

Church Planting Conference Session 3 - Men Of Integrity

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[0 : 00] These sessions were recorded at the Church Planned Conference hosted by the Our Generation Training Center and Vision Baptist Church. It is our desire that you'll be able to learn from these great speakers as they talk about the topic of church planting.

Seven, the Bible talks about it and it gives you 17 different qualifications. Out of the 17 qualifications, 15 of them are about integrity. 15 of them are about integrity, so the man that God uses, and really what I want you to think about is, well, the Bible speaks on more than anything else about the man that God's going to use.

It's not about whether you're a leader and whether or not you're well-read and whether or not you know. What the Bible talks about in 1 Timothy 3, time and time and time and time and time again, is he says you need to be a man of integrity.

Very few church planting boxes are going to talk about that. They're going to tell you how to look for the location you're going to be at and how to start and how to launch and how to do. And it's going to be very practical on what to do, but the Bible, when it starts, last time I checked, the Bible is a pretty good, pretty important book for us.

And the way it starts in 1 Timothy, it says if you're going to be a pastor, here's some things that you need to be aware of. And so we're not going to go through all of them. We're just going to go, we're going to skim through them. But the Bible does say, no, this is a true saying.

[1 : 14] If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. Verse 2, a bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach.

There's one thing about ability. There's 15 things about integrity. There's one thing about ability, and that is what you find in verse 2. Now, everybody wants to talk. You know, you go to a church planting seminar, and they'll give you a test to see if you have the ability to be a church planner.

But in the Bible, which is a pretty good source book, it says you're going to have 15 things telling you about your integrity, and you're going to have one thing that I want to tell you about your ability, and the ability is going to be you're able to teach.

That's going to be the ability. And then after that, the 17th thing you find out of these 17 things we're going to talk about, the 17th thing you find is maturity. So you have integrity, ability, and maturity.

And so those are three vital things. If anybody wants my lessons, I can email them to you. I don't, the notes, maybe it can help you out some. The Bible says, verse 4, the one that ruleth well his own household, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

[2 : 23] And it says, for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice. There's your maturity, not a novice. He said, as being filled up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Moreover, he must have a good report of them, which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Titus chapter 1, verse 6 and 9, he's going to reinforce the exact same things.

He's going to reinforce integrity. He's going to reinforce integrity. He's going to reinforce. It's amazing to me how everybody wants to be trained on how to start a church, but nobody wants to talk about being a man of character.

It blows my mind to think about the fact that if we look at the Bible model, the Bible model is a lot different than our model. Our model is, man, this guy's got it all together.

I'm talking, he dresses right. He walks right. He talks right. This guy is going to do great things for God. Well, it might be good to start at the Bible reference of this, where the Bible reference talks about being a man of integrity.

[3 : 23] Verse 6, it says, So the Bible starts a lot different.

Then we do. Verse 1 in 1 Timothy chapter 3, the Bible says desire. The Bible is a kind of important book for us. Hopefully it is our rule of faith and practice, although a lot of times we don't really act like it, but it is our rule of faith and practice.

And the Bible starts off by saying, listen, you have to have the desire. You have to want to do this. We need to make sure that we put our emphasis where God puts his emphasis. We need to make sure that we, it's funny because it's almost like when they're looking for a king and they don't want to look at David.

That's almost a church planning process. It's like, oh man, that guy's going to be a good church planner. That guy's going to be a good church planner. That guy's going to be a church planner. And God says, no, no, I don't look on the outside like you guys do.

I look on the heart. I look a little bit differently. And in church planning, he looks differently. He looks very, very differently than we do. So the Bible starts off with a desire. It says you desire to do this. This is integrity.

[4 : 44] You just have, there's no reason. I was talking to a student the other day. He said, brother Chris, I don't know if I want to be a missionary to this country because it's a little bit too comfortable. I said, do you realize the kind of desire God's placed in your heart?

That's different than most people's desires. That has to be a desire given of God. You know, you don't look at most people and say, you want to move halfway around the world to be a missionary? And they say, yeah, but the country's a little bit too comfortable.

Well, just kind of strange, you know, brother Chris, do you want, man, I feel like God's calling me. And they look at you and go, no, that's carnality, brother, because that's a little bit more comfortable of a country than the other country.

That's not what's going on. They have a strange desire that only God could give. And the Bible says in verse one, he says, you have a desire. Number two, he says, you're blameless. Thank God that's not perfect.

But that you're not a guy that people are looking to blame stuff on because of the character that you have and the integrity that you have. The Bible speaks of blameless. Number two, husband of one wife. A lot of big preachers haven't figured that one out yet.

[5 : 47] Vigilant. Vigilant. The Bible says vigilant. It says sober. We're just going to go through this really quick. We're speaking to pastors. We're speaking to mature people. We're speaking to men of God in this room.

So I know you've preached through this passage. I know that you understand this passage. But I want you to see. I was putting a letter next to each one that had to do with integrity. A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O.

Ability. A. Maturity. A. It's kind of lopsided.

Now all of our books are lopsided the other way. Our books are wanting to say, oh, if you want to be a pastor, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K. Oh, and by the way, see if you might be a man of character. When God approaches it, he says, no, no, no, no, no.

Your integrity, you're going to be sober. Verse 2. Verse 2, the Bible says also a man of good behavior. The Bible also says given to hospitality. Given to hospitality. Not given to wine.

[6 : 52] The Bible says not a striker. The Bible says not greedy, a filthy lucre. The Bible says patient. The Bible says not a brawler. Do you see? Brother Chris, why do you have a slide for each one of these?

Because maybe it will make you understand the way God looks at us is a little bit different than the way we look at each other. You know, it's amazing to me how we know exactly what it's going to take to be a church planner.

And God says, listen, I want you to understand to be a pastor. What I expect out of you is integrity. What I expect out of you is integrity. I expect you to be a man of integrity, not covetous, the Bible says.

You ruleth well his own house. The Bible talks about his family. Seems to be an important factor that the Bible speaks about. And I'll stop here for just a second speaking of your family and give you a couple of things to think about.

You know, the church is his bride. Last time I checked in the Bible. It's not our bride. Do you realize that when you place the priority on his bride over your bride, we would call that adultery?

[7 : 56] It's God's church that his son bought with his blood that he paid the price for. This is his work. And we get to do what God's called us to do.

But, you know, as church planners, a lot of times we forget the priority of what God's given us in our family. We forget what God's called us to do in our family. The church is his bride. It's not our bride.

When we put our priorities in the wrong place, we're actually with another man's wife. The man's name is Jesus. That's his church. That's his bride. And we need to be careful to prioritize things right.

He says, integrity, your family. A man who cares more for his church than his family is in danger of losing both. I had the privilege of being in Albania three or four days ago and had the privilege of sitting down with a young man.

And he said, Brother Chris, I love Turkey so much, but my wife doesn't like it. He said, I want to be a missionary to Turkey. And I want to go tell people in Turkey about Christ. And I said, man, there's nobody in the world that there's nothing in the world I'd prefer to talk about other than if somebody wants to give me another mic, I can use another one or that one.

[8 : 59] It doesn't matter. I said, you know, there's nothing in the world I love more. There's nothing in the world I love more than missions. Man, this is incredible. This is great. So you're interested in Turkey.

He said, yeah, I just have a small problem. My wife doesn't like Turkey. I said, why doesn't your wife like Turkey? He said, because we haven't had a date night in the last six months to a year probably. I said, why is that?

He said, I'm trying to learn the Turkish language. I said, man, that sounds way too much like a lot of our missionaries. We get so involved in the ministry that we forget that God said your first ministry is a ministry of integrity.

And it's a ministry of taking care of the house that God's given you. A man who cares more for his church than his family is in danger of losing both. God does not expect a man to sacrifice his family to build a church.

Because last time I checked, he was the one that bought the church. He was the one that paid the price for the church. He is the one that redeemed the church. And he's the one that grows the church so he can come later to take his church away.

[10 : 00] We put a weight on our shoulders that we do not deserve to have. Because last time I checked, it was his church, not our church. He says, listen, your family. God uses, or God does not expect a man to sacrifice his family to build a church.

Don't become so busy tending to the vineyards of others that you forget your own. Don't become so busy tending the vineyards of others that you forget to tend your own.

Because what you'll find is you're going to fall to the wayside and you're going to have a family that's not willing to follow to do what God's called you to do. Have a positive attitude about the ministry so they will as well.

Talk to church planners and they're like, Brother Chris, if I weren't a church planner, I could. Oh, Brother Chris, you don't understand the kind of money I could have made if it weren't a church planner.

Brother Chris, you don't understand. You know what? Have a positive attitude about where God's placed you. Have a positive attitude with your family because your family's going to follow that. You know what? We whine and we complain and then we wonder why our kids hate the ministry.

[11 : 01] I'm a missionary kid. I had the privilege of growing up in Peru. And if you look through the Facebook pages of people that were missionary kids alongside me, you won't find the same attitude about missions.

And you know why? Because people had the priorities in the wrong places. People said, you know what? It's more about my ability and what I can do. And it's more about what I'm able to do.

It's more about how God's gifted me when that's not really what it's about. It's about integrity, first of all. Have a positive attitude around your family. Missionaries and men of God in the past that we idolize would surprise us today.

I was listening to someone speak on that just the other day about how the men that we idolize. William Carey stuck his wife in a back room. Most pastors wouldn't support that nowadays, nor do I think that they should.

Brother, you know, I'm going to be a missionary to Peru. But just so you know, my wife's going to be in a back room and we're going to have a rat hole where we can pass her food to where she can eat. Now, if you'd support me, that'd be great. But then we say, oh, brother Chris, that was the father of modern missions.

[12 : 07] And maybe we need to decide that we're going to be careful with our families. Instead of having to deal with that, we're going to love the family that God's given us. Because in the integrity part, he says, listen, you're going to rule your own home well.

And if there's anybody that needs this lesson, it's probably me. Because I'm a workaholic. I enjoy working. I enjoy what I do. I love studying. I love reading.

I love, but the Bible says, you know, you need to take care of your own family. The Bible says children of subjection. And to hear a lot of people speak about this right here, it's kind of funny to me because their opinion of that is that the children have to be perfect.

There's one thing I found out about children, especially Brother Coffees, not mine, is they're not perfect. The Bible does speak of them governing well. You know what govern well means?

Govern well doesn't mean they're going to be perfect. Govern well means that when there's a problem, you're going to take care of it. I thank God for that because if not, my dad would have been disqualified from ministry many, many years ago because I know his kids.

[13 : 08] But the Bible does say to govern well. Make sure that you love your family and love them well. Remember, the bride of Christ is his bride, not our bride. And we love the church, but it's his bride.

And the results don't come from us and from what we do, they come from him. And God has been good to give you what you have, but just remember it is his bride. Integrity is ignored.

I believe it's probably one of the things most ignored among church planning. Our focus is on things like, hey, are you a leader? Our focus is on things like, are you organized?

Are you passionate about people? Are you a self-starter? And those are important things that might be good at our church. It used to be up there. I don't know where they put it now, but we used to have a triangle. I guess somebody decided we didn't need that anymore.

But on the, I don't, Robert. Okay, Pastor Robert. I didn't know anything about it. That was an inside joke, but evidently. Up here they had this triangle that said, it said, be, do, serve, train.

[14 : 11] And you know, in our churches we do this to where we're worried more about doing and serving and training than we are about being. But see, when the Bible comes to what a pastor is all about, he says, listen, I want integrity.

I want you to be first. Okay, I want you to be first. I don't want you to do first. I don't want you to serve first. I don't want you to train first. I want you to be first. I want you to be a man of integrity.

I want you to be the man that God's called you to be. I want you to be all about that. And then after that, we're going to start doing. But, you know, integrity has been ignored. You know, after reading many churches on many books on church planning, you feel like you have to be a superhero genius bionic man.

To be able to plan a church. Brothers, we had a thing about preaching the word of God.

I had a conference here about what the Bible says about expository preaching. I had a great time with them. And one of the things that I took away from it is the man that was speaking said, I'm going to put the same weight on an issue that the Bible places on the issue.

[15 : 19] He said, if you were to take and you were to put all of what the Bible has to say and then you want to preach on this issue. But the question is, out of all that the Bible has to say, how much weight was placed on that issue?

And he said, that's where I decide how much weight to put on the issue. If we were to do that on church planning, we'd have to throw away 99% of our books about it. And by the time it's done with, you really do.

You have to be a superhero genius bionic man to be able to start a church. But the Bible says, if I want to talk about it, I want to start with this. You need to be a man of integrity. You need to be a man of integrity.

We had, I think it was focused on the family that did a study where they said that over 45% of pastors had admitted to in the last year looking at pornography. Do you realize, I believe the number was actually higher, but I don't want to say the number was higher.

Because then they'll say, I'm exaggerating. But let's just say 45%. Do you realize what that means in this room? Brother Chris, I'm prepared to do missions work.

[16 : 33] I believe the number was more like 65. But I don't want to use that number. Do you realize what that means in this room? That means you could look around and know that.

These were men of God who had, Brother Chris, I'm a good preacher. Really? Are you a man of integrity? It's ignored in the way we do church planning nowadays.

God's take on church planning is a lot different than our take on church planning is. He looks at things a lot different than we look at things. He cares about things that we necessarily don't care about.

Really curious, I've read all the books, man. I know all the stuff. I've talked to this guy and I've talked to that guy and I've studied this book and I've studied that book. Well, maybe we need to understand that integrity doesn't need to be ignored. We need to understand how important that that is.

Now, qualities that come from integrity. I believe this is something important that we need to think about. There are qualities that come from integrity. Number one, we need to be a soul winner. Now, I believe I'm not Brother Jessup's age in any way, form, or fashion and I don't have his experience.

[17 : 39] But you know what we've done in Independent Baptist Realms? We've learned to put the soul winning face on and go, Brother Chris, I knocked on doors 17 hours this week.

But I believe soul winning is a lot more than knocking on doors. I believe it's a part of your lifestyle. What's amazing to me is you can go out and knock on doors and talk to people you've never met about Christ, but you don't have any friendships where you tell people about Christ.

You know, you've got two extremes to this. And probably my brother is probably the best medium in between those two that I know of. But, you know, you have side number one is, Brother Chris, I knocked on doors.

I put on my soul winning outfit and I put on my soul winning voice and I put on my soul winning Bible. And I went out and I soul won. Amen. Amen. And then the other side is you need to be a lifestyle evangelist. Where you never talk about Christ, but you have a life that says, I believe we have to have some medium somewhere that says something different.

I believe we need to be soul winners, no doubt about it. But you know what? I believe that we ought to have relationships that lead us to winning souls, not the other way around. Okay.

[18 : 53] Soul winning. No doubt about it. It's not just knocking on doors and giving out tracts. In Peru, Americans love to come visit us. Oh, man, they love coming to visit us. Because we'll put a box of 5,000 tracts in the van, 10,000 tracts in the van.

And then one day they'll pass out 10,000 tracts and they'll come and they'll go, Oh, brother Chris, it's just so different in Peru than it is in America. Oh, in Peru, people want to hear the gospel.

And it's not really what people in Peru want to hear the gospel. It's that we pass out pieces of paper in Peru where we tell them 1 in 10 are winners if you could call this number. That's the way businesses do business down there.

So everybody wants to take on them tracts because maybe they're giving something away. It's amazing how Americans come back to America thinking, Man, I wish Americans were like Peruvians were.

And what they don't understand is that 90% of our visitors don't come from tracts and don't come from visitation. It comes to Christians that understand what it means to be a Christian and tell others about Jesus Christ in their daily walk.

[19 : 58] Not on Saturday from 9 to 5. Soul winner. No doubt about it. We need to be a soul winner. But we need to live a life on purpose. Okay? We need to live a life on purpose saying, My life is going to be different than anybody else's life.

And when you see me, you're going to know there's a difference. But when it comes down to sitting down and talking about it, I'm going to tell you that the Bible says that if you do not accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you will spend eternity in hell separated from God.

You need to live a life on purpose. You need to share Christ through others, through intentional friendships. Independent Baptists, we've gotten the name of being soul winners, but we don't understand that soul winning is not the way to people's heart.

The way to people's hearts is intentional friendships. And when you have an intentional friendship, then you can actually speak to people about Christ. And you can see the transformation of lives. I wish I could take you to Peru to where you could see that.

I was 18 years old, and man, I just knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had the answer on how to make this church that I was taking over. I took over a church, and they had a total of four people going to church.

[21 : 11] And man, I just knew I had the answer. You know, I was going to knock on doors, and I was going to preach good messages. And man, I just knew, no doubt about it, we were going to knock the walls off of the church. It wasn't going to take any time at all, because I don't know if they knew this or not, but my name was Chris Gardner, and I was the son of Austin Gardner.

And so it was just going to happen. It was just going to happen. All you had to do was go there. If I arrived, man, it was going to happen. And after a year, we had grown from four to about five. And I was number five.

And now, you know, when you write back to the States, and you write that story, you always write something like, God's blessed us with a growth of over 25% this year. It's the creativity of prayer letters.

Amen? And what happened was this. We had a young man come to Christ. And that young man told his friends about Christ.

And they told their friends about Christ. And they told their friends about Christ. And they told, and the video, you know what? I was knocking doors and knocking doors and knocking doors and knocking doors, but I didn't understand that knocking doors would probably not grow a church.

[22 : 14] What would grow a church was somebody that had actually found what it meant to be a believer in Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. After a few years, the church had grown. God had done amazing things in the church.

But it only happened through intentional relationships, not through only knocking on doors. Say, Brother Chris, knocking on doors is bad. No, knocking on doors isn't bad. You need to be a soul winner. But soul winning is not something done when you put your uniform for soul winning on, then you take it off at the end of the Saturday.

You need to be a soul winner Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday that people know there's a difference in your life where you're at. No matter what you're doing, there's a difference about you. Intentional friendships.

If you're not a soul winner, you're able to attract and grow, if lucky, a church of people that come from other churches, not a group of people that have actually come to know Christ in your church.

Because, see, every church you'd go to, you're going to find, Brother Chris, man, we run this many. Well, really, the question is, if we run this many, the question is, how many people have come to Christ through your church?

[23 : 18] Because everybody's always mad with somebody at the church. And the question is, with an integrity, if you're a soul winner. We love 2 Timothy 2, 2, where the Bible talks about teaching others, training others.

But you know what? Training others comes from winning others. My dad used to teach classes at a mission board.

And he would stand up and he would teach at this mission board about training faithful men. And a guy would come up right after him and he'd say, Brother Chris, you know, you've got to understand that not everybody's going to be blessed with the kind of leaders that Brother Gardner was given.

And they never got the idea that Brother Gardner wasn't really given great leaders, that Brother Gardner took leaders from drunkards. It was a, you know, Brother, you just have to understand, missionaries, y'all can, y'all have to understand that not everybody's going to be blessed like Brother Gardner was.

And I'm sitting there thinking, I'm the boy and I watch these guys. And man, these guys couldn't stop drinking if their life depended on it. But these guys that were the great leaders are thieves. They stole my walkman as a kid.

[24 : 26] They asked me to borrow money so that, because Dad had told them to borrow money. And so I'd go into my piggy bank and I'd take all the money I had out and said, Dad needed money and I got some money here. Here's the money.

And then Dad comes home and says, Son, have you seen so? And so I said, yeah, I saw him. No, what happened? Well, he came by and I gave him all the money out of my piggy bank because he said that you had said that he needed money. Training faithful men doesn't come from having great leaders.

Training faithful men comes from the fact that we understand that soul winning happens from zero. And we tell others about Jesus Christ. And when we do, he will make a difference. Soul winner. Number two, lover of people.

Comes out of integrity. We have to love people. And in America, you know, we've got these cool sayings and we've got these pithy things that we like saying.

And one of them that we say in America all the time is, if it weren't for the people in the ministry, you know, it would be a great thing to be in the ministry. You wouldn't have a ministry if you don't have people. You've got to be a lover of people.

[25 : 27] And a lover of people means a lover of people with all their situations, with all their problems, with all their difficulties. When they come to you, you're going to love people. And you're going to love what God's given you in there. There would be no ministry without the people.

Number three, yes, you need to be a leader. But see, leadership comes from integrity, not outside of integrity. See, Paul says, follow me as I follow Christ.

What he's saying is, I am on the B level. I'm doing what I need to be. What I need to do to be what I need to be. And so, because of that, if you'll follow me, what you're going to find is, you're going to be who you need to be so that later you can do what you need to do.

So that later you can serve like you need to serve. And so that later you can train like you need to train. Leadership is not something I'm talking about. You can learn how to be the 360 degree leader.

You can learn how to be the irresistible leader. You can learn how to be a servant leader. You can learn how to be the leader that everybody wants to follow. I'm talking about you can find. All you have to do is put on Amazon leader.

[26 : 30] And you're going to find hundreds of books written on how to be whatever kind of leader you're supposed to be. And it's almost a flavor of the month, Dale, isn't it? You know, the important thing right now is, you know, we just had somebody come out with a book on the five laws of leadership.

Or the five levels of being a leader. You have leadership gold? Are you a 360 degree leader? Are you a leader of integrity? Are you a servant leader? What kind of leader are you? You see, leadership comes from integrity, not from reading a book on leadership.

And when Jesus is talking or when God's talking through his word about this, he says there's 15 things in here that I want you to understand are important. And really, I'm not going to talk about much outside of integrity.

Leadership comes through integrity. Self-starter. No doubt about it, you've got to be a self-starter. When you start a church, you don't start. Most guys don't know how to start a church because they don't know that they're going to be the guy that does everything.

You have no boss, so you've got to be disciplined. It's amazing. Everybody wants to start a church because I tell them in Peru, the reason you want to start a church is because you have lust for a pulpit.

[27 : 50] It's great to stand behind the pulpit, isn't it? Man, if I could have people listen to me the way I pastor Gardner, I have people listening to him, that'd be great. Well, see, that's not really what church planting is about. Hey, we've got to be a self-starter.

Young guys in the training center, you don't understand what it's like to wake up early in the morning and work a hard day. Maybe God will use me in church planting one day.

No, maybe it's time to do what God's called you to do right now and to do what God's called you to do right now and to be used of him right now so that later on you can see what God's going to do with you. You have no boss.

Be disciplined. The man who gets a lot done gets it done because he planned to get it done. It's amazing to me how many times I hear Americans say, I don't have time.

Have you ever noticed we've got time for what we want to have time for? I don't have time, Brother Chris, but I'm going out bass fishing on Saturday. There's nothing wrong with bass fishing, but there's a problem when you use the I don't have time excuse.

[28 : 55] Because we've all got time. The question is what we've got time for. Our president has the same 24 hours you do. Alexander the Great had the same 24 hours you did.

For a matter of fact, just about, well, no, not just about. Everybody's confined to the same 24 hours we are. He plans his work. Then he works his plan. He's got definite goals.

Be a finisher. Don't depend on others. You know, you get to working around the staff and you think that you're going to be able to work like others do. Hey, brother, could you do this for me? And you do this and you do this and you do this.

And then we're going to have this great thing. And then you go out and start a church and you're like. There's nobody else in the room with me. Be a finisher. Be somebody who doesn't depend on others. Learn to start.

Learn to produce ideas, plans, and programs by yourself. Be an example. People will only go as far as you lead them to go. I love hearing people talk about how they wish they had leaders like other people have.

[29 : 59] Can I tell you that nobody has leaders like other people have? If you take the Word of God, the book of Ephesians chapter 4, you're going to find that we're supposed to build those leaders. Those leaders don't come knocking on the door and saying, I'm ready to lead.

Are you willing to take me? People go down and they're like, man, I just wish I could have the kind of leaders that other people have. No, leaders come from the training that you give from the pulpit, from your house table, as you're training and as you're loving others.

People only go as far as you lead them to go. You cannot demand of others what you will not do. Prepare people by ministry, but prepare them by example. And that's a part of integrity. Ephesians chapter 4, 11 through 13.

If the leaders are not at the level you want them to be, then realize that they're a direct reflection of you and your preparation. It's nice being number two or number three or number four in charge, because if you're number four in charge, you can always blame it on number three and number two and number one.

Understand. It's a direct reflection of what the farmer did.

[31 : 33] Why do you let weeds grow around you and the plants and they're thinking, no, I don't let weeds grow around me. You're the leader. And you're letting the weeds grow around me. In your church, can I tell you that the level of leadership that you have in your church is a direct reflection of the kind of leader that you and I are.

And you can scream about it from the pulpit or you can start having a life of integrity that leads the way it needs to lead. If the leaders are not at the level you want them to be, then realize that it's a direct reflection of you and your preparation.

The other day, my brother, my brother has a gift. It's a gift of sarcasm. And anybody that knows him knows that.

And if you don't know him, you'd find that out pretty quickly if you get to know him. And the other day I come in, I say, Dad, Jacob is doing this, this and this, and I can't figure it out.

Never discuss an issue with David in the room with you. David looks and he goes, go figure. Oh, he does this and this and this just like his dad.

[32 : 43] As a leader, we've got to understand that the people that follow us, if they're not where we want them to be, probably the reason they're not where we want them to be at is because they've followed us to the exact place that we do not like. Live a life of integrity.

Learn to delegate, inspect which delegate. Delegation is not creating a fall guy. And if people feel that it is, then they're not going to want you to delegate to them. The second thing you find out of these things that the Bible says, you've got all these 15 things.

They're all about integrity. And then he says, I want to tell you what's the ability part is you've got to be apt to teach. You've got to be apt to teach. If you've started a Sunday school class and nobody wants to come to it, then that's probably a good indication you're not going to make a good pastor.

If when you say, now let's open the word of God, everybody automatically hits the snooze button and goes, there's probably something that says you're probably not the right guy to start the church.

I have to teach. The one thing that he says about ability, the one thing he says about ability is this. You've got to be apt to teach. We make more of a fuss about ability than integrity, but God does not.

[33 : 49] If your Sunday school class won't grow, there might be an ability problem. The Bible says you're supposed to be apt to teach. After that, he says you need to have maturity. You need to have maturity.

In 1 Timothy 3 and verse 6, the Bible says not a novice. Not a novice is going to look different on different people. But can I tell you that what's funny is we have many people that are apt to teach nowadays that are bloggers.

And they've got great stuff they can say on the blogosphere, but they don't have the maturity that goes along with the aptitude to teach. See, aptitude to teach does not say you're ready because, see, what a lot of people are, Brother Chris, I'm one of the best preachers anybody's ever heard.

Brother Chris, you don't understand. In my homiletics class, I'm talking about I taught the teacher how to preach. I am the man when it comes to teaching.

But, see, teaching is not the only thing. He says, listen, I'm going to have integrity, and then I'm going to have aptitude, and the aptitude is going to be aptitude to teach. But then after that, you've got to go have a maturity that goes along with that to be able to teach what God's given you to teach that's based out of the integrity that God has given you.

[34 : 57] You've got to have maturity, not a novice. Faith in God's provision, that comes from maturity.

Can I tell you that God is going to provide? Faith in God's provision. Financially, in your family, in your ministry, faith in God's provision.

Knowing what you believe, and not only knowing what you believe, knowing how to communicate it. You know, at the age of 18, when I took over Lighthouse Baptist Church, I knew everything.

Anybody else in here ever been 18 years old before? Or maybe not, it wasn't 18 for you, but, you know, you knew everything. I'm talking about, man, I've listened to all the great preachers and all the great... And I still remember I invited my dad to preach a revival at the church.

And I had been preaching on alcohol because everybody, everybody that came to my church were drunks. And when I say they were drunks, folks, I'm talking about you don't understand what drunks are.

[36 : 01] These guys were like the epitome of drunkenness. I'm talking about they could have been a poster child for what I was before Alcoholics Anonymous. I'm not these guys were just... So, man, I was up there and I was ripping about alcohol and how dumb it made you look and how bad it made you look.

And so I had dad come in and he preached a revival on alcohol. I bet you've never heard a revival on alcohol. But my dad finished it and I'm talking about all these drunks are sitting there going, man, that's good stuff.

And I'm sitting there going, I've been saying the same thing, but they won't listen to me about what I had to say. And I still remember doing the dumbest thing a guy can do that thinks he knows everything. I asked dad, I said, dad, why in the world will they listen to what you have to say about it?

And then they won't listen to me about what they have to say about it. And I still remember driving down the road in the white truck. And as we're driving down the road and I'm headed back home, dad goes, well, son, it's not really about what you say.

It's about how you say it. See, dad, in three nights, the preacher of the Bible said about alcohol and had really helped these guys to grow. What I was trying to do as a kid, I couldn't understand that there was a difference in being apt to teach.

[37 : 05] And there's a difference in the maturity that God gives you with the aptitude of teaching. Knowing what you believe, but not only knowing what you believe, but how to communicate it. Ask God to do great things and just trust him to do it.

Flexibility. On the mission field, and it may not be like this in the States, but flexibility. Have the courage to change what doesn't work for something that does.

It may not be that way in America. I don't know. In America, everything might always work because that's the way it's always been done. But what you're going to find on the mission field is, man, things don't work the way you thought they were going to work.

Have flexibility. Have the courage to change things that don't work. Able to work with people that aren't like me. Understand the culture that surrounds you. I've preached in South Dakota quite a few times, quite a few missions conferences out there.

And I just remember the pastor that was there before. He said, Brother Chris said, one of the funniest things you Southeastern boys do is y'all come down over to South Dakota and you try and create a church full of Georgia folks. I said, what do you mean by that?

[38 : 14] He says, oh, you preach like a Georgia boy. You talk like a Georgia boy. You expect everything to be done like a Georgia boy does stuff. Understand the culture where you're at. Where you're at. That's a Georgia boy, eh, man?

I understand the culture where you're at. Be a constant learner and develop some experience with the culture that God's placed you in. A friend of mine is in North Alabama and said, Brother Chris, I don't know why, but I can't get my church to grow.

But I hate high school football. Probably not a good thing for you to be in North Alabama and hate high school football because they eat, sleep, and drink high school football in Alabama.

You get American missionaries and they, I love American missionaries, and they go to Peru and explain to Peruvians how dumb a sport soccer is. David did it the other day, and like I said, he's given the gift of sarcasm.

And David the other day goes, man, that was a great game. He said, what I don't like about soccer is they don't have as much of a score in soccer as they do in football. And David's like, yeah, really, what game were you watching?

[39 : 16] And he says, man, I was watching this team against this team. And he says, they finished, it was a 14-7 game, man, it was close. And David said, 14-7. So what you mean is 2-1? You know, you had two scores to one score.

Americans go down to Peru and they go, oh, man, soccer's horrible, soccer's dumb. And they don't understand that's part of our culture. And what you don't understand, you understand the culture where you're at, God's place.

You have some maturity the way you do it. Become educated in three things. Become educated in the Word of God. Know your Bible. Just came back from Albania. And probably the biggest thing that sticks with me is this.

I've never seen a group of leaders that knew and loved the Word of God to the degree that these guys in Albania did. In Peru, we had a master's degree student from Bob Jones come down.

And Dad was translating for him. I said, I remember I was a little boy. And you're in a Catholic society. And they asked this about, they asked this master's degree graduate. They asked him, they said, hey, so what did you, so what does the Bible say about?

[40 : 22] And he goes, well, and he keeps talking and talking and talking and talking and never used the Bible. And the pastor of the church looked over at my dad and says, tell him to use this verse. I remember it like it was yesterday.

And he was telling him what, he was feeding him what verses he's supposed to use because the American master's degree student didn't know how to use his Bible, learn the Bible, love the Bible, be a student of the Scriptures. That's not against the college when I say that.

That's one student because, believe me, I have a college, and I know there's plenty of students that come out of my college. You want to know the Bible. Church planning and church growth method. Learn about them. The culture and the people where you work.

Get financial backing so that you can do all that you can to work where God's placed you to work. Can I tell you, God's given us the amazing, we get to plant a church.

But as we plant churches, let's not get confused about what church planning is about. Church planning is about, number one, it's about integrity. It's about integrity.

[41 : 24] Church planning, number two, is about ability. And then from that ability comes maturity that can actually take you to know and to teach what you need to teach and what you need to do in the right way.

Dear Lord, I thank you for the honor and privilege of being a preacher of your word. I ask you, dear Lord, that everything we do might bring honor and glory to you. Dear Lord, I thank you that your Bible does give us an outline for what I, as a pastor, am supposed to do.

Dear Lord, I ask you that you would help me to live a life of integrity. Dear Lord, I ask you to help me to live a life that my child might be able to say, my dad lived what he said. He didn't just say something from the pulpit, but he lived it in his life.

Dear Lord, I ask you that you might give me the ability and the maturity. Dear Lord, above all, dear Lord, I don't want tons of things that would make me able. I want tons of things that will make me be the man of integrity that you've caused me to be.

In your sweet, holy, precious name I pray. Amen. Thank you for listening to the Church Plain Conference hosted by the Our Generation Training Center and Vision Baptist Church.

[42 : 27] You can find the complete series of record sessions by logging on to www.sermonaudio.com forward slash visionpaptist.