



CHARACTER PRINCIPLE LESSONS

Leadership



Hope Christian Fellowship

Making Disciples Who Live & Love Like Jesus.

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How to use these Lessons

These lessons are great for small groups, one-on-one (person-to person) gatherings, and mentoring, or even at home with your own family.

We would like to suggest that you use the following format:

LOOK BACK

Take some time to find out how the group or person you are meeting with is doing in their life. If you are meeting regularly, ask questions like, “How have you applied what you learned last time we met?” “Did you get to share your story or the gospel with anyone this week?”

Other questions to consider:

- Did you accomplish your goals from last time we met?
- What have been your greatest challenges? How did you deal with those challenges?
- What do you believe is working well in your life?

LOOK UP

Do the lesson you have planned for this time together. Instruct your members to ask God to teach you what He wants you to learn from it. Ask questions like, “What did you like about this lesson?” “What did you find difficult to understand?” “Does anything from this lesson stand out to you?” “Is anything hitting your heart from this lesson?”

LOOK FORWARD

Take a bit of time to ponder and pray. Pray that God will enlighten you and those you are meeting. Encourage them to write down what impressions they are receiving from the Holy Spirit, and to consider those things as their “assignment” for the coming week.

Ask them to share their “assignment.”

Other questions to consider:

- What are your highest priorities for this week/month?
- What are your plans to help you grow in Christ?

How can we help you this week/month?

PRESSURE

“For the Lord grants wisdom! His every word is a treasure of knowledge and understanding.” Proverbs 2:6

Why should I want to understand people? That’s a good question. There are many reasons, but let’s look at a few of the important ones:

1. It will save us from a lot of conflicts.
2. We will be able to lead and motivate people.
3. It will give us a forgiving heart.

The wise man, Solomon, talked much about certain types of people – the fools, mockers, rebels, the lazy, and others. He was wise because he understood them and knew how to deal with them. He experienced great fame and success by understanding them and they called it “wisdom.” If we don’t understand mockers and rebels, we will have a lot of unnecessary conflicts with them and then develop a bad attitude toward them – which will, in turn, hurt us more than it will them. As people in business, we need to understand our employees in order to motivate them, or we will have poor production which will put us out of business. We also need to understand our customers – what they want and why they want it. Without understanding them and their needs, we may be serving them well but not satisfying them. Sometimes all they want is to be appreciated or recognized. Every one of us has at least four basic needs:

1. To be loved and appreciated.
2. To experience a sense of achievement or self-worth.
3. To have a sense of belonging.
4. To feel secure.

We should keep these in mind whenever we deal with people, regardless of the situation. Business management consists of motivating people to serve others. It is pretty hard to manage and motivate our people if we don’t understand their personal needs. We need to understand their strengths and their weaknesses and place them accordingly. A good team is made of a variety of people with a variety of gifts. The weakness in one should be covered by the strength of another. Out of the Lord’s mouth comes knowledge and understanding, and if we sincerely seek Him to gain wisdom, He will give it. God says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” When we understand why people do what they do and why they are what they are, we will know how to direct them to get the proper response.

A good understanding will also give us a forgiving attitude. Jesus understood His accusers. That’s why He could say, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” What an attitude! Forgiveness came easily because He understood their ignorance– why they did what they did. We can forgive easily if we understand ourselves and the situation of others. Generally, people want to be nice and good, but situations and pressures of life push them

past their hope or dreams. Many times, they feel bad immediately after they have reacted. This gives us an opportunity to speak a word of wisdom to them. The time to build people is when they are down; they won't listen to us when they are up. We need to commit ourselves to the task of understanding people. God will bless and reward us with a forgiving heart and will give us peace and happiness in a world that is full of frustration and conflict.

DISCUSSION:

How have you been affected by someone who takes the time to understand you?

What do you think motivates people?

MEASURING UP TO THE PLUMB LINE:

How well are you currently applying this principle in your life? (10 being highest, 2 being lowest).

Can you see the value of raising your rating?

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Many people will close their eyes to advice, but most people will open their eyes to example.

DEVELOPING PEOPLE

“The master may get better work from an untrained apprentice than from a skilled rebel” Proverbs 26:10

To develop means to become gradually fuller, larger or better. It can apply to anything such as people, products or attitudes. Since life is a process, we are all involved in developing physically, mentally, and spiritually. We are not born developed, but we are all born with the potential to develop.; So, why would we prefer to hire untrained people over the trained rebel? Very simply, the grained rebel thinks he knows it all; therefore he may not be adaptable to our organization. His skills may be good, but if he has an overbearing attitude about himself and his skills, he will be a problem. This tells us that the will of a person is more valuable than the skills. If we have a man’s will, he can be developed in his potential.

There are two things that are very important to the outcome of any life:

1. The environment in which we are born and nurtured.
2. The environment which we choose for ourselves.

The first environment is not our choice. The hands that feed us, the attitude and how they treat us, as well as the things they teach us will have much to do with our outcome. Why? Because we are like raw material that can be shaped and molded into almost anything. The first eight years of our life may well determine much of our future because of the paradigms developed in us. Of course, we can make decisions for ourselves later on, but even then they will be made by the paradigms of our past.

The second environment, which we choose for ourselves, is even more important than the first because we become responsible for our own choices. So, if our first was a good environment, it will continue to help us develop. But if it was a negative or distorted environment which brought bondage, we have the opportunity to accept or create a new one. It’s like being born again. The new environment will give us a new paradigm and a chance to develop into our potential. We must remember the power of the environment. The mind, or the spirit of a man is like a seed; within every seed lies the potential of life. If the seed is in a dry, cool environment, it will not produce or develop; it will lie dormant. But if we take the seed and place it in a warm, moist environment, it will automatically grow and develop. It will reach its full potential if the environment remains correct. We are much the same – if the environment is right, we grow and mature and produce to our potential. This principle works for our family, our business, or in any organization.

We must always consider these three things as we grow and develop:

1. Have a fixed, lifetime vision of what we would like to become.
2. Examine the past to see if we need a paradigm shift to get there.
3. Study the values of life and determine which ones will create the right environment for our goals.

We should never consider ourselves too old to review these. However, the longer we live with a certain paradigm, the harder it is to break it. So we must accept the fact that if we want to develop into our potential, we must always be prepared to change. Sometimes we want to change others rather than ourselves. If we are going to develop our children, employees, or society, we must lead them into proper values. As parents, we must take the responsibility to prepare our children for their future. Much of their future depends on us. As employers, we should develop people to fit into our organizations with their future in mind. The final outcome of all our influence and development of people is the creation of a culture and the environment in which we live. We should always remember that we have developed or created our situations and our successes by the way we have developed our people.

DISCUSSION:

Does your team consist of more skilled rebels or untrained apprentices?

What kind of environment for change exists in your family, business, and church?

MEASURING UP TO THE PLUMB LINE:

How well are you currently applying this principle in your life? (10 being highest, 2 being lowest).

Can you see the value of raising your rating?

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

An ego trip is like taking a vacation but never leaving home.

LISTENING

“A wise man will hear and increase learning.” Proverbs 1:5

Listening . . . the word “listen” means to make an effort to hear or pay attention, to give heed, or to take advice. The proverb says, “A wise man will hear,” meaning that if we are wise, we will be good listeners. The reason that wise men listen is that they know they become wiser by listening. Good listeners are seeking to learn more. Wisdom is not an inherited gift; rather, it is earned by listening and learning, and by observing and understanding. A good listener will usually have these four character traits:

1. They are disciplined listeners and talkers.
2. They are seekers of truth. They want to know what is right, not who is right.
3. They love quiet time – no radio, no TV, no reading, no interruptions. They like to have time to review what is inside them. They are thinkers.
4. They are full of questions. They don’t want to misunderstand or to be misunderstood.

Jesus was always aware of being misunderstood. That’s why He said, “He that has an ear, let him hear.” He meant, “Don’t just hear my words, comprehend and understand the idea and get the concept of what I’m trying to say.” All good teachers try to communicate certain concepts, but they don’t always use the right words. So we hear the words, but don’t get the bottom line. That’s why good listeners will probe by asking questions. If we are not disciplined listeners, we won’t get the point. Sometimes we think that people around us hear what we are saying, only to find out later that they thought we meant something else.

Listening is not enough – we must hear. Listening is not hearing until we fully understand what the other party is trying to convey to us. Television only communicates in part, for it only works one way. Telephones are a better system of communication, for we hear and respond. Fax machines, on the other hand, are perfect in communication: the receiving machine receives exactly what the sending machine transmitted. But we are not faxing machines! We measure and judge the words and emotions (our state of being). We hear the words, then form our own perceptions based on what we think we heard, and interpret it with our feelings from our past experiences. Everything we hear goes through a process of our hurts and disappointments, and we then judge accordingly. That’s what we call “reading into it.” Someone will take something we said, and they will say that we were talking about them when it was not even in our minds.

If we are going to be successful in building business and personal relationships, we will need to take the initiative to listen until we know where people are and what they need. Discovering needs is the first step in helping others. We will learn their needs if we can listen. Wise men become wise by listening, and they will keep on listening because they see the value in it.

A good way to make sure we understand someone is to ask him, "Is this what you are trying to tell me? Or "Is this what you mean?" don't be too proud to ask for clarity. It is time well spent and will avoid a lot of hurt and confusion.

DISCUSSION:

What type of people do you have difficulty hearing?

How has it affected you when someone has really listened to you?

Are you misunderstood a lot?

MEASURING UP TO THE PLUMB LINE:

How well are you currently applying this principle in your life? (10 being highest, 2 being lowest).

Can you see the value of raising your rating?

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

A good man will always increase in learning and understanding for he knows his life and the future depend on it.

INSPIRATION

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when dreams come true at last, there is life and joy.” Proverbs 13:12

Fear is a motivator. It is an important one, but it is used primarily to establish order and parameters. If we control people by fear only, we are poor leaders. Good leaders understand the importance of rules that are feared, but also understand that the “law worketh wrath.” Man cannot live by the law alone—sooner or later he will rebel. In order to develop a long-lasting, successful family, business, or society, we must design a system that gives every one

(1) personal dreams, (2) opportunity and (3) hope.

If we have no dreams and see no opportunities, we lose hope. And when we lose hope, we get angry and feel unfulfilled, which may turn into despondency and will cause some to even commit suicide. As long as there is hope, we can, and most of us will keep on going. Hope comes from seeing possibilities, and possibilities come from active and creative minds.

God made us in His image to have ideas and to be creative, to calculate and analyze situations. When leaders try to stifle this creativity, sooner or later people will analyze the unfairness and break away from its control. We cannot stifle individuality forever. Communism was a good example of this: Their system was built on keeping everyone equal and having all things in common. Their idea was, “Give a man food, clothing and shelter, and he will be happy.”

This sounds good as a philosophy, but it does not work because we are not all designed to be the same. We are all created equal, but our outcomes will be different because each one of us can make choices. We have different gifts, temperaments and creative ideas. This means some will pursue more than others, thus bringing different levels of understanding and opportunities.

To foster inspiration, we must create an environment where minds can work freely within a set of parameters. The parameters become the framework or guideline for creativity.

To motivate means to stimulate the mind and spirit of a person. This is what we call motivating by leading the minds of men and women. This is done by presenting dreams and possibilities to them, which will inspire them to pursue their future. They will be motivated from within, rather than controlled by external laws. They are led, not driven. This becomes their purpose or motive (reason) for living. If we give people an incentive or dream within the

framework of our personal goals and ambitions, both will benefit. Our intent for inspiring others will always have to be for a win/win situation. Otherwise, it would be considered unfair and will boomerang on us.

All good leaders will use incentives and dream-planting for motivating 10 to 1 over fear. They know fear must be a part of leading, but only as a last resort. Good leaders will focus on incentives and dream planting, which creates a powerful force within their employees, so they

become self-motivated. They will need less management because they will be working as unto themselves.

DISCUSSION:

Have you been more successfully motivated by fears or dreams?

How do you respond to rules?

Have you ever lost hope?

Explain the feeling.

MEASURING UP TO THE PLUMBLINE:

How well are you currently applying this principle in your life? (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

Can you see the value of raising your rating?

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Each day of our lives, we make deposits in the memory banks of those we meet. That becomes our reputation.

CONFLICT

“Go ahead and prepare for the conflict, but victory comes from God.” Proverbs 21:31

There are those who think that life should be without conflicts, but behind every great man or woman, there are war stories. These experiences have taught them principles that make them wise. They have learned that victory comes from God. God made us in His own image, with the power to create. This starts through ideas . . . one idea will stimulate another, and then another, which leaves us with many opinions. For this reason, we don't always agree with each other, because if we grow it will come from an idea that will form opinions in us. So a major part of our life is spent learning how to act and react (conflict) toward each other, because of our personal opinions. As we deal with these conflicts and testing, we should become better people, for through them we discover our strengths and weaknesses. It is very important to recognize that the victory comes from God, for it is through the creative gift of reasoning and choice that God gives us victory. Through this gift, we grow and overcome situations (conflicts). A few questions we need to ask ourselves are:

1. Has victory over the conflict made us better people or are we angry at life?
2. Has it kept us humble and thankful to God or are we critical?
3. Has it improved our character and taught us a lesson or has it made us haughty and arrogant?

It is not wrong to have conflicts. In fact, we can't grow or make progress without them, because most new ideas are initially rejected as they conflict with our old habits. Change is not always easy. Some of us never will. That's why we must allow time for an idea to mature, or conflict will turn into a war and separate us from important associates. Conflicts are the battles we fight in our minds; war is when it turns into hand-to-hand combat in the flesh. But it's O.K. to prepare for the conflict or war, for without preparation we cannot win. Once a father took his son to a boxing match. The son noticed that one of the boxers knelt down and prayed in his corner. The son asked the father, “Will that help him?” “Only if he is prepared to fight” replied the father. Likewise, we must believe that victory comes from God, but we must prepare ourselves as though it will not.

We must also be careful when we win because it is easy to become proud and boastful. And if we do, we will soon be humbled. The reason God humbles us is to teach us something because He knows we learn more from losing than we do from winning. When we lose, we question God and ourselves as to why we lost. What we learn from this will cause us to grow in understanding so we can improve and win. We should always remember that the victory is God's, or we will have to go through the test over and over again. God wants us to grow up and understand. When we are in a battle, it is easy to ask God to help us, and we are ready to make all kinds of deals and promises to Him. We must not forget them when victory comes.

So we should never be afraid of conflicts, knowing that there is a lesson to be learned which will help us in life and make us trust in God. Conflicts will come, but we must trust in God for solutions. This will build true godly character—then we can tell our own war stories!

Discussion:

How do you feel about conflict?

Have conflicts in your life made you better or bitter?

Give an example of how conflict has helped your life?

MEASURING UP TO THE PLUMBLINE:

How well are you currently applying this principle in your life? (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

Can you see the value of raising your rating?

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Conflict is so important to me that if there is none, then I create one.

CONFRONTATION

“A soft answer turns away wrath.” Proverbs 15:1

When we are confronted by someone, our natural tendencies are to get defensive and argumentative. It's because we don't want to be proven wrong. To be wrong is considered humbling, and it hurts our pride. So we defend our position even when we know we are wrong or have exaggerated the truth. No one is always right in every situation. Yet, all of us are usually partly right. It is this “partly right” which gets us into trouble. This is why:

1. Since we know we are at least partly right, we open our mouth and freely give our opinions.
2. Once we have spoken our opinions, we are committed to defending our position. It is not easy to admit that we are wrong.

We cannot have good communication without good relationships. Good relationships give us the right to communicate our opinion without conflict. Poor communication destroys relationships, wastes a lot of time and energy, and hinders us in resolving problems.

Yes, we may win the argument, but lose the battle or the point we were trying to make, and possibly lose a friend in the process. When we have disagreements—which we all have—it is not only important to “agree with the adversary quickly” (Matthew 5:25) but equally important to manage and control the tone of our voice. A “soft answer” turns away wrath. When our response is soft and gentle, our opponents will respect us and consider our point of view. This gives us a chance to continue the discussion. It is amazing how powerful words are in the hands of those who know how to use them. The words “I'm sorry” are powerful, but when they come from a soft, sensitive tongue, they are disarming. A soft, slow answer is more powerful than tanks and guns.

There are three questions we should ask ourselves before we get into a debate:

1. How enlightened am I on the subject? Don't show a boastful, overconfident attitude, but rather downplay your knowledge and maybe they will be surprised.
2. How much control do I have over my emotions? Refuse to let your anger control you, breath deep before you respond defensively
3. Do I know when to say, “You may be right!” or “That's an interesting point!”? All good communicators know how to humble themselves. And it's not wrong to say “I don't know” or “I'm not sure.”

The way we use and handle words may determine war or peace, friends or enemies, and failure or success in life. We must remember that it is better to get a part of something than nothing at all. The man who “knows that he knows” does not have to scream or get loud and abrasive. If he does, it may be a sign of his insecurity. It can be very embarrassing to be wrong at the top of our voice.

We can avoid a lot of problems and be more productive by giving soft answers to those who are arrogant and abrasive. When discussions create more heat than light, it is time to return a soft answer and let others embarrass themselves with their loudness. We should never walk away without establishing a respectful closure.

DISCUSSION:

How do you usually respond when someone communicates with you in anger or arrogance?

What aspect of the principle challenges you the most?

MEASURING UP TO THE PLUMBLINE:

How well are you currently applying this principle in your life? (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

Can you see the value of raising your rating?

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

The best way to win is to forget to keep score.

CRITICISM

“If you profit from constructive criticism you will be elected to the wise men’s hall of fame.” Proverbs 15:1

“I hate it!” is the most common response to the word criticism. The dictionary defines criticism as “the act of analyzing or passing judgment.” As strange as it may seem, we can benefit in our business and in our personal lives by receiving criticism. The benefits vary:

1. Become wise—we learn from the good and the bad.
2. Gain a powerful perspective—because we understand the critic.
3. Gain good judgment—because we pursue truth, not personalities. Our value for truth should always be greater than any feelings we have toward the person revealing the truth.

Since we all want to grow and experience the good life, we had better be prepared to listen to the critics. But

first, we must differentiate between the humanistic way and God’s way of criticism. One popular positive mental attitude theory says that there is no such thing as constructive criticism. They say criticism is all a negative approach to things. But the Proverb above implies that there is a way that criticism may be profitable. To say that criticism is wrong is the same as saying that we cannot bring correction to what is wrong—that is not common sense.

The root word of criticism is “critic.” Nobody likes a critic, but Solomon admonishes us to profit from them. A critic is someone who criticizes and makes accusations. What he is saying may be true, so we should always be open to receive. It may be what we need.

A critic is usually branded as a faultfinder with a rotten attitude. In most cases, we will not listen to what he is saying because of his attitude. Some take the attitude that it’s like getting kicked by a mule; you have to consider the source. However, we should be thankful for the critics—at least they have the guts to tell us what they think. Others may feel the same way about us, but would never have the courage to confront us, denying us the privilege to grow.

If we accept criticism we will profit. The criticism may not be true, but then again, it may! So the value is in listening to it, and not measuring it by the person giving it. That’s what Solomon was trying to tell us. He said we would be elected to the wise men’s hall of fame if we learn from them!

Yes, some criticism may stem from fault-finding people with a bad attitude, but we must still choose to carefully consider what they are saying. It may be something we need to hear that our friends would never have the courage to tell us.

So when criticism comes, we must ask ourselves if there is an objective standard or value that we are violating indicated by the criticism. If so, submit, not necessarily to the person, but to the principle or value. Use the content of the criticism for personal growth. How about this truth, “Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them” (Psalm

119:165). This means that if we are of the “right stuff,” criticism will not offend us. We would rather be thankful and take it into consideration.

Food for thought ... Someone said that if you want to know how to live the good life, ask a critic—he might have some good instructions.

DISCUSSION:

What is your attitude toward criticism?

Do you have a harder time with critical words or critical people?

MEASURING UP TO THE PLUMBLINE:

How well are you currently applying this principle in your life? (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

Can you see the value of raising your rating?

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

There are three things that are extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one’s self. Sometimes, we need the critic to help us.

CHASTISEMENT

“Punishment that hurts chases evil from the heart.” Proverbs 20:30

Chastisement...Webster says it is the punishment or discipline given to bring correction to that which is wrong or evil. We could also say that chastisement is the art of eliminating the evil to preserve the good. This should tell us what motivates us in doing the things we do. We all have four basic motivations:

1. We feel responsible and commit ourselves to do them.
2. We fear the consequences of not doing them.
3. We desire and enjoy the feeling of achievement.
4. We have a dream we want to fulfill.

The most common motivation is the second one—for fear of chastisement. It is not the best, but it is the most common motivation. The average employee works for fear of losing the job. Some hate their job but keep on working in it for years. Many business people have a certain amount of motivation from fear of losing their business. Even marriages hold up for fear of reputation or financial obligation. It is not wrong to have a measure of fear. In fact, no business, family or society can survive without it. Some of these fears make us faithful and responsible. We are to love and serve God, but without the fear of chastisement, we may not stay faithful under the pressure of temptation.

Everything alive that has been trained and becomes valuable will understand fear-motivation. Punishing misdeeds chases evil or unfavorable ideas and behavior from us. Horses, dogs, lions, kids, and adults all must understand the principle of reward for good, and chastisement for bad. Without a certain sense of fear, we cannot function properly. The fear of punishment or loss will cause everyone and everything to follow certain internal disciplines that will develop good behavior. These internal disciplines, or trained behaviors, increase their value. This is a principle that has been ignored in America. That is why thousands of children carry guns to school and crime is on the rise. Their fear of chastisement is less than the benefits they believe they will get from stealing. It is impossible to manage a family, a business, or a society without a set of laws that will put the fear of God in us. Yes, we must teach and love good values and the rewards they bring us, but we must also teach the consequences of not following them. Every action has a reaction. Every behavior has a reward. Every positive has a negative. It's the rule of life, and none of us can change it.

This fear of chastisement is not the best or most important motivation, but it is an immovable, hard fact of life.

The sooner we enforce these disciplines, the better off we will be. The fear of “punishment that hurts” (not just paying a fine) must be rooted in the back of every mind. The rules must be fair and just, but when they are broken it must hurt mentally, physically and financially. There is a wage or price that goes with sin.

God has set the rules— “punishment that hurts chases evil from the heart.” If we are managing and motivating people, we must first establish some absolute rules that bring tough consequences when broken. This will create fear of crossing over the line, but it will also let people know what we want or expect of them. This allows them to work freely within the framework of the established parameters. Well-communicated, strict laws that are enforced quickly will eliminate the fear of the unknown, which will give us freedom.

DISCUSSION:

Why do we hate chastisement?

Which of the four reasons for doing something applies best to you?

MEASURING UP TO THE PLUMB LINE:

How well are you currently applying this principle in your life? (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

Can you see the value of raising your rating?

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

If you want to dance, you can't be concerned about stepping on toes.

JUDGMENT

“Any story sounds true until someone tells the other side and sets the record straight.” Proverbs 18:17

One of the finest leadership qualities is to be able to make right judgments. Right judgments are not attained and then maintained; instead, they are a God-given insight into each situation or person on a daily basis. Leadership is really leading people through situations, keeping them focused on the desired end results. This takes good judgment; otherwise, situations will turn into disasters. Good leaders should always be concerned about their personal judgments or discernment—for their reputation and future are at stake. Good judgment usually comes from people who:

1. Are honest with themselves and have no hidden agendas.
2. Are more concerned about what is right than who is right.
3. Are not too proud to ask for other opinions.

In order to make the right judgments, we must first judge ourselves (Matthew 7:2), because we tend to judge others according to our own perceptions. We usually see in others what we see in ourselves. If we have greed, hatred, or strife within us, we will think others to be the same. We will judge them accordingly because out of the heart, the mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34).

Righteous judgments can be made only when we can see into the heart of the problem or person without our personal interests and feelings involved. That is not always easy because within every situation there are personalities involved. Most of the problems are people problems involving emotions, hot tempers, and some smooth talkers. Everyone is trying to sell their side of the story. And of course, no one wants to take the blame.

So, good judgment comes from sorting out all the trash by listening to both sides of the problem until we sense the truth in a situation. Any story sounds good until we hear the other side—once we feel we understand the situation, we must make a judgment on what to do. In most cases, it is wise not to blame just one person, but the team, because it takes a team to win. When we put all the blame on one person, it divides the team. A good line to use is, “I know that Joe was primarily at fault, but it could have been avoided if everyone would have been more careful.” Then forgive and set the rules for the future. Dwelling on and blaming people for past mistakes stunts our present growth, because we are being held captive to the past, taking away our future. Good judgment is often learned from mistakes that set the pace for the future. Problems are usually covered by a smokescreen, and if we don’t listen carefully, we will make wrong judgments and blame the wrong people.

We must also be able to make the right judgments in our world of high-pressure sales. Controlling the thoughts of a person in order to get him to see only one side of a story until he “signs the contract” is considered salesmanship by worldly standards. But this is manipulation. We can be sold down the river unless we have some insight and right judgment about people, especially salespeople. Right judgment is a value that is needed every hour of every day. So, seek insight by listening and thinking it over, then judge from a pure heart. If we do not buy or sell or make decisions when we are under pressure, we will become known as wise leaders.

One of our favorite lines should be, “I want to think it over.” This will give us favor with God and people, and a reputation of “a leader with right judgments.”

DISCUSSION:

What’s your first response when someone brings a “case” to you?

What was your belief about judgment before reading this principle?

MEASURING UP TO THE PLUMBLINE:

How well are you currently applying this principle in your life? (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

Can you see the value of raising your rating?

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Good judgment is perhaps the most equally divided but surely the most under-developed talent in the world.

MASTERPIECES

