

Ethical leaders...

- A. *Think and do what is right.* They stand up for right principles, practice what they preach, and are as good as their word. These godly behaviors build trust and credibility in the eyes of their followers.
- B. *Set clear and consistent examples for others to follow.* This builds cohesiveness in a group or organization. "Problems occur when ethical behavior is *not* clearly defined, understood, or demonstrated" (p. 64).
- C. *Resolve ethical conflicts as they arise.* This strengthens the foundation of the organization they lead. Real problems develop when leaders fail to understand, define, or demonstrate ethical behavior.

Source: Bethel, S.M. (1990). *Making a Difference: Twelve Qualities That Make You a Leader.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Why is character so important for leaders? (see Handout 1)

- A. *Leaders are by default in the spotlight:* "Influence is akin to an amplifier that increases the perceptions of who we are. Small character defects become more pronounced when we are placed in leadership positions" (p. 65).
- B. *"Followers place their trust in a leader who models integrity"* (p. 65). If a leader does not consistently demonstrate the example of strong character, including love, high morals, and unbending ethics, followers will distrust the leader and begin to withdraw.
Prov 22:1—A good name is to be chosen rather than riches.
- C. *"Without strong character, leaders can easily disqualify themselves for the role"* (p. 67). God expects and demands strong character from His leaders, as they lead His people.
Isaiah 66:2—God looks to the person who is humble and who trembles at His word.
Source: Nelson, A., Toler, S. (2002). *The 5 Secrets to Becoming a Leader.* Ventura, CA: Regal Books.

Godly leaders are not perfect in character, but they are constantly striving toward perfection as Christ admonished (Matt 5:48). Leaders make mistakes too. A hallmark of a godly leader is that he will identify his mistake, repent, and move forward in the right direction, with God's help. King David is an excellent example of a godly leader who made some profound mistakes. He also demonstrated the ability to profoundly repent, change and continue forward, leading God's people forward. This is why God referred to him as a "man after My own heart" (Acts 13:22).

III. Leadership and Values

- Strong organizations have strong values. These values *define desirable behaviors* that support the organization's central goals.
- Strong leaders *live* the values—in public and in private. Their personal conduct reflects these values and reinforces these values in others. "Who you are when no one is looking will affect the way you lead." (Nelson & Toler (2002), p. 64).

Prov 23:7—As one thinks in his heart, so he is.

- Strong values are a key competitive tool. These values are the *fabric* of the corporate culture and are the *basis* of all decisions.

Source: Tichy, N., Cohen E. (1997). *The Leadership Engine.* NY: Harper Collins.

IV. Leadership and Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental aspect of character and of any leader. Modern research identifies "honesty" as the one aspect of character consistently appearing as the most important trait desired for leaders. Leaders must be trustworthy and believable to be credible. The first Law of Leadership states that if you do not believe in the messenger, you will not believe the message.