

LIVING YOUR VALUES

CHARACTER MATTERS

[Moses] regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

– HEBREWS 11:26

The first resolution: Choose to be who God wants you to be.

The second resolution: Choose short-term pain for long-term gain.

And then Moses made a third life-shaping resolution: He chose God's values, not the world's. And that's why God used him! "He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." Moses made a value judgment. He clarified what mattered most to him.

What matters most in your life? What are the top three or four values in your life? Can you name them easily?

If you ask me, I'll tell you quite simply what they are for me: integrity, humility, and generosity. I decided more than 30 years ago that I wanted to build my life on integrity, humility, and generosity because they're the antidotes to the three traps of leadership.

Can you name the three most important values in your life right now? If you can't, then you certainly can't live by them. You're not living your values if you can't even name them. Before you go one more day, you need to sit down and ask, "What's most important to me? What are the top values in my life?" And you need to write them out, because until you clarify your values, you can't live by them.

Moses chose God's values over the world's values. Why is this so important? Because if you don't decide what's important in your life, other people are going to decide for you. They're going to push you into their mold. And you're going to live your life by their values, not yours.

You've got to decide what's most important to you and then live by those values.

Q. What are the three most important values in your life?

- Q. How did you determine that those are your most important values?
- Q. How are these three values shaping the way you live your life?
- Q. How are these values shaping the way you run your business?

Whether you intend it or not, your values impact your customers, suppliers, contractors and partners. In times of ease and times of stress, you have to set the example for your employees. It's the only way you can build trust in the workplace. After all, you can't ask your employees to follow the company values if you don't integrate them into your own daily work. Leaders go first!

But exhibiting these values yourself is only the beginning. You also must communicate them to your team and give performance feedback based on them. (Hint: this is just as true at home with your family as it is with your team in the workplace.)

- Q. Does your team know what the company's values are?
- Q. Do you tend to give feedback based on performance, or on values?

It's natural for us to give corrective feedback when things go wrong or when people make mistakes. If we're not careful, though, we can stifle the very values we want to promote, by sending the message that outcomes are more important than values.

This is just as true for the praise we give as well. For example, if one of your company values is *innovation* but you only give recognition when your team succeeds, how might that impact your team's willingness to try new ideas? Instead of leading with praise for their performance, challenge yourself to acknowledge the effort or creativity (or whatever other value) and why that's so important to the business. Show them you want to see more of that value in their work, even if the outcomes aren't a home run.

Having a clear set of values helps your employees understand what you stand for and gives them guidance for their work. And seeing you model these values in both word and action gives them an example to follow when integrating these values into their decision-making. And when these values are aligned with the teachings and example of Christ as seen in the Bible, our very lives become a witness to others.