

Listen To Your Mentors

These seven spiritual veterans offer sage advice to the  younger generation.

1. Live Life 'In Front of Jesus'

By Jack Hayford

I'm often asked, "What is the *one thing* above all others that is a leader's priority?" My answer has little to do with personal gifts or professional skill. But it is the thing that will become the foremost reason people will trust and follow you and the reason God will put His seal of approval on you. The one thing is integrity of heart.

Leaders with integrity of heart listen to the Holy Spirit's whispers, yield to His slightest "pings" of conscience and submit to His goads of correction or direction. It is found and sustained by daily choices of a conscience that *yields to*, and a conscientiousness that *abides in*, this sobering and inescapable truth: Every moment, I am *naked and exposed* in front of Jesus (see Heb. 4:13).

That I should live my life "in front of Jesus" is the counsel my mother engraved upon my heart as a child. It was never used to condemn, but spoken to teach me to live self-confronted by that reality. It has never produced perfection in me, but it has provided life-long protection from self-will, presumptuous indulgence or presumed self-righteousness. To live your life in front of Jesus will keep you on the sure course unto life, the pure path of love and in the securing fold of truth.

Jack Hayford is founding pastor of *The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, Calif.*, and former president of the *International Church of the Foursquare Gospel*.

2. Be God's Answer for a Hurting World

By Lisa Bevere

God created the woman as the answer to Earth's first problem: that man not be alone. Today there continue to be problems that only God's daughters can answer. Our world is heartsick and in need of intimate, safe connections. The problems loom so large, the needs are so vast, that our response must at once be intimate and enormous.

Lovely ones, I want you to rise up in strength, so you can enlarge the lives of others and hear the cry of the broken and captive. Any gift, ability or talent you have was given in order for you to improve the lives of others. There is something within you that this world desperately needs.

Together women of all ages are writing this chapter in the history of God's daughters. He is relating the mothers, daughters, sisters and grandmothers for their personal strength and spiritual growth, and for His kingdom purposes. Together we are stronger than any of us are standing alone.

Women are God's answer to hurting relationships, an impotent church and a dying world desperate for healing. You are a voice for those who've been silenced. You are beauty amid desolation. You, daughter, are God's answer.

Lisa Bevere *is an international Bible teacher and the author of numerous books, including Fight Like a Girl.*

3. Embrace the 'One Thing'

By David Shibley

A truly successful life is measured not by its duration but by its direction; not by its parties but by its purpose; not by what was amassed but by what was dispersed; not by the embracing of things but by embracing the *one thing*—to love Jesus supremely and to make Him loved by people everywhere.

To be effective in ministry, you must pursue God daily through prayer and Bible study, and guard your integrity. If you lose trust, it's game over. Stay true to Scripture—believe God and His Word—and keep evangelism and discipleship central.

Give high priority to cultivating relationships with God, your spouse, your family, and a few trusted friends, and always protect your “base,” which is your marriage and family. Allow yourself to grow from opposition—we can all learn from our critics—and let disappointments work for you. Steer clear of bitterness.

Discover and develop your dominant spiritual gifts and expect miracles. Pour into others, and do what it takes—count the cost, pay the price—to be faithful to your calling. You are the beneficiary of a century of the Spirit's outpouring. Live in such a way “that all will honor the Son” (see John 5:23). Inspire your generation to fulfill Christ's Great Commission.

David Shibley *is the founder of Global Advance, a ministry that equips church and marketplace leaders to help fulfill the Great Commission.*

4. Cultivate a Relationship With Jesus

By Mike Bickle

When looking back over 35 years of ministry, the single most

important truth that I can pass on to younger leaders is the absolute necessity of taking the time to cultivate a vibrant relationship with Jesus. The pressure to grow a ministry can be overwhelming. It comes with many hidden traps that can kill our spiritual lives. Many leaders today confess to living spiritually dry, disillusioned and burned-out lives. This is the inevitable result of pursuing ministry without a vibrant relationship with Jesus.

Jesus corrected the church in Ephesus for working hard in ministry without maintaining a fresh love and devotion to Him. He exhorted them: “You have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love” (Rev. 2:3-4, NKJV). Growth in ministry is good, but it can never replace your relationship with Jesus. Ministry service without the foundation of intimacy with Jesus inevitably leads to burnout and, thus, to far less ministry in the long haul.

Satan’s strategy is to distract from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Jesus (see 2 Cor. 11:3). He knows that if we lose this, we will be much more vulnerable to disillusionment. We must intentionally cultivate a responsive heart of love to Jesus. It does not happen automatically. It is something that we must set our hearts to do all the days of our lives.

Mike Bickle *is founder of the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Mo.*

5. Seek the Kingdom

By Bishop George McKinney

My first word of counsel to every leader is drawn from

biblical wisdom—"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). When a person's priorities are out of order, his life will be filled with confusion and God's given purpose will not be fulfilled.

Confirm your status as a citizen of the kingdom of God by acknowledging His authority over your time, talents, opportunities and treasures. When seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness is top priority, you will be able to experience faithfulness as a steward of God's blessings.

Second, "trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). It is essential for servant leaders in the kingdom to maintain an ongoing, intimate relationship of trust and obedience to God. Challenging situations tempt us to lean upon our own understanding. Always remember that God has promised to be with us at all times and that He delights in our acknowledging and trusting in Him. The kingdom is His kingdom, and we belong to Him; we are God's responsibility.

God's call to ministry is a call to preparation. It is not a call to success, but a call to faithfulness.

Bishop George McKinney *is pastor of St. Stephen's Cathedral Church of God in Christ in San Diego and a member of the denomination's 12-member General Board.*

6. Don't Be Offended

By Bob Mumford

Years ago, people built traps in order to catch birds. They would balance a box on a stick tied to a rope and birdseed or

other food would be placed under the box. When a bird came to eat the seed, the stick would trip, and the box would fall on the unsuspecting bird.

In Greek, that stick is called the *skandalizo*, translated “to offend.” When *skandalizo* becomes your portion—and it will—and you find yourself in a spiritually or emotionally dark box, it is often difficult to recover because you can feel like you’re fighting a tar baby. Every move is the wrong one. Every prayer sounds like a poorly verbalized whimper. All counsel seems petty or counterproductive.

Being scandalized or offended is one of the most binding traps into which a believer can fall. In many ways, it goes far beyond simply being hurt, deceived or ensnared by carnal sin; it has the capacity to totally undermine and destroy our walk with the Lord. When we have been scandalized, we really do not care what anyone thinks. We feel the early signs of deep-seated anger, and if we are not careful we can rapidly be sucked into the vacuum of rage and depression.

Jesus warned us about not being offended. We must allow God to do things that we would never expect. Maturity involves guarding against stumbling, falling into sin, or giving up our faith because our expectations were unmet.

Bob Mumford *is a veteran charismatic Bible teacher and founder of Lifechangers ministry.*

7. Lead By Example

By Nola Warren

During our years of ministry in Mexico, my husband and I have had the joy of mentoring hundreds of young men and women as they prepared for their God-given ministries. We always used

the apostle Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 11:1 as our guide: "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." We have always believed that is the best mentoring system of all, and it was one of the many truths we taught our own five children.

Always remember: Lead by example. As we are instructed to follow the example of Christ, we should remember the example He left. Jesus was love. He was sacrificial. He humbled Himself. He came to serve, not to be served. We need to love those who come to us for mentoring, sacrificing for them and never expecting them to serve us, but rather serving them ourselves.

And parents, don't forget about the little leaders of tomorrow living under your own roof. They also need to be loved and trained in the ways of our Lord.

Nola Warren *is a Bible teacher and longtime missionary to Mexico.*

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