uncertain terms what to look for in a potential leader. As we outline and elaborate on these requirements, note that Paul said very little about skills or abilities or even gifts. All these characteristics relate to qualities of life: high morals, ethical behavior, right attitudes, pure motives, proper goals, positive habits, quality relationships and a good reputation. Even knowledge is not high on Paul's list of priorities, though it is certainly assumed, particularly in his letter to Titus when he said these leaders were to "exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9).

There is a reason for this emphasis. Those who have knowledge, skills and abilities without the qualities outlined by Paul can lead people in the wrong direction efficiently and quickly. This was happening in both Ephesus and Crete.

Do not misunderstand! This does not mean that knowledge, skills and abilities are not important, even when looking for qualified spiritual leaders. The Scriptures warn against "zeal without knowledge" (Prov. 19:2, NIV). A person devoid of knowledge, skills and abilities will flounder as a leader. Giftedness without character, though, is lethal. When appointing leaders, if we get the "cart before the horse"—abilities before character—we can literally destroy a church or any other Christian organization. All it takes is one strong ego-driven person to disrupt unity and create almost intolerable divisiveness.

Leadership Principle 1:
A leader should be living an exemplary life that is obvious to both Christians and non-Christians.

Related Spiritual Principle: A leader must be above reproach.²

When looking for a potential leader, Paul listed this character quality first. Significantly, it is at the top of the list in both his first letter to Timothy and in his letter to Titus. Paul was not talking about perfection because Jesus Christ was the only perfect leader who walked on planet Earth. Rather, Paul was referring to a person's reputation—how others view this person.

Timothy's character was perhaps his greatest strength as a leader. This was a key reason Paul asked him to serve as his assistant in ministry. When he and Silas arrived in Lystra on their second missionary journey, Luke records that Timothy "was well spoken of" in his home town (Acts 16:2). People were talking about this young man and his commitment to Jesus Christ, not only where he lived, but also in Iconium, a neighboring city. His reputation had spread beyond his local community. Paul was impressed because he knew the leadership challenge that lay ahead. If new congregations were to survive and grow, they would need godly leaders.

Paul also knew that he needed a fellow missionary on the second journey who could discover and approve these leaders. More importantly, he needed an associate who was "practicing what he preached." In short, it takes a leader who has a "good reputation" to direct, train and appoint others with "a good reputation."

² See 1 Timothy 3:2a and Titus 1:6a.

Imagine what would have happened if Timothy had preached a message in Ephesus regarding the need for leaders who have a “good reputation” without demonstrating this quality in his own life. He faced a task that was tough enough without giving people the opportunity to question his own character.

Notice that Paul wanted Timothy to appoint leaders who not only had a good reputation in the “believing community,” but also in the “pagan community.” Consequently, he culminated his character profile for elders and pastors by stating that every spiritual leader “must have a **good reputation with those outside the church**” (1 Tim. 3:7, author’s emphasis). Paul did not mean that these potential leaders would not be criticized or ridiculed because of their faith. Rather, he wanted leaders in the church who demonstrated honesty and integrity in their relationships with nonbelievers. In essence, Paul was saying the same thing Peter said to all Christians when he wrote:

And keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame (1 Pet. 3:16).

Leadership Principle 2:
A leader should be morally pure, maintaining God’s standard of righteousness.

Related Spiritual Principle: A leader should be the husband of one wife.³

When Paul exhorted Timothy to seek individuals who had been “the husband of one wife,” in essence, he

³ See 1 Timothy 3:2b and Titus 1:6b.

was referring to moral purity. We could fairly translate Paul’s phrase as a “man of one woman.” In other words, any man who served the church as an elder or pastor was to have only one woman in his life sexually—namely, his wife.⁴

One reason this was such an important spiritual requirement in the New Testament world for leaders is that many men—particularly those who were well-to-do—had more than one woman he related to at a sexual level. Besides his wife, he had a slave girl who was available to him, and he often acquired the services of a temple prostitute. This was common within the Roman Empire. When any man became a Christian, however, he came face-to-face with a new standard of morality: God’s standard. He was to have only one woman in his life in terms of sexual intimacy: his legal wife. The same standard applied to any Christian woman. In terms of sexual relationships, she, too, was to have only one man in her life: her husband.

In both letters, being the “husband of one wife” is listed second after being “above reproach.” This is by divine design. Moral purity is the most important quality for building a good reputation. Any Christian leader who violates this principle becomes suspect in terms of being trustworthy. As my new friends stated during the

⁴ Before we look carefully at this characteristic of maturity and what Paul had in mind, note that the profiles outlined by Paul in his letters to Timothy and Titus are applicable to both men and women in leadership roles. It is true that Paul was referring primarily to men when he listed this quality, but other references to a woman’s leadership position emphasize the same quality of life. For example, a widow who served the church on a remunerative basis was to be “the wife of one man” (1 Tim. 5:9).

conference coffee break referred to earlier, if you cannot trust a man to be loyal to his wife, you cannot trust him to be loyal to his organization, be it Christian or non-Christian. The same applies to any woman in a leadership role. A woman who cheats on her husband will more often than not cheat the company—or the church.

This biblical requirement for Christian leaders raises an important question. Should a person who has committed adultery and truly repented of that sin ever be allowed to occupy a top leadership position in the church (pastor, elder, deacon, deaconess)? This question is not easily answered. One thing is clear, though. If this kind of behavior hurts our reputations, making it difficult for us to minister to others, we are violating the first requirement—being “above reproach.” For some it is possible to start over, especially in another community. For others, however, their reputations are so tainted because of their high profiles in the Christian community that it is virtually impossible to start over.

I remember talking to a well-known pastor who was guilty of adultery with many women. Relieved of his duties where he pastored, he wanted to immediately start a new church in the same geographical area. I reminded him one day that the “whole city” knew about his affairs because his moral crisis had been reported in the major newspaper. Furthermore, he was an author whose books were read widely and he was featured on a national and international television ministry. He could go very few places in the world without being known as the pastor of a large and growing church who had committed adultery, many times with many women.

Unfortunately, he did not listen to me (or several other concerned people). It was just a matter of time before he repeated his sinful behavior, devastating more people and bringing further reproach on the cause of Christ.

Having a “good reputation” is a fundamental criteria for answering the earlier question. More important, sufficient evidence must be made available to know whether or not the person has truly repented of the sin. Sadly, in the case just illustrated, it was revealed that this man was not telling the whole truth. After our conversation, it soon became evident that he had been involved with more women than any of us knew about. His so-called “repentance” was not real. Sadly, this, too, was reported in a well-known and sophisticated secular periodical. Unfortunately, many leaders who are trapped in this kind of sin and are found out are more “sorry” they were caught than that they hurt the Savior and deeply offended the Holy Spirit.

Leadership Principle 3:
A leader should walk by faith, demonstrate hope and manifest true biblical love in all relationships.

Related Spiritual Principle: A leader should be a temperate Christian.⁵

When Paul used the term “temperate,” he was describing a Christian who had a clear focus on life. More broadly, this kind of Christian has a philosophy of life that is built foursquare on the Scriptures.

Leaders who are temperate have a biblical view of history. They understand God’s sovereign control of the universe, but at the same

⁵ See 1 Timothy 3:2c.

time they carry out their human responsibilities diligently. They are balanced as they approach problems and they avoid extremes that sidetrack them from the purposes God left us in the world to fulfill.

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul described a “temperate” Christian as one who has “put on the breastplate of **faith** and **love**, and as a helmet, the **hope** of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8, author’s emphasis). Interestingly, Paul used these three words frequently to describe maturity among Christians generally (see Eph. 1:15, 18; Col. 1:3-8; 1 Thess. 1:2, 3; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Cor. 13:13). If all Christians together are to reflect these qualities, how much more must Christian leaders possess them.

More specifically, how do we recognize a Christian who is “temperate”?

Faith is reflected in Christians who are willing to step out and believe God’s promises. They do not fear the unknown, because they know that God is in control. At the same time, people of faith do not take foolish risks, ignoring the human factors in decision making. In essence, they practice the following proverb:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight (Prov. 3:5, 6).

Hope is reflected in Christians who are secure in what they believe. They are stable and steadfast, particularly in the face of adversity. They know where history is going and ultimately, no matter how much their society deteriorates, they know they have “an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will

not fade away, reserved in heaven” for them (1 Pet. 1:4). Furthermore, they are not “carried about by every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14).

Love is reflected in several characteristics that are beautifully illustrated in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, in which he describes love as being patient, kind, not jealous, not arrogant, not acting unbecomingly, not seeking its own, not provoked, not taking into account a wrong suffered and not rejoicing in unrighteousness. Love is also described as rejoicing with the truth, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things and enduring all things (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Leadership Principle 4:

A leader should be wise, discerning and experienced; the kind of Christian who reflects true humility and is disciplined by God’s grace to live a godly life and to be a person of prayer.

Related Spiritual Principle:

A Christian leader is a prudent person.⁶

The Greek word translated “prudent” is *sophron*, which literally means “sound in mind.” This word can also be translated “discreet,” “sober” or “sensible,” depending upon the context. Frankly, I like the word “prudent” because Webster reminds us that a prudent leader is “shrewd in the management of practical affairs.” Consequently, we can conclude that a prudent person is a “person of wisdom.”

When Moses faced the awesome responsibility of leading two million plus people through the wilderness, he was directed by the Lord to “Choose **wise** and **discerning** and

⁶ See 1 Timothy 3:2d.

experienced men” from each tribe and to appoint them as leaders to help in his own management role (Deut. 1:13, 14, author’s emphasis). In short, “wise,” “discerning” and “experienced” people become prudent leaders.

More specifically, how do we recognize a “prudent” Christian?

First of all, such a person is a humble leader. Paul underscored this reality when he wrote to the Romans that no person should “think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have **sound judgment** [that is, to think soberly, sensibly or prudently], as God has allotted to each a measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3, author’s emphasis). Put another way, prudent leaders will “do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit”; rather they function “with humility of mind.” They regard others “as more important” than themselves; they will “not merely look out for” their “own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3, 4).

Second, a prudent Christian is one who possesses a proper view of God’s grace. Paul underscored this point when he wrote to Titus:

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly [or prudently], righteously and godly in the present age (Titus 2:11, 12).

Finally, a prudent person is a person of prayer. Peter acknowledged this when he admonished his followers: “Be of **sound judgment** [be **prudent**] and sober of spirit for the purpose of prayer” (1 Pet. 4:7, author’s emphasis). A “prudent”

leader will go to his knees in humble and prayerful adoration, and then rise to a new level of righteous and holy living.

Leadership Principle 5:
A leader should live a well-ordered life that makes the gospel attractive to unbelievers.

Related Spiritual Principle: A leader must be a respectable Christian.⁷

If a temperate Christian reflects “a well-ordered *philosophy of life*,” a respectable Christian lives “a *well-ordered life*.” The former involves a person’s ability to think clearly; the latter reflects the ability to translate “good thinking” into “proper actions.”

The Greek word translated “respectable” is *kosmios*. Our English word “cosmetics” comes from the same basic word. We see this connection when the verb *kosmeo* is translated “to adorn.” For example, slaves were to be “well-pleasing, not argumentative” and they were not to steal from their masters. Rather, they were to “adorn [*kosmeo*] the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect” (Titus 2:10). In essence, Paul is teaching that a mature leader’s life will be like “cosmetics to the gospel.” When non-Christians observe their attitudes and actions, they should be attracted to the gospel message and to the One who incarnates that message.

When I speak about the subject of leadership qualities, I like to share the following modern parable:

A certain man and his wife in a certain city bought a home and moved in. This man was a Christian and the man from whom

⁷ See 1 Timothy 3:2e.

he purchased the house was also a Christian. Both were Christian ministers.

After a few days it became apparent that certain neighbors were disturbed that another minister had moved next door. For behold, the former minister had paid little attention to the outward appearance of his property. He allowed the grass to grow long and unattended, and when he did mow the lawn, certain sections were left uncut, and where he mowed, mounds of dry grass accumulated, creating a shabby appearance. Dandelions grew rampant, and other assorted weeds became a permanent part of the landscape. This man had planted no trees or shrubs, but allowed his large and spacious lawn to become a hay field.

It just so happened that certain neighbors in this particular community paid special attention to the outward appearances of their homes. True, many were not Christians and they were materialistic. Their houses and lawns appeared to be their “gods.”

But the neighbors were totally turned off by this minister’s irresponsibility and lack of orderliness and unwillingness to do his part to add to the natural beauty of the neighborhood. Consequently, the minister moving in after the former one moved away found great communication barriers with his non-Christian neighbors. They were utterly convinced that ministers are a bad lot, that they are disorderly, unconcerned and irresponsible about keeping up their property.

This is a true parable. It happened to my wife and me. Because of this man’s actions, it took us months to build bridges to the people next door. Eventually, we won respect by working hard to do what this Christian leader had not done. After days of mowing, planting trees and shrubs and eliminating the weeds, we overcame this communication barrier. We became “respectable” in that neighborhood and once again we were able to “adorn” the gospel of Christ by living a lifestyle that was commensurate with the character of God.

Leadership Principle 6:

A leader should be unselfish and generous, willing to open his home for ministry and to share his earthly blessings with both Christians and non-Christians.

Related Spiritual Principle:

A Christian leader should be hospitable.⁸

Generally speaking, “being hospitable” refers to the way we use our material possessions—particularly the homes we live in and the food we eat. Interestingly, showing hospitality is not distinctive to Christianity. For example, consider the following description of the Muslim culture: “A traveler may sit at the door of a perfect stranger and smoke a pipe until the master welcomes him with an evening meal and then tarry a limited number of days without inquiry as to his purposes, and depart with a simple ‘God be with you’ as his only compensation.”⁹

⁸ See 1 Timothy 3:2f.

⁹ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), p. 502.

It is clear from the New Testament that Christians, of all people, should be hospitable. Listen to the following exhortations:

- Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor ...contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality (Rom. 12:10, 13).
- Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it (Heb. 13:1, 2).
- Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint (1 Pet. 4:8, 9).

“Showing love” and “demonstrating hospitality” are inseparable concepts. **Love** is the foundational quality that reflects the unselfish way Jesus Christ gave His life to save us. **Hospitality** is a specific way we can imitate Jesus Christ and demonstrate His love to others. To fail to show hospitality is to fail to love as Jesus commanded.

If all Christians are to show hospitality—and they are—they need to see it in their leaders. This was imperative in the early days of Christianity because the church could not own property. Consequently, they had to meet in homes—especially in the homes of church leaders. Though cultural situations have changed, it is still important that a Christian leader be hospitable.

Leadership Principle 7:
A leader should be able to communicate in a nonargumentative, nondefensive and nonthreatening way—demonstrating gentleness, patience and teachability without compromising the message of the Word of God.

Related Spiritual Principle: A leader must be able to teach.¹⁰

On the surface, it may appear that Paul was talking about the “**gift** of teaching,” or an **ability** or **skill** in communication. Not so—at least not in the way we describe teaching methods today. Rather, to be “able to teach” is a quality of life, an aspect of a person’s character.

Let’s allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. The Greek word translated “able to teach” is *didaktikos*. This word is used only twice in the New Testament—here in 1 Timothy and in 2 Timothy 2:23-25. In this latter passage, the main idea is “communication,” which is described as *didaktikos*. Note the words Paul used that cluster around the quality of being “able to teach.” Paul exhorted Timothy to “not be quarrelsome” or argumentative. He was to be “kind to all,” referring specifically to everyone he was teaching. While teaching, he was to be “patient when wronged.” When anyone opposed the message of the Word of God, he was to “correct with gentleness.”

Needless to say, these are qualities of maturity that are reflected in a nondefensive approach to communication and an openness to learn. In classical Greek, the word *didaktikos* meant “teachable.” In essence, a person who is “able to

¹⁰ See 1 Timothy 3:2g.

teach” demonstrates a sense of security, teachability and a nonthreatening response to those who may disagree.

I love to illustrate this quality of life by telling a true story of a man and his wife who have served with me as lay leaders for several years at Fellowship Bible Church North where I am senior pastor. Mike and his wife, Sharon, are wonderful dedicated Christians and have always challenged me with their own walk with God.

Mike is a banker. One Saturday morning, he and Sharon were eating breakfast. As they looked out their kitchen window, a bus pulled up in front of their home. A number of people got off the bus, picked up placards and began to picket in front of their house.

In a few minutes, a man knocked at the door with a document in his hands. He wanted Mike to sign a statement that his bank—a large Savings & Loan conglomerate throughout Texas—demonstrated prejudicial decisions against minorities in making loans. Standing beside this man was another individual with a camera, ready to take a picture of Mike’s reactions—assuming they would be negative, which would probably be displayed the next day in *The Dallas Morning News*.

In reality, what had happened was that the United States government had passed legislation that had been interpreted by minorities as prejudicial treatment. Since Mike was the CEO of this large Savings & Loan association, those minorities targeted him as a

means to make their point. In short, Mike was set up.

As a Christian, what would you have done in this situation?

Frankly, my own reactions might have been less than mature. Mike’s response illustrates in an incredible way what Paul meant by being “able to teach.” Rather than defending himself or reacting negatively, Mike invited all of the picketers into his home. Naturally, the man at the door with the document in his hands was totally nonplused—as was the entire group. However, recognizing Mike’s offer was sincere, they laid down their placards in a pile on the front lawn and all marched into his family room. Sharon served them coffee while Mike explained his personal concerns for minorities, as well as the history of his own involvement with minority groups in the city of Dallas.

When the natural opportunity came, Mike shifted his focus from his involvement in social activities to an experience that he had several years before. Mike had come to know Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior which, he told the group, even intensified his concern for helping others.

At that point, there was a decided change in the reactions of the group. Mike even began to get some affirmations from some of these strangers. Mike had won their hearts. They began to see more clearly his own perspective on what was happening in our society.

After a period of time together, the people stood up, thanked Mike and Sharon for their hospitality, and one by one walked out the door and got on the bus and left. They were never heard from again.¹¹

When I heard Mike share this experience, I thought immediately of what Paul wrote to Timothy about being “able to teach.” Mike and Sharon both demonstrated unusual maturity in that situation. Very quickly, a negative response on Mike’s part could have led to an argument. If he had “slammed the door”—which I would have been tempted to do—he would have played into their hands. More importantly, he would have missed the golden opportunity to share both the message of Christ and Christlikeness.

By “keeping the door open” and being “patient when wronged” and “with gentleness correcting those who were in opposition” to him, Mike was also given an “open door” to correct the thinking of the people in this group. Right there before his very eyes he began to see attitude changes, which happens when people begin to listen and to come “to the knowledge of the truth.”

What Mike did in no way justifies anything that may have been inappropriately done by the United States government or any other organization. Mike, however, took this opportunity to share his desire to be fair, honest and nonprejudiced in his dealings with people, both in his personal life and in his business. By practicing this quality of life in a

nondefensive and open way, he was “able to teach.”

Leadership Principle 8:
A leader should not be in bondage to any sinful cravings of the flesh; furthermore, that person should carefully consider the way his or her freedoms in Christ might lead others to sin.

Related Spiritual Principle: A Christian leader must not be addicted to wine.¹²

This particular requirement for leadership has often confused people. The fact is the Bible does not teach total abstinence. Most scholars agree that references to wine in both the Old and New Testaments refer to fermented grape juice. This is why Paul wrote that a spiritual leader should not be “addicted to wine.” Obviously, we cannot be “addicted” to nonalcoholic grape juice. If Paul were teaching total abstinence, he would have stated that a spiritual leader should never partake of wine. What does the Bible actually teach about drinking wine?

The following guidelines are provided in the Bible.

1. It is always outside God’s will to overindulge and overdrink. Listen carefully to the following warnings in the book of Proverbs:

Who has woe?
 Who has sorrow?
 Who has contentions?
 Who has complaining?
 Who has wounds
 without cause?
 Who has redness of eyes?

¹¹ This story has been previously published in *The Walk* by Gene A. Getz (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), pp. 201, 202, 218.

¹² See 1 Timothy 3:3a and Titus 1:7d.

Those who linger long over wine (Prov. 23:29, 30).

parents simply moves them in that direction more quickly.

2. It is always outside God’s will to become **addicted** to wine. Listen to the words of Paul in his letter to the Corinthians: In 1 Corinthians 6:12 Paul wrote, “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be **mastered** by anything.” In essence, this is what Paul had in mind when he established this requirement for spiritual leaders. Today we classify this kind of person as an alcoholic.

3. It is always outside God’s will when we cause others to sin. Paul spoke to this particular issue when he said, “It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine or to do anything by which your brother stumbles” (Rom. 14:21). This principle is applicable to all relationships. However, it is particularly applicable to parents. The National Council on Alcoholism states that children of alcoholics run a risk of becoming alcoholics themselves that is four times greater than that of children of nonalcoholics. This demonstrates the power of modeling and example. Furthermore, we must remember that some children (some say one in five) are born with a propensity toward alcoholism. When children have this natural tendency to become addicted, modeling by

4. It is always outside God’s will to become addicted to anything. Paul’s exhortation to not be addicted to wine has a broader application. A Christian should not be addicted to anything: drugs of any kind, sex, material things or food. For example, some Christians regularly overeat, but they never drink wine or any kind of alcoholic beverage. Yet the Bible condemns both addictions (see Prov. 23:20, 21).

Within a period of two weeks, two men in the church I pastor separately approached me regarding drinking alcoholic beverages. Both men were growing Christians who desired to do the will of God. The factor that triggered their concerns about their actions, however, was their young children. Both these men were well aware of the problems in our society. They knew the dangers of alcoholism, and they were concerned about the example they might set for their children. Was it worth the risk to drink, although drinking might not be sin for them? Would their freedom in Christ eventually cause one of their children to fall?

As we discussed the matter, they both came to the conclusion that drinking alcoholic beverages in front of their children was not worth the risk. One decided on total abstinence. The other decided on abstinence in front of the children. Both made decisions based on principles of Scripture (see Rom. 14:1-23).

Leadership Principle 9:
A leader should be able to control angry feelings, never expressing these feelings in hurtful ways nor allowing them to linger indefinitely.

Related Spiritual Principle: A leader is not pugnacious.¹³

The Greek word translated “pugnacious” is *pleektees*. Thayer defines this kind of person as a “bruiser,” one who is “ready with a blow”; a “pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person.”¹⁴ Pugnaciousness is really anger out of our control. It is not surprising that Paul stated this requirement for spiritual leaders following his warning against being “addicted to wine.” Drinking and particularly drunkenness often lead to arguments, brawls and fights.

Even more fundamental to not being pugnacious is to avoid being “quick tempered.” Paul referred to this characteristic in his letter to Titus (1:7). “Quick temperedness” is also a form of anger.

At this point, we must understand that not all anger is sinful. It is a normal emotion. Paul acknowledged this when he admonished the Ephesians: “Be angry, and yet do not sin” (Eph. 4:26). Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, demonstrated that it is possible to express anger without sinning when He drove the money changers from the Temple (see John 2:13-17).

When does anger become sinful?

1. When it results in “quick tempered” behavior. The Greek

word *orgilos*, which Paul used in Titus 1:7, literally means “prone to anger.” The English word that probably comes closest to describing this kind of quick-tempered person is “irascible,” meaning “hot tempered” or “easily provoked” to anger. A quick-tempered person “flies off the handle,” “loses control” and usually says and does things that hurt and offend others.

2. When it hurts people physically. This is what Paul had in mind when he used the Greek word *pleektees*—which is translated “pugnacious.” This can also happen when anger gets out of control.
3. When it persists and results in bitterness. After Paul exhorted the Ephesians to “be angry and yet do not sin,” he elaborated by warning them that all of us need a cooling off period when we get angry. It is virtually impossible to suddenly flip the switch and dissipate angry feelings. Time, however, becomes our friend. It gives us an opportunity to understand what is causing our anger and to become more objective. If this does not happen, angry feelings can turn to bitterness, which is sinful.
4. When we hurt people emotionally and spiritually. Anger that leads to verbal abuse can be even more devastating than physical abuse. Some Christians would never strike out at others physically, but they use their tongues to put others down, to control

¹³ See 1 Timothy 3:3b.

¹⁴ Joseph H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p. 516.

people, to embarrass them and to misplace their own hostility. Unfortunately, children are more vulnerable to this kind of abuse than adults simply because they have no way of protecting themselves.

5. When we become vengeful. It is natural to want to hurt those who have hurt us—to get even. That, however, God says, is not our right nor our responsibility. Paul wrote: “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.... Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Rom. 12:17, 19).

Leadership Principle 10:
A leader should be able to demonstrate strong convictions and directness in taking a stand for righteousness, but to also balance these attitudes and actions with a loving spirit.

Related Spiritual Principle:
Be gentle.¹⁵

Paul contrasts “pugnaciousness” with “gentleness.” Interestingly, several Greek words are translated “gentle.” Paul, however, chose this particular word (*epiikees*) to describe a particular kind of gentleness: “a spirit of forbearance.” Thayer defines the word as being “equitable” and “fair,” and we might add “reasonable.”¹⁶

I like to use Tom Landry, former coach of the Dallas Cowboys, to illustrate this particular quality.

Coach Landry was a fair-minded man. Tony Dorsett, a premier running back who at times frustrated Landry, made the following comment as he reflected back on his years with the Cowboys: “Maybe you didn’t always like his decisions, but he was fair. He would listen to all sides of an issue and then decide what was best for the team.”¹⁷

Dorsett was not the only Cowboy who at times caused a lot of difficulties for Landry. Dwayne Thomas, another powerful running back, helped lead the Cowboys to a Super Bowl victory. Thomas later got hooked on drugs, however, and his behavior became so bizarre that it became ridiculous.

Then Thomas (Hollywood) Henderson blew a potentially brilliant career for the same reason and later became a public embarrassment to the entire Cowboy organization.

As tough-minded as Landry could be, he demonstrated incredible patience and forbearance (gentleness) with these men on his team. In his book *The Landry Legend*, Bob St. John summarized Tom’s approach: “Faith was certainly a factor in helping him to try to understand and cope with a much troubled Dwayne Thomas and to be more fair and understanding of a person such as Thomas (Hollywood) Henderson and the somewhat different behavior patterns of Tony Dorsett.”¹⁸

Randy White, an All-Pro Defensive lineman put it this way, “Hey, I was there when he had a lot of those misfits, and Coach Landry would bend over backwards in giving them a second and even a third chance. That’s two or three more than they’d have gotten from anybody else—or from anybody in any other

¹⁵ See 1 Timothy 3:3c.

¹⁶ Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 238.

¹⁷ Bob St. John, *The Landry Legend* (Dallas: Word Inc., 1989), p. 283.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

kind of business. He did it because he has faith in people.”¹⁹

Mike Ditka, who both played for the Cowboys and later coached the Chicago Bears added, “Tom Landry is probably the fairest guy I’ve ever been around. He let a lot of players push him to the limit. But when they did, that was it!”²⁰

I use this Tom Landry illustration because it is not often we find a Christian man who is so well-known as a leader and who has demonstrated so dramatically what Paul had in mind with the word *epiikees*. Strange as it seems, this form of “gentleness” and “patience” is unique. The translators of the *Amplified New Testament* captured this meaning with these words, “not combative but gentle and considerate” (1 Tim. 3:3).

Leadership Principle 11:
A leader should relate to others by using a style of communication that does not make them feel controlled, manipulated and defensive.

Related Spiritual Principle:
Do not be contentious.²¹

I have a close friend who now serves with me as a lay elder at Fellowship Bible Church North. Those who knew him best called him “Mr. Charge Ahead.” In his young days, he was known as “Fast Eddie.” He loved to debate—which at times was interpreted as being argumentative, insensitive and even contentious. Before this man was selected to be an elder, we followed a standard procedure we regularly use in evaluating whether a man and his

wife are qualified for this level of leadership. We asked all our other elders (and their wives) and our staff pastors (and their wives) to fill out an evaluation form on each prospective candidate and his wife (if married). This form is based on the characteristics we are looking at in this chapter. We ask each person to use a seven-point scale to express his or her degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with this person’s behavior on each characteristic.... [The questions are in the next article. *Ed.*]

When Eddie was being considered for eldership, we followed this procedure. When the forms were returned, he was consistently marked down in several related areas, one being “contentious.” As senior pastor, I and one other lay elder sat down with this man and his wife to report these responses. Frankly, I was nervous about it, as I always am in these circumstances. This kind of communication is always difficult for me, especially when it involves a close friend.

A wonderful thing happened. Eddie sat and listened, obviously surprised. He was totally open and nondefensive and thanked us for our time and openness with him and assured us he would think and pray about what we had shared.

Later, he asked his wife—who had received perfect scores—for her opinion. Did she agree with our evaluation? She did. What she said surprised him. In retrospect, the following is Eddie’s own personal account of what happened!

When Maureen said that she agreed with the evaluation that I could be contentious, argumentative and too bold in defending the views I held strongly, I knew that God

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 291.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 157.

²¹ See 1 Timothy 3:3d.

wanted to get my attention—big time. I also knew down deep that the evaluation was correct. As I asked God for help, He made it clear to me that I needed to develop the fruit of the Spirit known as gentleness. He also gave me a plan. I was to get my family to hold me accountable. One evening I called my family together and asked each one to forgive me for not being gentle and to ask for their help. I explained to them that every time they saw me using my verbal skills to steamroll over them, raise my voice, show anger or be contentious in any way, they were to put an X on the family calendar in the kitchen.

To my dismay, the next day I got five Xs. I considered changing the rules! But I was committed and my family helped me learn to be gentle. What started out as a crushing blow to my “Mr. Charge Ahead” ego had turned into a wonderful blessing in my life. I now know a viewpoint spoken in gentleness with energy is much more acceptable and effective with the listener. I certainly have not arrived at my goal, but I’m on my way.

Eddie’s response to this process in itself demonstrates his growing maturity. The changes he made were immediately obvious to all who knew him well. He eventually became an elder and today I consider him one of our most faithful board members. He has a heart for God, a heart for the ministry and a heart for people. The facts are, he really always did. He simply needed to change his style of communication. He did not mean to appear contentious, authoritarian, argumentative and controlling. When he learned that other mature

leaders—including one within his own family—thought he was, however, he made some permanent and lasting changes.

Leadership Principle 12:
A leader should be a generous Christian, giving regularly, systematically, proportionally and joyfully to the Lord’s work.

Related Spiritual Principle:
A leader must be free from the love of money.²²

A mature Christian leader does not love money. This is true of all mature believers. Do not misunderstand. The Scriptures do not teach that “money,” per se, is evil. Nor do they teach that it is wrong to have lots of money. What they do teach is that it is a serious violation of God’s will when we love it. That is why Paul said that when a Christian is selected for a leadership position, that person should be “free”—not from money, but “from the love of money.”

I had the unique experience of joining a group of men who studied everything the Bible says about material possessions. Later I wrote a book entitled *A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions*, in which I compiled the findings. To our amazement, we discovered that God says more about the way Christians should use their material possessions than about any other subject other than God Himself. Unquestionably, the greatest hallmark of Christian maturity is generosity.

Some researchers tell us that the average Christian gives only about 2 percent of his or her income to the Lord. Because approximately 15 percent of the Christian population tithe (i.e., give 10 percent of their

²² See 1 Timothy 3:3e.

income), this means that the majority of Christians give next to nothing. This simply indicates that most of us are “lovers of money.” Christians as a whole have become materialists, which is a direct violation of the will of God.

In our culture, I personally believe this admonition should mean that we give a *minimum* of 10 percent of our gross income. If at all possible, this should be a starting point. If it is not possible, it should be our goal—one that we should ask God to help us reach as soon as possible.

Leadership Principle 13:
A leader who is also a parent should have a good relationship with his or her children, giving proper direction to the family unit.

Related Spiritual Principle: A leader manages his own household well.²³

Because Paul was addressing men with this maturity profile, he compared the father role to both the pastoral and deacon role (see 1 Tim. 3:12). The basic criteria for determining whether or not a man is ready for a key leadership role in the church is how well he is functioning as a spiritual leader in his home. His children particularly will reflect how well he has fulfilled this God-ordained function. If he is mature, a man will be able to keep “his children under control with all dignity” (1 Tim. 3:4). Paul told Titus that this kind of father will have “children who believe” and who are “not accused of dissipation or rebellion” (Titus 1:6).

Paul viewed a well-ordered family as the true test of a man’s maturity and ability to lead other Christians. When the whole household is committed to Christ, you can be

sure the father is spiritually and psychologically mature. When this is not true, however, if that man is appointed as a spiritual leader, the church will experience the same problems his family did. The very weaknesses that made this man a poor husband and dad will cause him to be a poor leader in the church. Furthermore, if a man who is not a good leader at home accepts this kind of leadership role, his family members will have less respect for him, which in turn will cause greater problems.

Do not misunderstand! Paul was not saying a person had to have children to be a good leader. He was simply saying **if** a man **is married**, and **if he has children**, then he should have a well-ordered household.

Neither was Paul referring to young children and the natural phases they go through as they are growing up. Rather, he was talking about older children who still lived in the family complex and who were guilty of “dissipation” and “rebellion” (see Titus 1:6)—or more specifically, a riotous and immoral lifestyle. The rebellious sons of Eli, who served as priests in the Tabernacle, illustrate what Paul had in mind (see 1 Sam. 2:12ff.).

Women who serve in leadership positions should also be tested in the same way. For example, Paul commended Timothy’s mother, Eunice, for her diligence in nurturing this young man in biblical truth. She had taught him the Scriptures from the time he was a child (see 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15). Because Timothy’s father was not a Christian, Eunice served as both the mother and father in terms of spiritual nurture.

Note also that when Paul outlined qualifications for women who would serve in deacon roles, he stated they must “be dignified, not malicious

²³ See 1 Timothy 3:4.

gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things” (1 Tim. 3:11)—which certainly implies being good “managers of their own household.”²⁴

Paul also addressed this issue when writing to both older and younger women. Older women were to serve as leaders to younger women. To be qualified to do so, Paul outlined very specific leadership qualifications in Titus 2:3-5.

BECOMING A CHRISTIAN LEADER

It is important to understand that the criteria for selecting leaders in the church is not just a profile for pastors, elders or deacons. Rather, what Paul outlined in his letters to Timothy and Titus are the marks of a mature Christian. In essence, Paul was stating, “If you want to be a spiritual leader in the church, that’s great! But just make sure you are mature!” He then outlined what a mature Christian looks like, whether male or female. The specific characteristics Paul pulled together in these succinct and power-packed paragraphs are listed elsewhere in the New Testament as marks of maturity and goals for all Christians.

Note again that Paul was not saying a Christian must be perfect to be a leader. That would disqualify all of us, including the apostle Paul (see Phil. 3:12-14). Along the way each of us fails in certain areas of our lives. The mark of true maturity, as illustrated by my friend Eddie, is what we do about our weaknesses. A mature Christian is open to correction and takes steps to make changes!

Should the qualifications Paul listed for elders or pastors be used to select **all** leaders in the church? This would be ideal because these profiles present the marks of a mature Christian. Realistically, however, new Christians can serve in many positions that do not require the same standards. It takes time to grow in Christ and reflect His character, and often the most conducive place to mature is in a leadership position. We must remember that the apostles became leaders before they became mature. They often demonstrated incredible egocentric and childish behavior. Jesus gave them selective responsibilities under His supervision and guidance, however, to prepare them for the Day of Pentecost when they became responsible to launch and lead the Church under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

When all is said and done, however, those who serve as pastors and other top leaders of the church should, of all people, be mature in Christ. If they are not, the whole Body of Christ will suffer, including the person who is assigned to a leadership position, but is not truly ready to provide such leadership.

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²⁴ When Paul referred to “women” in 1 Timothy 3:12, it is my personal opinion he was referring to women in “serving roles.” Consequently, this concept could be translated “deaconess.”

STEP 4: FORM A RESPONSE
What are your initial thoughts?

Spiritual Formation

- Take time this week to pray about each of the character qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-12, asking God to reveal any qualities that need special attention. You may wish to journal your prayers and make a specific list of things you need to work on.

Deeper Understanding

- Write out a summary of 1 Timothy 3:1-12:

More Skillful Ministry

- Take the extra copy of the questionnaire at the end of Getz's article out of your folder and ask someone who knows you well to complete the questionnaire with you in mind. Make sure that the person you choose feels free to be open and honest in their evaluation of you (it might be best to give them a day or two to think carefully through their response).
- Fill in the remaining copy of the evaluation for yourself. Identify strengths and weaknesses based on the categories used by Getz.

STEP 5: DISCUSS THE ISSUE
What can we learn from each other?

1. Why did Paul primarily list character qualifications as a way of identifying church leaders in 1 Timothy 3 rather than knowledge, skills, abilities or things that are distinctly “spiritual” (like being a person of prayer)?
2. Once we have identified character weaknesses (see “Addendum: Principles to Live By” in *Step 3: Consult Other Sources*), what sort of steps can church leaders take in order to address and correct them?
3. In 1 Timothy 3 Paul says that Christian leaders are to be self-controlled, gentle and hospitable. How would you go about assessing whether or not a potential church leader had these qualities?
4. Getz’s *Leadership Principle 8* (page 16) refers to leaders in the church not being in bondage to any sinful cravings and that leaders need to be very careful in considering how the exercise of Christian freedom might impact others. While 1 Timothy 3 specifically mentions addiction to alcohol, what other addictions might be of concern in your culture?
5. To what extent are these character qualities in 1 Timothy 3:1-12 special to church overseers and to what extent are they really applicable to any mature Christian?
6. Your church wants to have people in leadership who are of godly character. “Choose one of the following brief situations and describe how you would respond to the leader being depicted:
 - Mike dislikes confrontation, so he will often top off a formal gathering in the meeting room with an informal gathering in the parking lot....
 - Mary has a tremendous amount of Bible knowledge but... [does not relate well to others. *Ed.*] In one evening she can ‘love’ a person and then become as cold as ice to the same person.
 - Mark is a good leader and well liked, but in unguarded moments he slips into crude language and cursing.”¹

¹ Jeffrey Arnold, *Seven Traits of a Successful Leader*, (NavPress Publishing Group, Colorado Springs, CO, 1997), 37.

STEP 6: TAKE ACTION TO OBEY
What are the outcomes of this issue?

1. Look again at your initial ideas on the character of a leader in the *Step 4: Form a Response* and *Step 5: Discuss the Issue* sections. Are there any aspects of your thinking that you wish to revise now that you have had a discussion with your group?

2. What do you sense God leading you to do in response to what you have learned about the character of a Christian leader?

3. How do you plan to carry this out (when, who, where, etc.)?

4. Share the above plans with a mentoring partner or with one or more of your leadership team. Allow yourself to be accountable to them for these plans/goals.