

LIFE GUIDED BY CORE SET PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

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Introduction

Guiding Principles for your Positive lifestyle Strategy

When you're developing a "*Positive lifestyle*," you need to define principles that will guide your lifestyle decisions based on your own personal beliefs and value system. These guiding principles should encompass your personal core values as well as family core values. They should also reflect your cultural and religious beliefs.

The ideas presented here are based on virtues that transcend most cultures and are universally valued by all spiritual and religious beliefs. They merely serve as guidelines and *food for thought* to help define principles important to you, clarify personal core values and define your own family values.

FOR EXAMPLE

Suppose your child comes home from school and tells you their teacher was talking about core values and proceeds to ask you; What are your *values*? ... and... What's really important to you? Would you be able to answer that... on the spot? Many people can't instantly answer those questions.

Not to say they don't have any values, perhaps they're just caught off guard or taken unaware at the particular moment.

Definition of Keywords and Their Meaning

WHAT IS PRINCIPLES?

To define principles in the personal context, we perceive them to be rules or beliefs governing morally correct behavior and attitudes. More specifically, your personal convictions and commitments to what is true to your heart, the personal code of ethics in which you put your faith in. Guiding principles root from the virtues you value most and will not abandon or compromise under any condition.

FOR Example: "The Golden Rule"; Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

This is by far one of the most important principles you can promote as your lifestyle. If you abandon this principle, then you disregard the virtues of *Justice, Respect, Fairness* and many others such as *Caring, Consideration, Kindness, Courtesy* and *Thoughtfulness*.

Another principle might be the biblical principle in the "*Ten Commandments*": **Thou Shalt Not Steal**". If you were to violate this principle you would disregard the many virtues such as *Honesty, Trustworthiness, Consideration, Justice, Self-discipline, Respect* and *Integrity*.

Consequently, your principles stem from your core values. In order to define your personal core values and family values you need to clarify which "*Virtues*" shape those values.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VALUES AND VIRTUES?

WHAT ARE VALUES?

The definition of values can be categorized into either "*Personal Preference Values*" or "*Principle Values*."

John Heenan, founder, and Director of "*The New Zealand Foundation for Character Education Inc.*" defines values this way; "Values that are "*Preferences*" are personal choices that are subjective and changeable at any time." An example may be your value for material things such as, your house or car or perhaps your special value put on a good education. You may likely adjust these personal preference values as your life circumstances changes.

"On the other hand values that are "*Principles*," like honesty and compassion and fairness, are consistent, and objective." The greatest difference, is that "*Preference*" values are something: "*To Have*"... While values that are "*Principles*" are something "*To Be*", like honest, kind, compassionate and responsible. (Acquired through virtues)

What are Virtues?

When we define virtue, we deem it as objective, *an actual quality considered morally good or desirable in a person*. Virtues are the foundation to your core value system, the very essence that make up good character.

In addition to the above-mentioned virtues, *Patience, Consideration, Trustworthiness* and *Forgiveness* are just a few more examples.

Core Christian Principles and Values

After a comprehensive analysis of the definition and root meaning of Principles and Values, we will be looking at some basic Christian Principles and Values every Faithful Child of God should possess to live a life well pleasing to God.

1. LOVE:

WHAT IS THAT THING CALLED “LOVE”?

There are three types of Love translated from the Greek used in the bible. The analysis of these three types of Love will help us understand the true “LOVE” required for this discussion.

- Eros Love- Also known as erotic love. It is based on strong feelings toward another, it usually occurs in the first stages of a man to woman romantic relationship.
- Philo’s Love- Philo’s Love is a love based on friendship between two people. Philo’s Love is a love based on “give and take” a love where two people benefit from each other in a mutual way, a love where one partner is still concerned with what he / she can take, but at the same time is also concerned with his / her partners benefit and therefore give back in turn. Philo’s - is a higher type of love than Eros.
- Agape Love-Agape Love is an Unconditional love. Agape Love is above Philo’s and Eros love. It is a love that is totally selfless, where a person gives out love to another person even if this act does not benefit him / her in any way. Whether the love given is returned or not, the person continue to love ~(even without any self-benefit). **Agape Love** – is the expression of God’s love towards man, as declared in Rom.5:8. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still Sinners, Christ died for us”. In 1Cor.13:3 – 13, Apostle Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote about the transformational nature of love. ***“3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up. 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. NKJV.***

LOVE – ‘is the chain that binds every faithful Christian together in one accord’.

In **John 13:34-35**, Jesus declared:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another."

2. SELF – CONTROL

*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty. And he who rules his Spirit than he who takes a city. **Prov.16:32.***

In an “anything goes” society, self-control sometimes becomes a somewhat foreign value. But embracing Christian principles means controlling one’s words and behaviors. The premise of reliance upon God is that His will and plan matters. When speaking about core Christian values, it’s essential to include self-control. This is the last of the nine Christian values Paul speaks about in Galatians.5:23, as regards to the fruit of the spirit. It is vital for all Christians.

3. HUMILITY

Humility or being humble is a quality of being courteously respectful of others. It is the opposite of aggressiveness, arrogance, boastfulness, and vanity. Acting with humility does not in any way deny our own self-worth. Rather, it affirms the inherent worth of all persons. Humility is exactly what is needed to live in peace and harmony with all persons.

It dissipates anger and heals old wounds. It allows us to see the dignity and worth of all God's people. Humility distinguishes the wise leader from the arrogant power-seeker. In (Matthew 20:20-28) the mother of the two Sons of Zebedee humble her self-kneeling before the Lord requesting the Lord to grant her two Sons to be with the Lord, one at the right and the other by the left hand side of Jesus.

4. INTEGRITY

can be a slippery word to pin down. Integrity is derived from the root word “integer.” In math, an integer is a whole number (1, 2, 3, 4) as opposed to a fraction. So, the idea of integrity concerns wholeness, completeness, or entirety. It’s also related to another word - *integrated*. Therefore, integrity is when all aspects of our lives are integrated and working together as a whole. A person who says one thing, but does another is fragmented. That’s called hypocrisy. A person who does one thing today but does a contrary thing tomorrow is also fragmented. That’s called duplicity. But a person who speaks and acts with integrity has consistency and has all aspects of life working together as a whole.

As Christians, we should naturally be people of high integrity, but many struggle with living out what they believe. Instead of being examples of faithfulness and consistency, people often wind-up being examples of hypocrisy and duplicity.

To sum up the lesson on integrity, is the story drawn from Daniel's life of integrity. In chapter 2 of Daniel, God delivered Daniel and his three friends. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream he could not understand; neither could his counselors and wise men reveal or interpret the dream. In anger, the king commanded the execution of all the wise men of the land, including Daniel and his friends.

In the providence of God, Daniel learned of the king's dilemma, then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision of the king known to his three friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning the king's dream.

Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision, so Daniel was able to reveal to the king his dream and its meaning, sparing his own life and the lives of the other Babylonian wise men.

In chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar created a great golden image, before which the people of all nations were to bow in worship. Daniel's three friends refused to bow down. Again, in anger, Nebuchadnezzar threatened them with death if they did not obey his decree.

Refusing to obey, they were thrown into a fiery furnace. God was present with them there and preserved them from death, injury, and even the smell of fire. The king was so impressed he issued a decree guaranteeing the Jews freedom to worship their God without hindrance.

5. PRAYER

What is prayer?

Prayer is a request or the act of communicating with God. When we pray, we seek God's companionship as we journey through the ups and downs of our life's journey. Prayer is a fundamental part of a Christian life. prayer is the Christian's greatest weapon in times of challenges.

Here are Some Reasons why Prayer is Important for Christians

1. Prayer is important for Christians because prayer opens communication with God.
2. Prayer strengthens our faith and trust in God.
3. Prayer allows us to intercede on behalf of another person.
4. Prayer brings comfort and peace.
5. Prayer gives us the opportunity to turn our concerns over to God.

6. Prayer provides a way to show others they are cared for and loved. *And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed. “(Deut. 31:8).*

Finally, Brethren, be courageous, pray without ceasing, (1 Thess. 5:17).