

## Chapter 9

### Integrity and Morals

This book addresses many of the skills needed to work with the homeless and the addicted persons God brings through the door of Rescue Missions. Skill is important. More important is the lifestyle of those who will be representing Him.

Christ-followers are called to walk in the light. Those who represent Him to others are called to live blameless. What does this mean, and how on earth do we comply? The short answer is only in God's strength. Your salvation is based on His work. Your success in walking with Him is in His strength.

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord,  
continue to live your lives in Him.”  
Colossians 2:6(NIV)

Living blameless means I am being careful to be who I am in Christ. The inside is forgiven and clean, and the outside reflects that. Jesus did not affirm the hypocrites as His representatives. According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, when David uses the Hebrew word for “blameless” in Psalm 15:2, he means with “nothing in his outward activities or internal disposition that is odious to God.” *It may be odious to some humans but not to God.*

Working in the Mission, you will soon be accosted with someone accusing you of anything and everything, starting with “You say you are a Christian.” Scripture does not guarantee that everyone will speak the truth about you. In fact, Jesus warned you in Matthew 5:11 that people will falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Him. Our job is to make sure it is because of Him and not because of our own ungodly behavior or speech.

Philippians 2:14-15 “Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.”

Many of the Scriptures that talk about blamelessness include an instruction as you see in the Philippians passage above. Grumbling is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures as something that is obviously displeasing to the Lord. Our absence of grumbling makes us stand out as quite different from the people around us. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:8-11, puts grumbling in a list of sins such as sexual immorality, sins from our ancestors that we need to learn to abhor.

Warning: When your life starts to count for Christ, the enemy starts to try to derail you.

1 Peter 5:8 (NIV) “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

James 4:7 (NIV) "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Paul warns us in 2 Corinthians 2:11 to be aware of the schemes of the devil. Each of us has weak points and he is cunning in what area he chooses to attack us. One of those major areas is sexual immorality. There are specific ways you can beat the enemy at his own game. Remember, he is a deceiver and will try to minimize the outcomes of missteps (check out Eve's testimony).

### **Purity in the Workplace**

Prevention is much easier than recovery. You may have great intentions, but work with clients who have been used to being detractors in lives of those who reach out to help them. Here are specific ways you can prevent suggestive issues:

Never talk, counsel, or assist a client of the opposite gender in a closed room. Leave the door open. Refer the client to another staff person of the same gender, work in teams, or talk in open spaces where there are others in observable range. If you have cameras in your building, take the person to the location where the camera is picking up on the action.

I have recommended that single staff members who have responsibilities with persons of the opposite gender wear a wedding band. If you are questioned about it, you can make some reference to a reminder of your relationship with Christ.

Use discretion in your apparel. Women should be discreet in not exposing any area that could be seen as a temptation either to clients or to other staff. This includes plunging necklines and suggestive clothing. We are commanded in several places to not be a stumbling block. We also must understand that our clients have learned to measure people's values by their choice of clothing.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 and 7-8 "Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more...For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification."

Titus 2:11-15 (NIV) "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good."

Integrity and morals also include personal habits like honesty. The mission worker must maintain a blameless level of honesty. Your witness to clients will be destroyed if you do not refrain from all lying. Early on in my work in Rescue, I asked God to help me to stop all lying in my life. For me, this was more than telling falsehoods. I needed to stop misrepresenting, manipulating, or misleading. God, in His kindness, gave me the plan that if and when I violated the truth, I would have to go back to the person involved and confess. That was over 30 years and 3 lies ago. You see, when I had to confess once to my

boss, once to my co-worker, and once to a client, the cure was in. The cost exceeded the benefit. Accountability is vital in maintaining integrity.

Those who hear us identifying ourselves with Jesus watch us closely. Our speech must reflect Him. 2 Timothy 3:3 puts gossip and slander in the same context as murder, and Ephesians 5:3-4 puts crude joking in context with all impurity.

I highly recommend you take a self-analysis of character traits at <http://character-in-action.com/character-trait-definitions/>.

The author, Elizabeth Hamilton, has been involved in Rescue Mission work and has a wonderful site at [www.character-in-action.com](http://www.character-in-action.com).

So what can we do to avoid pitfalls in our character?

- Ephesians 5:4 Substitute thanksgiving.
- Philippians 4:8 Guard what you think about.
- Psalm 119:11 Memorize and meditate on God's word.

Hebrews 12:1 (NIV) "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."