

Success and Significance in Life and Ministry



Second Master Key

UNCOMPROMISING INTEGRITY IN LEADERSHIP

God's Will for our Lives as Leaders in the Church:

COLOSSIANS 1:9-10 NKJV

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; {10} that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

Paul's Prayer Wish for Us - His prayers for our Lives:

- We are to have a full understanding of God's will for us.
- We are to live a life worthy of God, and fully please Him.
- We are to be fruitful in everything we do for God.
- We are to increase in what we know about God. More importantly, we are to increase progressively and continually in how deeply we personally and intimately know Him. (It's all about relationship!)

Three Seasons in Life, Leadership and Ministry¹

There are three seasons of growth we go through in order to accomplish the four goals in Paul's prayer, above.

FIRST - THE DISCIPLINE SEASON

(A Continuing Test of Will)

This season begins when we recognize how much we fall short of holiness and commitment to the Lord. And so, we begin to work toward what we ought to become. We understand that we have to remake our thinking and adjust our habits. We see the value of gaining a disciplined pattern of increased holiness and dedication. We begin to do our best to establish this pattern.

The Discipline Season is a continuing test of our wills. We realize the need to surrender the areas of our lives we have coveted that do not please God. It is a season of sacrifice, always accompanied by a measure of personal struggle to achieve the discipline we

¹ Idea originally taken from the three seasons of prayer - Pastor Dale Gentry

need. We have our victories and we also have our failures and defeats. God uses all of it to move us ahead toward our next season of life and ministry. You may be struggling in this first season, the Discipline Season.

ROMANS 12:1-3 NKJV

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. {3} For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”

LUKE 9:23-24 NKJV

“Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. {24} For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.””

SECOND - THE DESIRE SEASON

This next season in a leader’s life and ministry, is when our behaviors, our faithfulness, Bible study, times of prayer and serious self-examination transition into more consistent patterns of life. We even may find these patterns developing into somewhat enjoyable habits. In many ways, we have gone beyond the issue of forced behavior. We have tasted the meal and have begun to like what we tasted. We now want more. We have seen its value. We also see a change coming over ourselves and we like what we see. We have a new understanding of the value of faithful behavior, Bible study, prayer and a desire to grow in the Lord. We begin to look forward to them much more than before.

PSALM 34:8 NKJV

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”

THIRD - THE DELIGHT SEASON

In this season, we graduate to an understanding of the value of being all He called us to be. Prayer and Bible study take priority over other things. They now dictate most of how we live our lives and conduct our ministries. We find ourselves delighting in all that we discover God has for us, and all we find ourselves to be in Him.

We are maturing into deeper levels. We are moving toward our destinies, and fulfilling the plans and purposes of God. Ministry is not forced or burdensome. It is now joyfully pleasing to us - and to God. We have tasted an uncompromising life, we understand how valuable it is... and we are hungry to live it!

What about you?

You may be in any one of these three seasons. God always has so much more for you. His heart's desire is that you grow daily - that you look like, act like, talk like, think like and love like Jesus - more each day! That is your challenge... and your responsibility, both as a leader and a child of God.

Seven Principles of Uncompromising Integrity in Leadership

A Model of Maturity in Ministry and Personal Integrity: Daniel - a Leader who Delighted in a Life of No Compromise

Even as a young leader, Daniel lived in the Delight Season. His story is a study in holy habits and godly commitment. He “walked worthy of the Lord, was fully pleasing to Him, and was fruitful in every good work.”² Regardless of his circumstances, Daniel was determined to stand for what He knew was right. He was a winner and a champion for God!

DANIEL 1:8 NKJV

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

First Principle

God's leaders know they don't decide their futures. They decide their habits and their habits decide their futures.

For many years, Daniel served his kings with faithfulness and distinction. His life and ministry were beyond reproach. He earned everyone's respect, even that of his enemies.

Let's go into the lion's den!

² from Colossians 1:10 (See beginning Scripture on Page 1)

DANIEL 6:4... 8-10 NKJV

“So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.... {8} “Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.” {9} Therefore King Darius signed the written decree. {10} Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”

Story - A Test of Commitment

It was in the dead of winter of 1965 in Moscow. There was fear in the air. The secret police and the army were everywhere in everyone's business. Thousands were being jailed and sent to Siberia to certain death in cold, wet prisons.

On a particular Friday night and the snow was falling heavily. Soldiers were getting ready to go out and arrest a small group of people who had been reported to be praying to God in the back room of a local shop. Unknown to their comrades, six of these soldiers were Christians - men who loved Christ. They had a plan. They volunteered to be the ones who would storm the shop and drive those they found inside out into the storm. The others would wait outside to arrest them and carry away them away to a waiting court.

Inside the back room of the darkened shop, behind locked doors, there was beautiful praying and singing to the Lord. Suddenly the door to the shop was splintered into pieces. Before anyone could as much as move, six Red Army soldiers burst in with their AK 47 rifles and demanded everyone stand against the wall. ***“We heard you are Christians. Such a thing is not legal! If you are not a Christian, leave now!” If you are, stay and face the consequences.***

A dozen men and women fled through the shattered door... only to be caught outside by the waiting soldiers and taken to the court. They were brought before the judge, and were accused of being Christians. The judge listened to what the arresting soldiers said, and how the accused replied. Here is his verdict. ***“I do not see any evidence that these people are Christians. They look like, act like and talk like all the rest of us. Case dismissed.”*** And they were set free.

Meanwhile back at the shop, the six soldiers who burst in said to their captives, ***“Do not worry, we are Christians too. We just wanted to pray with people who are really deserving of the name Christian.”*** And so they prayed together, had good fellowship, and everyone went home satisfied that they had been a good testimony in the eyes of God.

(Source Unknown)

MATTHEW 7:21-23 NKJV

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. {22} Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ {23} And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

Question to Ask Yourself

- Will the things you do every day be a picture - a testimony of your uncompromising faithfulness to God?
- Or... will compromise and half truth be the habits in your life?

Leadership Rule #1

The word “compromise” is not in a leader’s vocabulary.

Ask yourself this question.

If you were arrested for being faithful to the Lord, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

DANIEL 6:10 (Again)

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”

Daniel opened his window and prayed, as was his habit and custom. What others thought, or saw or did was never the issue. He would trust in the Lord. There would be no compromising his integrity. Daniel was observed praying in his window and it was reported to the king. There was no way out. He was thrown into the lion’s den.

DANIEL 6:19-23 NKJV

“Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. {20} And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” {21} Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! {22} My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.” {23} Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out

of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.”

Daniel’s uncompromising life in the face of the lion’s den brought him the favor of God. He stayed in that window and prayed. When he found himself in the lion’s den, he surely must have prayed again. His faith was solid as a rock. He positioned himself for victory, by getting on his knees before the Lord! It was his habit.

Leadership Rule #2

You can pray because of a crisis or you because it is your habit and delight. If prayer is your habit and delight, when the crisis comes, you will already be positioned for victory!³

Second Principle

God’s leaders position themselves for victory.

Third Principle

God does not send the victory to you. He sends your victory to where you are supposed to be.

Where is a leader is supposed to be?

Like Daniel, a leader is supposed to be where his or her habits bring to pass the perfect will of God. This is done through consistent faithfulness and commitment to God - and to the people we lead. A leader chooses habits and ways that honor God - both in His eyes, and in the eyes of those around us. Regardless of what others might think, say or do, we are to please God.

Leadership Rule #3

Pleasing God is the primary call of every leader.

Like Daniel, we must make a habit out of positioning ourselves to receive our blessings. Then we will have our victories. Daniel stayed on his knees in that window. He did the right thing, in spite of the consequences. He displayed his integrity. He would once again reap the fruit of his commitment to God - despite all odds!

³ Dr. Tom Peters, my pastor, for years has said, “You can pray by habit or pray by crisis.”

Fourth Principle

It is never wrong to do right. It is never right to do wrong.

(Daniel's life bore the fruits of uncompromising commitment to righteousness and trust in God. He believed God!)

The character of Daniel's life reflects his desire to run his race and fulfill his call. He was constantly growing. He would go through life becoming a great testimony to the God he continually served.

Throughout his life, he *"increased in wisdom and stature, and in the favor of men and God."* (See LUKE 2:52 NKJV)

Fifth Principle

Leaders of integrity refuse to remain what they are today."

They are determined to be all they can be tomorrow."

Leaders of integrity make becoming more like Christ their habit. They know how valuable it is to grow and change. Today is not good enough for them. They want their tomorrows, and they want them God's way. They want to see God glorified in their lives, their relationships and their ministries.

Never Look Back

Becoming an excellent leader is a life-long process. Excellence in leadership and ministry goes beyond what you do or how well you do it. It goes right to the heart. How is your heart today? Do not let your mistakes and weaknesses hold you back. Today is a brand new day. Old things have passed away and all things are new.

Sixth Principle

Yesterday's mistakes and today's weaknesses are not qualified to determine tomorrow's greatness. Only what is in your heart will do that.

- We get to tomorrow by leaving today behind.
- We get to tomorrow by being teachable - by being willing to become what God wants us to be!

Press beyond the Discipline Season, through the Desire Season and into the Delight Season!

PSALM 37:4 NKJV

“Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

Leadership Rule #4

A leader with integrity does not settle for less than the best from God... or doing less than the best for God.

- Make a decision to take hold of God. Be like Daniel. Refuse to compromise. Refuse to defile yourself.
- Decide to live a consistent, holy, habitual, faith-filled life of service to God.
- Desire to fulfill your potential as a winner and a champion. You have been boxed in for too long! It’s time to break out and go for it!

Seventh Principle

When we can become all God wants us to be, then we will surely do all God wants us to do.

MICAH 2:13 NKJV

“The one who breaks open will come up before them; They will break out, Pass through the gate, And go out by it; Their king will pass before them, With the LORD at their head.”

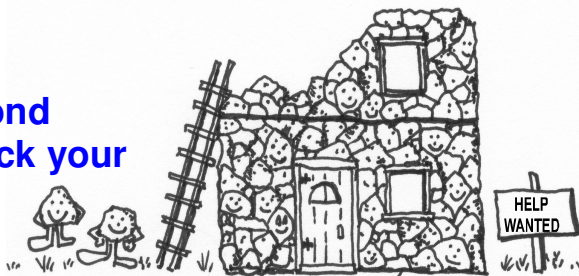
Break out and go for it!

1 PETER 2:4-5 NKJV

“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Three seasons - Seven Principles - Four Rules: from God to you!

Uncompromising integrity in leadership gives us our second Master Key. Turn it and unlock your destiny!



Living Stones