

## **Essentials to Leadership: Character Development**

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### **Course description: Character Development – part 5**

This course continues to discuss the biblical necessity of godly character. Each lesson dives into specifics about how we develop our character in ways that build credibility, respect, and the type of integrity to lead God's people.

#### **Course Objectives: By the end of the class students will have:**

- A. Listed a minimum of five ways we lose respect and a minimum of five ways we gain respect as leaders.
- B. Considered three significant thoughts related to respect.

#### **Outline of the class:**

- A. Divide the class into groups of four and ask the groups to spend 10 minutes and make a list of at least five ways that leaders lose respect.
- B. When the task is finished, ask each group to share one at a time and write the answers on the whiteboard. A few possible suggestions to add to the list, if they are not already mentioned include:
  - 1. Hypocrisy
  - 2. Poor decisions
  - 3. Inappropriate behavior
  - 4. Lack of respect for others
  - 5. Arrogance – inappropriate pride
  - 6. Blaming others for one's own actions
  - 7. Talking about others behind their back (truth or lies)
  - 8. Abusive language
  - 9. Lying
  - 10. Inconsistency
- C. Now, ask each group to take another 10 minutes to make a list of at least five ways that leaders gain respect.
- D. When the task is finished, ask each group to share one at a time and write the answers on the opposite side of the whiteboard. A few possible suggestions to add to the list, if they are not already mentioned include:

1. Preparation: Be prepared with a knowledge of the subject/task.
2. Show respect to others: We are all made in the image of God, and for no other reason than this, we need to show others respect.
3. Never ask someone else to do something we are unwilling to do ourselves.
4. Put others first: Difficult in a culture so driven by self-interest.
5. Demonstrate humility
6. Admit mistakes: Take responsibility for our actions. Never blame others.
7. Learn good manners: Always use “please” and “thank you.”
8. Discipline privately – Praise publicly
9. Make good decisions
10. Respect yourself: Our personal appearance, attitude, type of language used all speak volumes about how we see ourselves)

E. A few thoughts to consider with regards to respect:

1. Respect is earned. Many have stated it before, but people will not follow by accident. They follow leaders they respect.
  - a. Think about the challenges within the political framework of our country and the lack of respect that is shown to government officials at all levels.
  - b. Think about the corruption in the corporate world and how employees possess such disgust for leaders whose hypocrisy and drive for money makes them more tyrannical.
  - c. Think about the home and the hypocrisy seen by children when parents act one way around Christians in the church building, but when they get home appear more like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.
2. Respect is essential for long-lasting leadership
  - a. Since respect is essential for long-lasting leadership, we need to take steps to ensure we gain the respect of others by following the areas listed on the whiteboard. Relate to a few that are on the list.
  - b. Remember, the time is now. We cannot change the past, but we can do whatever it takes now to change the future.
3. “Respect is never commanded; but demanded by our actions” – A previous student at the Bear Valley Bible Institute shared this thought from his father.

- a. People in positions of authority may command specific actions to subordinates, but that does not mean they are respected. Titles and positions of authority do not necessarily go hand in hand with respect.
- b. However, when genuine character is demonstrated, the natural result will be respect.
- c. Think about professional athletes and entertainers. People may respect their talent or ability, but the personal lives of many of these people cause them to lose respect (examples: Tiger Woods, Magic Johnson, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, etc. – you can think of your own examples to use).
- d. Think about some of the people in the Bible that we respect and those we do not respect (examples: apart from the obvious – Jesus - Paul, Peter, James, John, Abraham, Noah. And then consider Adam, Manasseh, Saul, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, lawyers, etc. – again make your own list).

Conclusion:

- A. Respect is easy to lose and hard to gain. We need to work every day at establishing the kind of character that people respect.
- B. When people respect the individual, they will follow. This is especially crucial within the church today. We need leaders that are respected and demonstrate the kind of character that people are willing to follow.
- C. Next week, we will build on this discussion and consider another area that directly relates to our character.

Recommended Reading:

Maxwell, John. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*

Maxwell, John. *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of Leaders*