



CHARACTER PRINCIPLE LESSONS

Productivity



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?

AMBITION

“A wise youth makes hay while the sun shines, but what a shame to see a lad who sleeps away his hour of opportunity.” Proverbs 10:5

One of the first character traits of a successful person is their endless ambition. They are usually known as hard workers, always concerned about getting things done. Because of their ambition, they see many opportunities and are always trying to make hay while the sun shines. They know that the sun will not always shine for them, so they take advantage of opportunities while they are available. Ambitious people will not sleep away their best time. They will get up in the morning and start their day with a good attitude and prayer. There are three ways to energize a person:

1. Find and press their “hot button.”
2. Talk about their potential.
3. Reward their achievement.

Energy always follows vision and purpose and it seems endless when it is for personal gain or achievement. This environment creates opportunity, and opportunities are always plentiful when driven by purpose.

However, opportunity is only seen by people who have high energy. Therefore a wise youth makes hay while the sun shines, which tells us that he was already planning to make the hay. He was already an energized worker, a planner, and full of ambition. He was only waiting for the weather, sunshine or opportunity.

Opportunities don't necessarily come our way; we create them. No one will offer an opportunity to a lazy or unproductive person because they know he won't jump on it. Favors are usually earned. It's hard to favor a person who we know will not take advantage of the favor. In sports, we hear players say as an excuse, “The ball didn't bounce our way.” But others will go after the ball and make sure they will be where it's going to bounce. They create the opportunities by pursuing the ball. Some will say you were lucky, but others will say, “The more I practice and the harder I work, the luckier I will get.”

So, opportunities follow the hardworking, ambitious, responsible people that have a positive attitude. They know that things don't just happen, so they are out to make them happen. They go after the ball. They also know the value of planning and working the plan. They are wise and know time is limited and must be managed wisely. An old saying goes, “If you want to get things done, ask the person who is already too busy.”

Ambitious people have a productive thought pattern and see opportunities. They discover them. Their hard-working, productive attitude creates a need within them to plan and organize. In order to seize the moment of opportunity,

1. We must plan our work.
2. We must limit or budget our time.
3. We must constantly re-evaluate ourselves and our goals.

By doing this, they find better ways, greater possibilities and bigger opportunities. And they won't sleep away their hour of opportunity. Work, to them, is considered an opportunity and is always available— there are always things to do for those who want to do something. This spells opportunity for the ambitious ones. Productive days make us feel good, but when we waste (sleep) the time away, we feel worthless. So plan to work hard and get things done. It will pay you great dividends, which will be greater opportunities and you will have energy and ambition to achieve your goals.

DISCUSSION:

Is it OK to be ambitious? Why?

Why does God guard success and power with problems?

Are opportunities earned or are they favors?

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:

The secret of getting energized is to have a goal you want to achieve..

DEPENDABILITY

*“God delights in those who keep their promises,
and abhors those who don’t.”* Proverbs 12:22

Our lives and businesses are built around things that are stable and dependable. We depend on the stable laws of physics—such as gravity and the timing of the solar system. These laws are fixed, and we can plan our lives around them. We also depend on manmade equipment and technology.

Equipment and systems that are not dependable are replaced. This also applies to us as individuals: if we are not dependable or punctual we may be replaced by someone who is. Successful business people usually have a reputation of:

1. Being prompt and making good use of their time.
2. They keep their word, and expect others to do the same.
3. They are stable and predictable.

They call this being dependable.

For a business person, management of resources is considered a key to profitability. We know we need natural and financial resources, but it is also very important that we value people and their punctuality as a resource. In order to do this, we must first recognize time as a valuable resource. We should consider time as one of the most valuable commodities ever given to mankind. You cannot do anything without it. A minute wasted is a minute lost forever. When we are punctual, it shows we value our time as well as the time of others. This creates value in ourselves because others will consider us responsible, trustworthy, and dependable.

One of the most visible character flaws is the inability to be somewhere on time, or not show up at all.

Tardiness, or not being punctual, is costly because it affects our reputation. We become known for arriving late and being undependable. Somehow we can always find an excuse, and may even lie to cover up, which adds to the flaw. Others blame it on their culture, but that doesn't make it right. If we don't take the responsibility for our personal promptness, others will treat us the same, and valuable time will be lost by sitting around waiting for each other. Tardiness is a habit—a bad one. We won't overcome this bad habit until we see how it hurts us. Some will justify tardiness as a part of being busy, but if we are late on the job, late on delivery, and late for appointments, sooner or later we won't have a job, a delivery, or an appointment.

Don't make an appointment if you are not planning to be there on time.

If we overcome this flaw, we gain a valuable asset which makes people believe in us. They will say, “He is responsible and a man of his word. He is dependable and predictable. You can count on him.”

Dependability is a powerful character trait that brings many other great attributes with it. God will delight in us if we keep our promises, and so will those around us. The next time you go to

a meeting, see how you rate in punctuality on a scale of one to ten. It may be very enlightening to yourself, but it could be what others have noticed all along.

DISCUSSION:

If someone would ask 10 of your friends or associates about your dependability, what would they say?

What reactions do you have when someone is late?

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:

He who is dependable is like the sun. It is there even when the storm is raging.

GOALS

"We should make plans counting on God to direct us." Proverbs 16:9

Planning can be a goal in itself, but goals are primarily long or short-term strategies set within a plan.

The plan is the big picture of our objectives and short term goals are like points along the way in the strategies of how to get there. Whatever we do in life should be done based on a goal. If we don't have a goal, then we don't have direction for our lives, and we will become a part of someone else's plan. We must understand that things don't just happen. We can dream of possibilities and the future, but it will not happen unless we design a plan with weekly or monthly goals on how to achieve them.

We should always work from a daily planner or some written list of things to do for the week. This will give us an exciting life and future, because we are going somewhere by getting things done. Without planning and setting goals, we just respond to situations as they come up, which gives us a feeling that life is full of nothing but situations.

Getting somewhere in life starts by—

1. Knowing where we are (awareness).
2. Knowing what we want (a goal).
3. Having a plan for how to get there (a strategy).

The majority of our lives can turn out to be what we want it to be, if we have a goal and keep working on our plan. When we plan our activities and reach the goals we set for ourselves, we get a great feeling of satisfaction. We will have become achievers. We should ask ourselves: The things I'm doing this week, are they things I planned as a part of my personal goal, or things that were planned for the benefit of someone else?

We must all respond and participate in the ideas and dreams of others. But, if we want to reach the desires of our lives, we must also have ideas and dreams of our own and start planning on how we will bring them into reality. Yes, we should have goals and make plans, but count on God to direct us.

In order to have our dreams come true, we need to do these four things:

1. Write out our dreams (clarity).
2. Write out what it will cost (evaluation).
3. Write out our goals and strategies (plan).
4. Review them regularly (focus).

There is a law in life that, "we attract that which we give attention to." So, always carry a pen and paper with you to write down thoughts that contribute to your goals and after awhile you'll see a plan develop to accomplish them.

Writing out our dreams and goals will do two things for us: First, we will find out if we really have a dream or if it is just wishful thinking. Second, we will discover the cost of the dream.

Jesus said that before we build, we should consider the cost such as time, effort, and money. Building dreams always costs us something. The price and sacrifices needed to achieve the dream may be more than we want to pay. So we can either forsake the dream or adjust the goals. It's very important to constantly review our goals. This keeps us focused and develops a mindset to achieve.

Certain goals must be set within our overall plan so we can measure the progression of the plan. Without goals our dream will seem out of reach. But if we have a good plan with goal posts along the way, we can focus on the goal which is short-term, rather than the 5 or 10-year plan which will seem too far away and hopeless, causing us to lose interest.

Of course, we must always ask God to bless our plans. If that seems difficult, perhaps we should change them. If our plans cannot be blessed by God, then we are building on sand. And even if we achieve them, we will not be happy very long.

DISCUSSION:

Are most of your current goals those you've set for yourself or those set by others?

When was the last time you wrote out a dream or goal you wanted to accomplish?

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:

The person who aims at nothing is sure to hit it.

HARD WORK

“Work hard and become a leader; be lazy and never succeed.” Proverbs 12:24

Work. . . It is almost a bad word anymore. Nowadays we want to have everything handed to us. Being a hard worker is one of the finest qualities we will find in a person. It is what brings success to our lives, our communities and nation. Good, hard workers are always concerned about quantity and quality production. They become valuable to any organization or company, because they are productive.

The Proverb says, “Work hard and become a leader...” Here’s why:

The hard worker’s mind is on getting things done. When they are working, they see other things that need to be done, and do those jobs as well. Since they are production oriented, they become creative. They look for work and ways to get it done better and faster. This will get the hard workers a promotion, and before long, they will be in leadership.

Good work ethics are among the qualities and values that will make any nation great; but in our world today sometimes we are not even allowed to help each other get the job done. Some will tell us, “It’s not our responsibility.” They promise to get us more for doing less. Now we want to work less and make more—have shorter hours, more benefits, longer vacations, more holidays. We want less sweat, but more money. What a tragedy. It is no wonder we get in trouble. We have lost one of our greatest assets, the “desire to work.”

Why is it that when we find a job, we quit looking for work? Our welfare and support systems have made some of us dependent and lazy. These support systems were created to help people for a short term, not to depend on them for a living.

There are three benefits that we will get for being a hard worker:

1. Security: because we will put our trust in God and our developed abilities, not in government programs.
2. Wealth: because we keep increasing our value and wage.
3. Happiness: because we know we have earned our position in life and experience fulfillment.

There is a law in life: Anything that doesn’t work is either fixed or thrown away. This law holds true for people as well. If we don’t work—or won’t work—we are discarded and rejected.

Jesus said, “If the salt has lost its flavor (or value), it becomes good for nothing and will be cast out and rejected.” We are to create value in order to be accepted. We have a great opportunity in our world today.

Be a hard worker, out- perform others, do what others won’t do and you will not only become a leader, but also a rare species and in demand. If you want a good future, be a hard worker.

DISCUSSION:

Do you love to go to work and take responsibility?

Do you earn your wage or are you trusting in something else?

In your life, what do you consider to be hard work?

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:

Work is an opportunity given by God and is always available, even when jobs are not.

PRODUCTIVITY

“An empty stable stays clean, but there is no income from any empty stable.” Proverbs 14:4

The root word of productivity is productive or fertile. It is the result of an activity. To be fertile is to be able to produce or to reproduce. We say, “Good land is fertile land,” meaning it is valuable because it has ability to produce. If managed right, it can make us wealthy by giving us income from the activity that we manage on it.

Like an empty stable that stays clean, so no activity produces no income. Land without managed activity cannot make us wealthy. It is the activity or productivity of the land that produces the income. Just like land has ability to produce, so God said, “I have given you the power to create wealth.” He did not give us wealth, but He gave us the ability to create or get it. The key to getting it is activity or productivity.

The first command ever given to man was to “be fruitful and multiply” (produce and reproduce). God created all things, then gave them to man to manage. The outcome of what God created, or gave us, is in our hands.

A banker once visited a farmer, one of his clients. As he drove along the white fences, well-kept buildings, and flowered, well-manicured lawn, he was amazed at the beauty of it. He commented to the farmer, “God has given you the most beautiful farm in this valley.” The farmer looked at his fields and thought of the hard work and effort it took, and replied, “Yeah! He sure has. But you should have seen it when He had it by Himself.” See, the potential was in the land and the farmer. But it took the productiveness of the farmer to bring it to wealth.

In every man or woman there is a potential home, farm or business. It is up to us to produce it and manage it. God has given us the ability and the energy, and supplied us with resources. If we fail, it is not His fault. In most cases, it’s the lack of productivity.

There are three things very important to every one of us if we want to be successful:

1. Be productive: earn your way through life.
2. Manage what you produce: take care of it and maintain it.
3. Do it efficiently: measure your quantity and quality.

The key to effectiveness is to manage hard work and productivity on one side, with control and stewardship on the other side. We should never stand back and be satisfied with just being organized. Organization without productivity equals failure.

Many times production is made up of “managing messes.” We should see beauty in a certain amount of disorganization— it may be a sign of someone working. Building creates sawdust and dirt. A clean stable has no horses. We cannot be productive without having some type of disorder.

Many big corporations are learning some hard facts: too many unproductive, organized chiefs (clean stables) spend most of their time enjoying their benefit programs, and are not being productive. That's why we downsize.

Being productive may not seem to be in style, and it may seem disorganized at times, but it still works best for the bottom line. Thank God for work horses messing up the stable—they generate income.

Discussion:

Have you kept your position in life by being productive?

Do you consider yourself a producer or a consumer?

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:

Success comes when we fall in love with the work it takes to fulfill our dreams.

COMMON SENSE

“Any enterprise . . . becomes strong through common sense.” Proverbs 24:3

Common sense is not so common anymore. If we can understand its value and apply it as a part of our lives, we will have learned a lot. Life is not meant to be complicated. It is only when we get away from common sense that we lose ourselves in confusion. Common sense is sound logic, practical reasoning or simple equations. The end result of common sense is practical wisdom.

The prodigal son wandered away from common sense until he was eating with the pigs. He finally came back to his senses (common sense) and went home to where he belonged.

Sometimes we get so educated that we can't even think in a practical way. Common sense is the ability to reason out problems and find practical and sensible ways to overcome them. Education may not necessarily give us that. We must have education, but without common sense (practical reasoning) it loses much of its value.

We should always have our dreams and goals, but we must always blend them in with common sense so they will come true. Otherwise, they will only remain dreams.

Common sense is familiar areas or things common to us; therefore it may vary in people. Many times we are taught how to do things in a certain way. This way becomes common to us, until someone finds a more simple and better way of doing it. Common sense would then teach us, “Let's change our ways.”

Likewise, a nation's culture may tolerate bribes, lying and cheating. Common sense, however, would tell us not to do it because it is morally wrong and will hurt us as individuals as well as our societies.

So, common sense may also become habit or tradition to us, which can stifle our personal growth and keep us bound by tradition. Sometimes our religious beliefs will stand in the way of progress, because we refuse to follow truth or common sense.

The opposite of common sense would be stupidity or being dense. How many times have you heard someone say, “I was stupid,” which could mean he was out of touch with reality?

If we follow that which we know is right, it is usually common sense, because Proverbs says, “A man who steers away from common sense will end up dead” (Proverbs 21:16).

Our plans can be so rigid that we forget to listen to our heart, which is normally suggesting the use of common sense. We must remember that our minds can get so pumped up that we get on a high and get out of touch with ourselves and reality and do stupid things.

God gave us the ability to reason, but He also reminds us to stay in touch with our common sense. Plans without the virtue of common sense are like laws without mercy, no second chances, or life without forgiveness. No family, business or nation can survive without this virtue as a part of their planned strategies.

Common sense will suggest change or adjustment as you proceed. It is God's way of balancing our plans with His, and keeping us from failing. Common sense will give us:

1. A practical mind and good logic.
2. An open mind.

Through life's experiences, we calculate and observe things. This should create common sense in us— sometimes called "the gut feeling." We need to be sensitive to those feelings. They may not always be right, but it may be a warning that we are entering an unfamiliar area. We then operate in this area either in faith or in fear. It's in these moments when we must call on common sense to speak to us and protect us as we walk through the minefields of life.

DISCUSSION:

What is the difference between common sense and education?

Share a situation where you applied common sense. What were the results?

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:

We were all born with our eyes closed and our mouth open, and it takes a lifetime to reverse it.

DIRECTION

“Since the Lord is directing our steps, why try to understand everything that happens along the way?” Proverbs 20:24

Direction is primarily for those who want to go somewhere. We all get somewhere, some unintentionally and others with a planned strategy. Either way, we should ask ourselves: Is God directing our steps, or are we on our own way?

The question is: How can we know that God is directing our steps? First, we must be honest with ourselves and do what we know we should. An honest heart is always looking for, and responding to, truth. This honesty in our hearts creates an environment where God can influence us through our conscience or through friends who walk with God.

There are three benefits we get by allowing God to direct our steps:

1. A positive walk: God’s ordered steps are proven, for He is the way.
2. A faith walk: we do not have to understand everything because we know our end.
3. A walk in gladness: we know where we are going and what we are doing.

It is easy to walk with God if we know that He is directing our path. Walking with God comes from doing things that we know are pleasing to Him. We don’t have to understand everything that happens, but we will always have to do what we know is right.

Doing wrong kills our faith and brings guilt. Guilt will destroy not only our businesses, but also our lives, because we lose direction and doubt ourselves. It makes us run from our problems, and eventually become ashamed of ourselves. But when we do what we know is right, we feel good about ourselves and towards God. We feel free and unashamed and fearless of whom we might run into because “the righteous are bold as a lion.” Not everything we do may work, but we know that by doing right and walking in steps ordered by God, we will win in the end.

Since we know that we are going to overcome, we don’t get discouraged. If we keep walking in His ways, believing and trying to do what we know is right, eventually we will achieve our goals.

It’s difficult to accept directions from someone who we don’t know or has no previous track record. But the more we learn about God and His ways, the more we will trust in His direction, because he has a history of directing people and making heroes who win in the game of life.

It is always important to try to understand why things are the way they are. But there is also a time when we need to put our trust in God and keep on going. Even if we don’t understand everything, we can walk by faith for a while.

Only things that move need steering. If we don’t believe that God is directing us, we need to re-evaluate our actions and intents, because faith and trust “come” from listening to what truth is speaking to our hearts. If our hearts condemn us, it is because we know we are doing something we shouldn’t be doing. When God speaks to our hearts, we should follow it—this will determine God’s level of trust in us. He has lots of good things for us, such as life, liberty and prosperity, if we allow Him to direct our steps.

Practice doing what you know is right for one week. You will be amazed at how much you will sense the Lord directing your steps, and you won't insist on understanding everything—because the Lord directs the steps of a good man! Not accepting God's direction is like saying that we are smarter than He is. Only the fool says, "There is no God."

DISCUSSION:

Describe a situation where you know the Lord was directing your steps. How did you know?

Have you had times of faith without evidence?

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:

You don't become great by being mentored by a bad instructor.

EFFECTIVE PLANNING

“Any enterprise is built by wise planning.” Proverbs 24:3

There are different views on how we should or should not plan our lives. There are some who quote the scripture, “Take no thought of tomorrow,” believing it means not to plan anything. This view is held by many believers. Others, of course, differ. But consider that Jesus, who spoke these words, came to our world on a planned mission which was designed by God with goals and appointed times. This leads us to believe that we should also plan our lives.

My personal belief is that we should live our lives as though we may die tomorrow, yet plan as though we may live to be a hundred. Very few things are ever achieved without a vision of the future and a plan of how to bring it into existence. Ninety percent of our life can turn out to be as we envision it with good planning. Without a plan, we merely respond to situations as they come along. We will either have a plan for our lives, or we will become part of someone else’s plan.

Wise planning will save us from lots of problems in every aspect of life, making it more orderly and meaningful. For our plan to be successful, it must contain three elements:

1. We must have a vision.
2. It must spell out our mission.
3. We must have a strategy of how we are planning to achieve it.

People must have vision in order to be happy—this becomes our mission and purpose. Our mission will then demand a plan with specific goals.

One of the most important parts of our lives is to experience achievement. All good plans have short and long-term goals which have time allocations and achievement dates. This way, we can measure our progress. This becomes a “game plan” with responsibilities and rules to follow. The plan becomes the “rules of the game.”

Imagine playing basketball without a hoop, or baseball without bases. We could never decide whether we are winning or losing, or know whether we are performing well or poorly. There is no way to measure our progress if there are no plans and goals for the game. It is hard to enjoy a vacation without a wise, realistic plan of where we are going and how much it will cost. The plan is what causes the excitement. The plan will show us how and when to get there, and what we are going to do while we are there. Our entire lives need to be planned wisely. This makes life interesting.

If we want to succeed and have God’s blessing, our plan should have these four concerns:

1. Is it achievable?
2. Is it maintainable after it is achieved?
3. What effect will it have on our family and friends?
4. What will I become in the end result?

Not everything we plan will work out, but at least we can measure according to our plan and then readjust wisely. God wants us to plan our lives. He will bless our plan when we seek Him

for guidance. That is planning wisely. We must make sure we build (plan our lives) on a set of values which will produce good character while we are in the process of achieving it, or we may become a failure rather than a success.

DISCUSSION:

What do you want to become?

How do you plan to get there?

Are your goals connected with your plan?

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:

You can travel any road and get somewhere, but if you know where you want to go, you must plan which roads to take.

FACTS

“Any enterprise . . . profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts.” Proverbs 24:3-4

“I have the facts. . .” - what a powerful statement. Facts should not be ignored, because facts mean the state of things as they really are, or reality. We all need to rely on honest reports. We cannot plan effectively or function properly without knowing at least some facts. No one, except our heavenly Father, knows all the facts.

No one ever started a family, business, or organization by knowing all the facts. It is, however, very important that we get as many facts as possible before we do too much planning. Too many assumptions in our plans will cause us to fail.

After we have accumulated sufficient facts, we have a right to assume a few things. We should, however, understand that more facts will come our way, and be ready to make the necessary adjustments to our plans.

Sometimes we confuse the word truth with facts. Although facts are based on certain truths, we may have the facts but may not necessarily have all the truth. So, when someone presents us facts, we need to be careful, because these facts may not give us the whole truth or the whole picture.

Sometimes sales people will get us focused on certain facts about their product to make the sale, and later we become unhappy about the overall value of the product. Certain facts may be used to deceive us. So, truth is the accumulation of all the facts, rather than certain facts. However, facts should never be ignored, for they do lead us to truth.

The Proverb above says that staying abreast of the facts is the way to build our business. Facts will help us make “wonderful profits.” Therefore, weekly fact sheets are very important in our business. These facts should be recaps of things that happened, such as sales for the week, labor cost, and production efficiency. Every business or household should know every week whether they are doing well or poorly, and what progress they are making. Bad news can turn out to be good news because it gives us a chance to make a change for the better. These facts, good or bad, should be visible to us every day, to confront us, force change, and let us know our situation so we can make adjustments. If we don’t have the facts, we may be failing and not know it until it’s too late to recover.

Right now, the world and its economies are changing. To ignore these facts and refuse to adjust brings disaster. The Soviet Union ignored the facts, and their nation crumbled. Other nations are also ignoring the facts. Heavy national debts, mismanaged economics, and moral deterioration are facts which cannot be ignored without penalty. Some of these nations should have faced these facts thirty years ago. Failure does not just happen overnight; it comes from ignoring the facts over time.

There are three things that will always cause disaster for us:

1. Ignorance (unaware).
2. Not paying attention to the facts.

3. A stubborn heart that refuses to change.

Make sure you face the facts. They are there to help you, not to hurt you. Don't be like the man who said, "I have already made up my mind, so don't confuse me with the facts."

DISCUSSION:

How do you measure your weekly productivity value?

Why would we want to ignore or avoid the facts?

Have you ever been deceived because you had certain facts but not the whole truth?

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:

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.

RESPONSIBILITY

“A faithful employee is as refreshing as a cool day in the hot summer time.” Proverbs 25:13

A faithful employee is a responsible person. To be responsible is to give account or to be dependable. No wonder Solomon said this kind of person is “as refreshing as a cool day in the hot summer time!”

A responsible person is one who can be trusted. These kinds of people are hard to find, but when we find them we will notice that they have a different motivation than the average person. They have two motivating factors that spring from their character that makes them responsible.

THE FIRST MOTIVATOR IS “OUT OF RESPONSIBILITY.”

It takes high-quality people to be motivated purely out of responsibility. Because they want to be trusted, they are willing to prove themselves, and they will stand up as pillars on issues. Many times these people receive no benefits in this, and it may even put their reputations on the line. These people are driven by certain ethics and principles that they will fight for, in spite of loss or lack of personal gain. This is a pure motivation.

For example, abortion is an issue that may not affect us or our family, but we may fight against it and be willing to risk our friendships or reputation without any personal benefits. This constitutes character ethics and means people are principle-driven. These individuals are fixed—they have a firm constitution that they live by. We call them “men and women of valor,” meaning people of value. They can be placed anywhere in our businesses or political arena. They are responsible and can be trusted and are willing to risk their reputation. They take pride in being strong and they don’t care if they are different. They carry the nature of a prophet with eyes fixed on who they are and what mission they are on. They live in a world of faithfully serving others and building their name and legacy.

THE SECOND MOTIVATOR IS THE “FEELING OF ACHIEVEMENT.”

This is also a high-quality motivation, and again there are no particular benefits gained by these people.

For example, someone who is a millionaire several times over and has all he will ever need could go fishing or travel for the rest of his life. Instead, he keeps on doing business and working every day—he may even venture out into new things and keep on going. Some will say he is greedy. He may be, but it is possible that he simply enjoys being responsible and likes to be an achiever. This person may do what others say can’t be done, simply for the sake of accomplishing it.

Being responsible is more than making a commitment. It is a true calling or value-based belief birthed in a person. It’s a desire or an inner force that holds them accountable to themselves. They do things for the sake of getting them done or for the enjoyment of seeing them done. This makes them true servants.

Jesus was a true servant. He had nothing to gain for Himself. He gave up His reputation to build His name. He was humiliated and rejected to gain our trust. He was truly and purely motivated from within. He saw what we were, and took the responsibility of making sure we got the opportunity of being what we could be. It cost Him something, but He now has earned the greatest name ever in the history of mankind, and also in the world to come. He was truly motivated from within. The Father sent Him on a mission because He knew that He was responsible and could be trusted. He was and still is as refreshing as a cool day in the hot summer time. We, too, will be chosen and sent on a mission when we are responsible.

DISCUSSION:

Do you consider yourself a responsible person? If yes, why?

In which of your current responsibilities do you feel truly called by God?

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:

The people who make a difference are not those with the credentials, but those who are responsible.

