

Instructions to Christians Who Are in Positions of Authority (9).

1. The same attitude traits that should characterize those under authority should also characterize those who are in positions of authority (9a).
 - a. Wholeheartedly commit yourself to doing the will of God (6b).
 - i. As a leader, you are tasked with finding God's will (5:17).
 - ii. As a leader, you must lead in the accomplishment of God's will (1 Corinthians 11:1).
 - b. Cultivate an attitude of goodwill toward those under your authority (7).
 - i. Don't impugn the motives of those under your authority (1 Corinthians 13:5).
 - ii. Avoid the Fundamental Attribution Error: the tendency to attribute the negative behaviors of others to their intentions and personalities, while attributing their own negative behaviors to environmental factors.
 - c. Recognize that you are under the authority of an ultimate master, the Lord Jesus Christ (7).
2. Those in authority should not intimidate their subordinates (9b).
 - a. Threatening, intimidating language is not to be used among Christians (cf. 4:15).
 - b. Intimidation is a poor discipleship tool.
 - c. Employers need to learn how to motivate employees without the use of threatening.
 - i. Proverbs 18:21 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue..."
 - ii. A threatening leader isolates himself from the very ones that can help him most.
 - d. Threatening heaps all the responsibility for change on the other person. A wise leader learns to master conflict resolution by establishing trust. When there is trust, conflict becomes nothing more than the pursuit of truth. It is not only okay, but desirable.
3. Those in authority must remember that they will give account to their Master in Heaven (9c).
 - a. All our good works are being noticed by the One who really cares and will be rewarded (8c)!
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."
 - c. Just as God will hold employers accountable for the way they stewarded their employees, employers should hold their employees accountable for their responsibilities.
 - i. Holding employees accountable is a selfless act that's rooted in love.
 - ii. To hold someone accountable is to care about them enough to risk having them blame you for pointing out their shortcomings.
 - iii. Many deceive themselves into believing that they don't hold others accountable because they love them too much to hurt their feelings; in reality this reluctance is mutually harmful.
4. Those in authority must avoid favoritism (9d).
 - a. God does not show His children preferential treatment and neither should we.
 - b. Deuteronomy 10:17 "For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:"
 - c. James 2:1 "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons."

Conclusion:

1. Are you treating others with goodwill?
2. Are you relying on intimidation, rather than growing through mutually beneficial conflict resolution?
3. Are you leading with a constant realization that you will give account for the way you lead others?
4. What processes have you put in place to avoid favoritism in your leadership?