

Balance Gifts, Character

How important is integrity – in business, in government, in religion, in our personal lives? It is the foundation upon which good character is built. With that in mind, how many leaders have ruined their lives and damaged the lives of others through immorality?

Newspaper headlines and electronic news reports regularly scream accounts of those who have great positions of responsibility, and then their moral shortcomings are exposed.

Character has become a crucial issue today precisely because of the myriad leaders in any realm of public endeavor who have fallen morally. Leaders must remember that they influence others beyond themselves; they never fall in a vacuum. And they must realize that replacing fallen leaders is a slow and difficult process.

All of us are subject to temptation to stray from what we have been taught to be ethical and honest. Speaking on this subject, John C. Maxwell, author, minister and developer of leaders, asks: “How can we guard against falling?”

Writing in his book, *Leadership Promises for Your Week*, he offers this advice: “First, we must take care not to emphasize the gifts of a leader over his or her character. We have an unhealthy tendency to see and reward the gift more than the character; but both are to be developed.”

Maxwell encourages leaders to “strike the following balance if we are to finish well:”

- What I Am – humble, convicted, visionary.
- What I Do – rely on God, do the right thing, set goals.
- What I Gain – power from God, high morale, credibility.

There is wisdom in Maxwell’s words – instruction we should take to heart.

We may also be comforted by God’s promise to us all:

If we say we have no sin, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, He will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrong things we have done (1 John 1:8-9).

– Beecher Hunter