

L MESSAGE

Why compromise

"Integrity doesn't happen by accident. It happens on purpose".

Henry & Richard Blackaby

I really believe that God equates the water-tightness of your integrity with your leadership capacity and the amount he is willing to entrust to you. If your personal integrity is compromised in a way that causes those following you to lose all trust in you then you disqualify yourself from leadership. To draw on the last episode's analogy, if the integrity of your cube wall is breached to the point that your cube fills completely with water, you are finished in leadership. If however you decide to shore up the integrity of your life and leadership — strengthening the integrity of your cube walls so to speak — then the more flawless your character is and the more able and willing God is to trust you with the work of His kingdom.

So why do we compromise or threaten our own integrity when it comes to leading?

My initial reaction to this question was to say that ultimately we are all selfish, we do things to benefit ourselves, and further our own ambition at the cost of others — lie, cheat, steal, hurt others, disrespect them, etc. - we lack vital and continued concern for what our followers deserve from us their leader. Another avenue I contemplated was that perhaps we just like to prefer our needs, and desire for power above that of serving our people, in that it's more about self preservation, than servanthood. However as I considered the question further I became aware that this is by no means a comprehensive response to the question at hand. We also need to factor into our thinking the clarity (or absence of clarity) of the standards we have been given to follow. If there is no clarity, we cannot see the goal posts and therefore we don't know what it means to have integrity in that role. Sometimes the cause for a breach in integrity can be attributed to weaknesses that have grown and developed in us since childhood, and only now in the realm of leadership does the issue in question rise to the surface. Finally another aspect needed to be accounted for is what the apostle Paul would call sin, and how its infectious nature attempts to pollute all that is good. Having said all this though my conclusion so far as to the reasons why we compromise our integrity is rarely malicious, but is ALWAYS subtle.

This means that as leaders we need to be especially aware of the smallest temptations that present themselves, knowing that each dark opportunity to get ahead, in ways that breach the values we have claimed to adhere to, each threaten to jeopardise the integrity of our leadership.

Hopefully this insight into how we strengthen the integrity of our leadership cube will allow you to turn on the bilge pump and pump out all the unwanted water - dangerous values, habits, character traits and ultimately sin - that may have leaked into your life and caused the integrity of the cube walls in your life to crack.

Let me give you another tool, as we continue our thinking on these matters, which I have found to be extremely useful and remarkably accurate over the last few years. A friend of mine says: 'If there is something you don't like in someone else, it's most probably something that you don't like about yourself.' Let me give you an example: You find yourself always complaining to others about the relational distance others have toward you. The problem may be that you are being relationally distant to them. You find yourself angered by the fact that other leaders break the rules they have put in place. Sometimes however you bend your rules to suit you, but that's OK. You find yourself disappointed that others aren't being open and honest with you, but there are difficult things weighing on your heart that you feel need to be said to people but you haven't done so yet.

I have found that one of the most effective (and painful) ways to pinpoint your own character weaknesses is to write a list of the things that bug, irritate, disappoint, anger, frustrate or hurt you concerning others and then apply that list to your own life. Why not write that list this week and begin to work through some of these issues.