

What is the preeminent quality of Christ's character that informs the life of disciples who lead others?

Leading disciples¹ fix their gaze on the holiness of Christ and seek to reflect this holiness in the character and conduct of their own lives. This holiness is a blend of moral purity, spiritual produce, sacred purpose and transcendent power.

1. State in your own words what this means?
2. What questions or issues does the core truth raise for you?

Peter was a man who had come face-to-face with his own sin. He had tried to talk Jesus out of going to the cross, bragged about how much more loyal he would be to Christ than the other disciples, and then bitterly denied Jesus when the pressure was on. Peter has also come face to face with God's amazing grace which moves him to this very striking appeal in this text.

I Peter 1:14-19

¹³Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴As obedient children, **do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.** ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶for it is written: **"Be holy, because I am holy."**

¹⁷Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, **live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.** ¹⁸For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the **empty way of life** handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1. How could "ignorance" make a person "conform to...evil desires" (v. 14) or pursue an "empty way of life" (v. 18)? Give an example of this.
2. Based on your own experience or observations, what are some of the "evil desires" that might actually lurk behind the actions of someone in leadership?
3. What does the word *holy* mean or suggest to you?
4. What does it mean to "live...as strangers here in reverent fear" (v. 17)?

¹ referring to the kind of leadership Christ calls us to...leadership and discipleship are inexorably linked together as we are first disciples and second, disciples called to lead

Isaiah 6 recounts the calling of the prophet Isaiah into the service of God. These events took place shortly after the death of a beloved king, Uzziah. He was the most powerful being that Isaiah had ever known. He was a brilliant statesman, an uncommonly strong moral leader, and charming public figure. He had shepherded Israel for 50 years and when he died, all of Israel went into mourning as never again would they encounter such greatness.

Isaiah 6:1-8

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“**Holy, holy, holy** is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

⁶ Then one of the **seraphs** flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

1. The temple in Jerusalem would have been by far the largest, most glorious structure Isaiah had ever seen (especially with King Uzziah’s restoration efforts). But what does verse 1 tell us about the magnitude and glory of God? What words are used to describe God’s glory?
2. “Seraphs” were angelic warriors of staggering strength and speed. In verse 4 we’re told that the sound of their voices created a cataclysm of shock and awe in the temple. The reference to their “feet” is likely a euphemism referring to their “private parts.” What do you think is the significance of these mighty beings covering up their eyes and “feet”?
3. What do the seraphs say about the character and influence of God in verse 3? Why repeat “holy” three times?
4. What was Isaiah’s emotional and spiritual response to this encounter (v. 5) and why?
5. Have you ever felt anything like this when contemplating God’s nature? How do you relate to this experience of worship?
6. How does the Lord alleviate Isaiah’s sense of moral disintegration?
7. Why do you think Isaiah volunteered himself when God called (v. 8)?

Holiness Health Check:

1. What aspect of Jesus' character do you find particularly compelling?
2. Take a moment to do a fearless moral inventory of the purity of your character. List as least two things in which, if left unaddressed, might be a stumbling block to those who follow your lead?
3. Evaluate the presence of the fruit of the Spirit in your life. Place a check next to the fruits you feel are most abundant in your life right now.

	Love. I desire the good of others and express this in my actions, seeking to love others as Christ loves me.
	Joy. I remain content, hopeful and thankful, even in the midst of difficult circumstances.
	Peace. I release anxiety about the past, present and future by putting my faith in God's presence, promises and providence.
	Patience. I demonstrate forbearance in the face of others' sins, fears and limitations, knowing that God does this with me.
	Kindness. I show practical consideration and compassion toward others, meeting needs in ways felt by them.
	Generosity. I use my resources as I believe Jesus would, expressing to God and extending to others my sense of the grace I've been given.
	Faithfulness. I remain true to God's Word and calling, keeping my promises and persevering in the face of trials.
	Gentleness. I exhibit sensitivity and tenderness in my treatment of others, restraining the force I could exercise.
	Self-Control. I demonstrate power, through the Spirit, to direct my passions and appetites rather than having them direct me.

4. Place a * next to any of the fruit listed (in number 3) that you particularly sense needs to be growing in you.
5. What aspects of your life do you regard as *holy*—set apart or consecrated—to God? How does this show?
6. What are you still holding back—unwilling or not yet able to dedicate to God?