

Talent Plus Teachability, Character and Responsibility

“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.”

Ezekiel 22:30

Teachability Expands Your Talent

If you are a highly talented person, you may have a tough time with maintaining a teachable spirit. Talented people often think they know it all. Teachability is not so much about competence and mental capacity as it is about attitude. It is the desire to listen, learn and apply. It is the hunger to discover and grow. Talented individuals with teachable attitudes become talent-plus leaders.

Remember: It’s what you learn after you know it all that counts.

Do you have the right attitude about learning? Please consider the following truths about learning:

1. The more you are interested in _____, the greater the potential for growth.
2. Teachable people are always open to new _____ and willing to learn from others.
3. Learning is meant to be a _____ pursuit.
4. Talented people are often the most _____ to teach.
5. Pride is the number one _____ to teachability.

The Problems with Pride

- Pride distorts our perspective of _____.
- Pride closes our minds to new _____.
- Pride closes our minds to _____.
- Pride prevents us from admitting _____.
- Pride keeps us from making needed _____.

How to Overcome a Pride Problem

1. Recognize and _____ your pride.
2. Express _____ often.
3. Laugh at _____.
4. Make your friends your _____.
5. Learn to be a good _____.

Chinese Proverb: *Blessed are they who laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be entertained.*

Biblical Case Study: The Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

We think of Paul as a leader of enormous strength, talent and courage. It is interesting to note his comments about his weakness, fear and trembling (v. 3). Paul understood the devastating potential of pride. He knew that leaders must serve in humility, seek dependence on God and not seek the glory that God alone deserves. Paul draws three conclusions about his leadership:

1. I renounce human values – I will think the way God thinks. (vv. 1,2)
2. I renounce human strength – I will be weak and seek His strength. (v. 3)
3. I renounce human wisdom – I will ask God for wisdom and favor. (vv. 4,5)

Discussion: Do you believe you are a good listener? Do you have people in your life who you can go to for advice? Why or why not?

Character Protects Your Talent

Many people with talent climb quickly to the top, but the ones who have neglected to develop strong character rarely stay there long. Absence of strong character eventually topples them.

What exactly comprises character? The following four elements are essential:

1. _____ - The greatest victories are internal ones. We must learn to lead ourselves. Self-discipline is the ability to do what is right even when you don't feel like doing it.
2. _____ - Core values define what we believe and how we live. They give order and structure to a person's inner life. When the inner life is in order, a person can navigate almost anything the world throws at him.
3. Sense of _____ - You must know who you are. No man can long show one face to himself and another to the public without living a very confusing and ineffective life.
4. _____ - Integrity is the alignment of values, thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Character Is a Choice

Talent is a gift, but character is a choice. If you want it, you must develop it. Here is how to become a talent-plus person in the area of character:

1. Don't give up or give in to adversity. Character cannot be developed in ease and comfort.
2. Always do the right thing.
 - Cowardice asks the question: Is it safe?
 - Consensus asks the question: Is it popular?
 - Character asks the question: Is it right?
3. Take control of your life. Developing character is your personal responsibility.

Remember: While your circumstances are beyond your control, your character is not. Character, more than anything else, will make you a talent-plus person.

Biblical Case Study: Daniel (Daniel 6:1-10)

Daniel faced a crucially important choice. Would he submit to an ungodly law, or stick with his convictions? His core values guided his actions. Because of his values and principles, Daniel was able to decide quickly and confidently to do what was right. This man of godly character did the right thing even when he knew the consequences would be the den of lions.

Discussion: How would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 when it comes to self-discipline? How can you improve in this area? Take time to identify and discuss your core values.

Responsibility Strengthens Your Talent

Success on any major scale always requires a person to accept responsibility. In the final analysis, the one quality all successful people have is the ability to take on responsibility. Many people overvalue talent and undervalue responsibility. Here are several reasons we must learn to accept responsibility:

1. Responsibility provides the _____ for success.
2. Responsibility, handled correctly, leads to more _____.
3. Responsibility _____ ability and opportunity.
4. Responsibility, over time, builds a solid _____.

Consider the following steps to help you become a talent-plus person when it comes to responsibility:

1. Start _____ you are.
2. Choose your _____ wisely.
3. Stop _____ others.
4. Make tough _____ and stand by them.
5. Live beyond yourself by _____ others.
6. Learn responsibility's major _____:
 - Recognize that gaining success requires self-discipline.
 - When you start, finish.
 - Know when others are depending on you.
 - Don't wait for others to step up and take responsibility.

Biblical Case Study: King Zedekiah (Jeremiah 38:1-6)

Abuse of power occurs not only when evil leaders act out of selfishness, but when good leaders neglect to do what is right. King Zedekiah delegated an undesirable task to someone else, declaring himself powerless to act (v. 5). The king lacked the character and courage to do the right thing.

On the other hand, Jeremiah remained responsible to a call he didn't like. He proclaimed destruction against his own people. He faced his responsibility to obey God. He put responsibility before popularity (v. 3).

Assessment and Application

Assessment:

Are you facing a tough decision in your ministry, job, or personal life? Why are you not taking action?

Application:

Prayerfully seek God's guidance in making the tough decision. Make the decision and determine to follow through on that decision just as soon as possible.