

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye over you . . . Psalm 32:8

THE VANISHING VALUE: INTEGRITY

For several months now, we have been considering on Sunday mornings the values that we might want to 'pass on' to our children, and to the next generation. We have considered many values over these weeks; by way of reminder, let me list them for you:

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| † Grace | † Work | † Prayerfulness | † Kindness |
| † Humility | † Holiness | † Thankfulness | † Love |
| † Wisdom | † Obedience | † Compassion | † Forgiveness |
| † Perseverance | † Repentance | † Friendliness | |

Which of these strikes you as 1) the best development opportunity for you (the value you most need to work on) or 2) the one you would most like to pass on to others?

Well, we have one left: Unselfishness. I found an interesting title for this message, coming up this Sunday, you will see it on the bulletin cover: **"How to be selfless. . . in a selfie world."** Have you ever noticed how self-centered our American culture has become? Perhaps if you have not lived long, you have not noticed the change. I believe I have lived long enough now to notice a big change in the orientation of our nation, and our people.

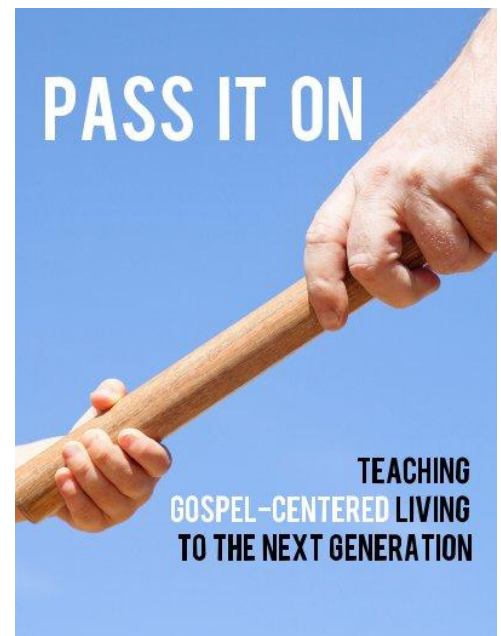
For example, the 'selfie'; taking pictures of oneself with one's cell phone, and posting it to a social media site, like FaceBook. Few would have done that years ago. It probably would have been considered 'immodest', or 'not humble.' Now, everyone is doing it! People think about themselves a lot, what they like, what they want, what they're going to do for themselves next on the bucket list. Well, we'll save that one for Sunday morning: how to become more like Jesus (unselfish) and less like the secular American culture (selfish!)

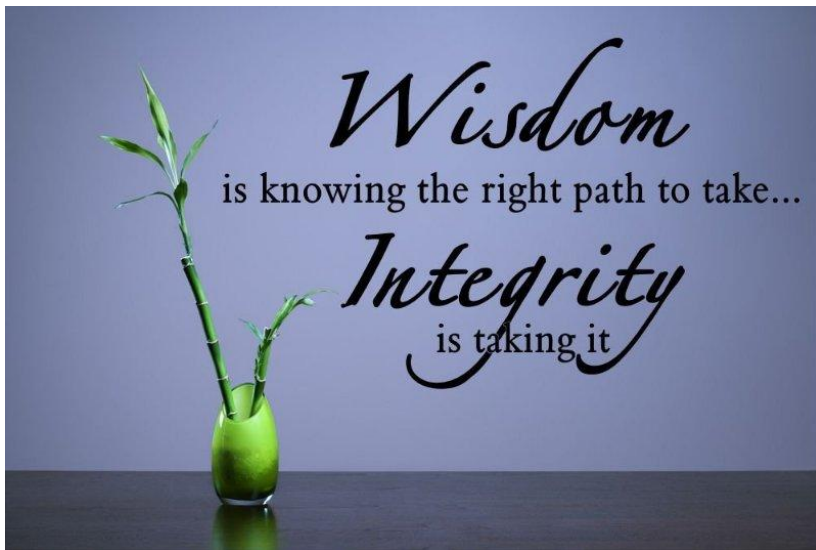
What I wanted to address in our newsletter today is an important value that sort of missed the boat: **INTEGRITY**.

What is integrity? From the Encarta Dictionary: ***Possession of firm principles; the quality of possessing and steadfastly adhering to high moral principles or professional standards.***

What are your own thoughts about our integrity, nationally, and as people living in this land? I seem to sense a strong downward trend. It seems especially apparent in the news media, who have stopped objectively reporting the news fairly and impartially, with integrity, and now every news piece is really an opinion piece by the author or broadcast journalist, and generally extremely one sided - the conservative side, or the liberal side.

Integrity issues are not limited only to media and journalists. Politicians too. Leaders at all levels in government. So many scandals. And probably, things that in years gone by that would have been scandalous, are just stock and trade for the way things are today, and get little attention.





I think we all struggle with integrity at different levels. For me, years ago, it involved paying sales tax on used cars. Every time I sold an old jalopy, and bought another one, I'd have to pay the sales tax all over again. I didn't like that. I was tempted in my integrity.

For others, it's something else. For children, cheating in school. Copying from others, using crib notes, whatever. In the competitive arena, many people try to make themselves look better by trying to make their competitors look worse; for example in a competition to see who will get the next promotion at work.

Many who run businesses today try to use questionable means to avoid the appearance of income, so as to pay lower taxes. Some who are lower in income find creative ways to maximize the government benefits they receive; while they could apply the same intelligence and creativity to actually work for a living!

Integrity even becomes an issue in churches. Many churches have divided, failed, and folded due to integrity issues within the church. In my former life in the formerly great state of New York, I followed a pastor who terribly misguided the sheep, deceived and manipulated them, and was finally caught in an adulterous relationship with the wife of the lay leader of the church! He was eventually defrocked (removed, credentials lost) but there was church conflict and poor health for years, as well as a multi-million dollar lawsuit that was a major distraction.

As Christian people, we are called to integrity. Actually, the wisdom literature (mostly from King Solomon) has much to say about this particular value:

Proverbs 19:1 ***Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in speech and is a fool.***

Proverbs 20:7 ***The righteous who walks in his integrity— blessed are his children after him!***

Proverbs 12:22 ***Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight.***

Jesus seems to ring in on this particular value as well:

Luke 16:10 ***"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much."***

To have integrity, another way of thinking about this: we need purity. We need holiness of mind and heart. We cannot compartmentalize and say (to ourselves) "I will have integrity in these areas of my life, but not in these other areas." We need to have integrity . . . across the board.

And how do we pass this on to the next generation, to those who are watching us with curious eyes: we do it just like Jesus - we show, and we tell. We show forth our integrity with our words, our attitudes, our deeds. And we tell about it; we find the 'teachable moments' when we can lovingly present integrity as a better option than whatever has been happening with those who need our instruction.

Integrity. It is a fading value in our world today. But it is a core value of those who follow Christ. May it be so with us!

TIME TO STEP UP! (North Pointe Update)

Our board is continuing down the path of making arrangements to purchase the Orrstown Bank administrative complex, called 'North Pointe Business Center' on the corner of Salem Road and Philadelphia Avenue.

If this happens, this will offer our church family a new lease on life, with a campus that is much more visible to the community, easier to find, more accessible, safer, and with more room for us to grow.

Our finance chair, Bill Nye, has been working with bank officials and our attorney to come to a written understanding of how and when a purchase could happen. The actual closing, if this all continues to that point, would probably be in early 2019, more than a year from now. However, having a written, signed understanding could happen within a few short weeks.

One of the interesting features of the purchase arrangement is this: the combined income we would receive from tenants leasing various portions of the business center would cover the entirety of our mortgage payments. What would be needed for us as Salem people to fund, would be the cost of transforming part of the property into a church facility; we call that renovation costs. We also would need to come up with a down payment. For this reason, a capital campaign goal (note the thermometer at the front of the church) has been set at the \$ 1,000,000 mark, which the board feels is attainable for a church our size, given how the Lord has prospered our people and also has given them generous hearts towards the work of the church and our mission - to make disciples. We are just starting out and have yet to truly publicize the capital campaign, but we are already over the \$ 60,000 mark! Thanks for your generosity in this!

One question for all of us to consider - this would be a BIG MOVE. A BIG CHANGE. Almost like a sea-change, or cultural change. It would require a substantial number of us to give generously, and work hard, to succeed and be fruitful with the transition. By the time we would open the doors of the new facility to the public, possibly in the summer of 2019, we would need to be fully ready to function well; everything in place, all systems, ministries, operations of the church up and running nicely. It will take a lot of effort to get to that point.

And one concern: we are not operating all that well right now, with what the Lord has already entrusted to our care. Can we really have the Lord 'expand our territory' (prayer of Jabez) if we cannot competently handle the territory we already have?

So, as the senior pastor of the church, I am asking that we step up to a higher level of functioning NOW. Have you heard . . . have you noticed . . . that we are short of volunteers in some important areas? And that our campus is looking a bit 'out of order' in some ways?

As followers of Christ, my belief is that we are NOT spectators who come for a weekly church performance; we are members of a body who work together to advance the cause of Christ. We are to be producers, not consumers. We are to be ministers, each of us, serving in different ways as the Lord has gifted us!



Here are some ways to step into greater roles of service, to help Salem function more fully, and more faithfully NOW:

- ✠ We need more people to serve in **Audio-Visual** (running sound, lights, and video for worship services, and special events at the church. We are running with a skeleton crew, and the demand is too high for the small number of servants that we have.) Talk to Randy Hoover.
- ✠ We need more people who love little children to serve in the **nursery**. (We have had to terminate offering nursery at the 8:30 service, partly due to a shortage of willing volunteers. Note - even older folks (grandma and grandpa age) make great nursery volunteers! Talk to Jessie Nicholson.
- ✠ We need more people to **teach children** on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. As part of our 'get ready for our future' we are trying to strengthen and re-create how we do children's ministry to make it exciting and relevant for today's kids. Talk to Amy Elliot.
- ✠ We need people who like **grounds-keeping**. Right now, much of our lawn maintenance is falling on one lonely man - Earl Ross. We have acres of lawn to care for. We have playgrounds that need special attention. Likewise, Charlene Forrester has been beautifying our gardens single handedly. God has given us a big campus - many acres, three big buildings, several smaller buildings, a ball field, a play ground. Many hands make light work! Talk to Dave Brenize.
- ✠ We need people who like to **visit and care for people** who are hurting or lonely. This winter, we will begin a new ministry, Stephen Ministry, which has the sole focus of walking alongside people who are grieving losses. Lose of a spouse. Loss of a parent. Loss of a job. Loss of health. Loss of a child, or an important relationship. If you enjoy being a comfort to people, and could visit someone (one person at a time) once or twice a month, talk to Sandy Ibaugh.
- ✠ We need people who like to **keep a clean house**. So many of you have such clean houses! I am impressed when I visit! Well, Salem is the Lord's house. Shouldn't it be as clean as your own house? Our paid janitor is only very part time, and can only cover the high traffic areas. We need people who will silently augment those paid services with some volunteer hours to de-clutter, tidy up, deep clean, and make our place shine!

Let's face it; it's a bit embarrassing bringing new people through our buildings when our facilities are not all that 'presentable'. If you need ideas for where you can help, talk to Dave Brenize. By the way, if you are responsible for or routinely use a particular ministry or room in the church, just go for it! Keep it looking nice!

I think raising the bar on how well we operate and how nice we look here at our present Salem Campus would be a good 'great ready' goal for what is to come. Please do pray about your part in serving the Lord here at Salem. We are all servants here . . . not just a chosen few of us.



SOME THOUGHTS ON GIVING . . .

Salem is not a money church. Never has been. Never been money grubbing. Never talk about money much here. Maybe once every three years we have a sermon or two on stewardship - how to manage the Lord's assets, recognizing that we are stewards, not owners.



And yet, at this particular point in time, when there is such need for good stewardship in so many places in the church, perhaps a brief refresher would be in order. So, here goes.

Tithing. The Tithe is God's financial standard for giving. It is a minimum standard, not a maximum standard. God uses the tithe as a test of whether we love Him, or love Mammon (money). If you read the book of Malachi, you will read how God became very dissatisfied with His people when they became unfaithful about their giving! The tithe is intended, as best we understand, to keep the church healthy and functioning at its most basic level - covering the costs of operating our property, utilities, building expenses, and staff salaries.

Offerings. There are some who truly do not currently have the wherewithal to tithe - to give a full 10% or more of gross income to God. And so there is this category of 'offerings.' We give what we can to God. By the way, if it doesn't hurt a little bit or create a need for us to sacrifice something, our offerings are not very meaningful to God, as He measures our faith.

Designated Giving within the church. We have a number of opportunities for designated giving within the church. These work best if they are 'second mile' giving; giving beyond our basic tithe to support some additional ministries of goals of the church. This is not a place to play musical chairs, or to rob Peter to pay Paul. By doing those things, we only weaken the church, because taking from our tithe to cover other optional giving usually means there is not enough in the 'General Fund' to keep the church financially healthy and paying its bills.

Here are some current options for designated giving - the big ones:

- ***Faith Promise for Missions.*** Every year at the Missions Conference we make a promise to God, based on how much we perceive the Lord wants us to give to Missions - in addition to our Tithe. When we make that commitment, we need to stick with it throughout the year, so we can keep our promises to missionaries and missionary agencies that we have pledged to support. We are getting somewhat behind in this area for 2017.
- ***Capital Campaign.*** We are now beginning a capital campaign to accumulate funds to cover the down payment and renovation costs either for a) a new campus at North Pointe, or b) starting significant renovations, improvements, and expansion at our current site. This giving, again, would be in addition to our tithe.
- ***Royal Family Camp.*** This is one of our more significant investments. And although this ministry is headquartered at Salem, it is a para-church ministry and ecumenical (many churches) ministry. This giving, again, is optional, based on the Lord's guidance and our generosity, to give above and beyond our tithe.

Well, I hope that is helpful. Consider this not legalism, or rules, but just experienced based guidance on how to handle our giving, so that the church can remain healthy and on track financially! By the way, the Lord loves a joyful giver!

SALEM PRAYER CORNER . . . Please be in prayer for

✝ Ministry Needs:

- Potential Salem relocation to North Pointe
- Developing Stephen Ministry: Sandy Ibaugh
- Pastor Lascase, ministry in Haiti
- Renewal of Children's Ministry area
- Greater volunteer spirit at Salem

✝ Our Nation

- Renewal of national purpose
- Healing of racial divisions
- Collaboration of political parties

✝ Hospital, or recovery

- Daryl Kissinger, recovery from pneumonia
- Kristy Jones, recover from appendectomy
- Jen Ross, recovering from bad fall

- Margaretta Young, October hernia surgery
- Doris Guyer, heart failure, weakness
- Lisa Sattazahn, Knee Surgery recovery
- Jerry Paisley's grandchild, Tori
- Marcy Wolford, PTSD

✝ Grieving Families:

- Wilmot, loss of Jeana's mom, Sharon
- Amon Family, loss of nephew Kevin

✝ Suffering from pain, discomfort, illness, treatment

- Julianna Shubert, ongoing disorder
- Bob Paxton - compression fracture spine
- Brandon Kissinger, Chiari Malformation
- Ray Bricker, Parkinsons

LAST WORDS: A CHURCH FOR ALL!

I note that some churches specifically strive to reach "Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, White Collar, Suburbanites, 2.5 kids, one dog." They have specific demographic groups they are trying to reach, and receive in their flock and fold.

At Salem, we have no such goal. We want to receive, warmly, lovingly, everyone that the Lord sends here. Our aim is to be a warm and welcoming church, that is willing to walk side by side with all kinds of folks as they encounter Christ, wrestle with His word to them, and gain ground in their journey of faith.

So, we will see all kinds here. Rich, and poor. White and black. People with good habits. People struggling with bad habits. People who contribute to the public welfare. People who receive public assistance. People who have led charmed lives. People whose lives have been filled with horrors, and are trying to find wholeness and healing.

Jesus seemed to minister to all kinds. Should we do less?

In Christ; Pastor Art

