

# What Makes a Good Manager?



## SABBATH—FEBRUARY 3

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Hebrews 11:8–12; Romans 4:13, 18–21; Matthew 6:24; Hebrews 9:14.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “This is what people should think about us: We are servants of Christ [Jesus]. We are the ones God has trusted with his secret truths. A person who is trusted with something must show that he is worthy of that trust” (1 Corinthians 4:1, 2, ICB).

**SOME COMPANIES** are famous for the things they sell. These companies sell their things under a special name that almost everyone knows. A group of things sold under a special name is called a “brand.” Managers of God’s gifts also are known by a special name and brand. Their special name is Christians. People know we are Christians by the special things we do and the love we show. This love is our “brand.”

A Christian manager’s life shows Jesus’ love. As Christian managers, we show Jesus’ love when we are connected to Him. We show we belong to Jesus when we live in the same way He lived. Then we show that our lives are blended with His (1 Corinthians 6:17).

This week, we study what makes a good manager. We will learn that we must be loyal managers of God’s truth. We must guard this truth, obey it, and teach it to other people. Our study about being good managers will help our connection with God grow stronger. It will make us better managers. As managers, we must remember that God is love. This love will become our “brand” that will have power to change every part of our lives, now and in the future.



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## LOYALTY TO GOD: PART 1 (Hebrews 11:8–12, 17–19)

“A person who is trusted with something must show that he is worthy of that trust” (1 Corinthians 4:2, ICB). It is important for a loyal manager of God’s gifts to fight and win “the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12, NLV). God is loyal. We also become loyal as we allow God to work in us. Being loyal means staying true to the things we know are right, even during spiritual battles.

Battles between right and wrong and good and evil are fought every day. They will be fought in the future. After all, our faith is a fight against evil. A good manager in every place or time and in every fight of faith will show he or she is loyal to God. What if you love riches? Then your only hope is to stay loyal to God and remember His warning about the dangers of loving money. What if you want to be famous? Then you must stay loyal to what the Bible says about having a heart that is not proud. What if you fight against thoughts that are full of sin? Then you must stay loyal to God’s promise to make you holy. What if you want power? Then you must stay loyal to what God says about being a servant to all. The choice to be loyal or disloyal often is made in an instant. What happens after that choice can change our lives forever.

**Read Genesis 15:6; Hebrews 11:8–12, 17–19; and Romans 4:13, 18–21. What do these verses teach about being loyal?**



**With deep feeling, Luther put his left hand on the Bible. He raised his right hand to heaven. And he promised to stay loyal to God.**

In Hebrew, being loyal means to believe or trust. The same Hebrew word also gives us the word “amen.” “Amen” means to be “solid” or “firm.” Loyalty means God tested us. And we stayed firm in our loyalty to His plan.

Here is a story that shows loyalty. It is about a man named Martin Luther. Luther lived in the 1500s. He was a church Reformer. Reformers are people who work to improve things. Luther wanted to improve the Catholic Church. He stood before the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire [Kingdom] to defend his beliefs. “With deep feeling, Luther put his left hand on the Bible. He raised his right hand to heaven. And he promised to stay loyal to God. He would be loyal to what he believed, even if that meant he died.”—J. H. Merle d’Aubigné, *History of the Reformation [Religious Awakening] of the Sixteenth [16th] Century* (New York: The American Tract [Short religious book] Society [Company], 1848), volume 2, book 7, page 260, adapted.

**LOYALTY TO GOD: PART 2 (Matthew 6:24)**

**“No one can be a slave to two masters. He will hate one master and love the other. Or he will follow one master and refuse to follow the other. So you cannot serve God and money at the same time’ ” (Matthew 6:24, ICB). What does this verse teach us about loyalty to God?**

God’s name means “ ‘Jealous’ ” (Exodus 34:14, NlrV). You will recall from lesson 2 that “jealous” means God “carefully protects what belongs to Him.” Our knowing this meaning of God’s name should help us all to see that we need to be loyal to God. What does it mean to be loyal to a “jealous” God? It means we show our loyalty to Him by our love. Loyalty to God shows who we are in the fight of faith. Our loyalty also encourages us to fight.

Our loyalty is very important to God (1 Kings 8:61). Loyalty does not mean following a list of rules. Instead, loyalty shows our beliefs, faith, and trust in God.

**Read 1 Chronicles 28:9. What does this verse teach us about why we need to be loyal to God?**

We can choose to be loyal. Or we can choose to disobey God. But we must give God our loyalty in the same way that we give Him our love. We must offer our loyalty and love to God as free gifts. Here is a word picture that helps us understand better what this idea means. In war, sometimes troops on the front lines are forced to stay and fight. What if these troops leave? Then their leaders would shoot them. So, these troops stay. But they do not stay because of loyalty. That is *not* the service God asks from us.

Now let us look at Job. God did not warn Job about all the pain and ruin that would destroy his family, his belongings, and his health. Many awful things happened to Job. But he never stopped trusting, loving, and serving God. Instead, Job chose to do what was right. Job’s loyalty is shown in these famous words, “ ‘Even if God kills me, [I will] still [continue to] put my hope in him’ ” (Job 13:15, NlrV). Job was loyal to God even after bad things happened to him. He is an example of a loyal servant of God.

**Are you loyal to God? If yes, how loyal are you? How can you show your loyalty more?**



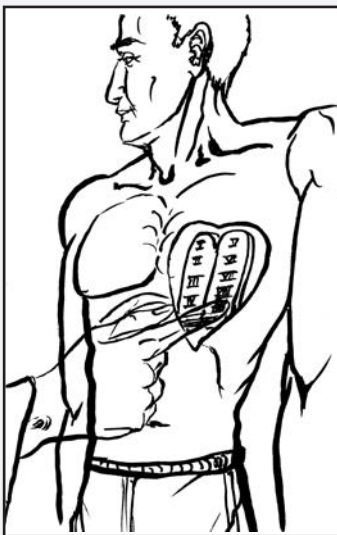
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## HEARTS AND MINDS WITH NO GUILT (Hebrews 10:19–22)

There are many precious things we can own. They include health, love, friends, and a wonderful family. All these are special gifts from God. But maybe the most important gift from God is a mind with no guilt.

**Read Hebrews 10:19–22 and 1 Timothy 4:1, 2. As these verses show us, what does it mean to have a “sense of . . . right and wrong [that] has been destroyed” (1 Timothy 4:2, NlrV) and to have an “understanding . . . destroyed by a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:2, ICB)?**

Our sense of right and wrong helps us to do good and to make the best choices in life. Where does the power to make the best choices come from? It comes from having God’s law written on our hearts and minds. Then we can understand right from wrong and choose what is right. God wrote His law on the heart of Adam. But sin almost erased God’s law. And not just in Adam, but also in Adam’s children and all who came after them. Only small pieces of the knowledge of God’s law stayed in their minds. But even then, “they show that in their hearts they know what is right and wrong, just as the law commands” (Romans 2:15, ICB). Sadly, Adam failed to obey this law. But Jesus succeeded where Adam failed. He succeeded because God’s law was from the very beginning “within [His] heart” (Psalm 40:8, NLV).



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**Read what Paul says in Hebrews 9:14. What does Paul say will heal our minds from the damage of sin? What gives our minds the power to know and choose right from wrong?**

“The mind must be made clear and clean. And it must stay that way. A clear and clean mind will be able to choose between good and evil.”—Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character [Thoughts, feelings, and actions], and Personality*, volume 1, pages 327, 328, adapted. So, God’s law must be written on the heart of the believer (Hebrews 8:10).

**Who has not fought against the awful power of a guilty heart and mind? Every sinner knows that this battle can be a curse. How can thinking about Jesus and His death on the cross for your sin help free you from this curse?**

## OBEYING GOD (1 John 5:2, 3)

Abel bowed at his altar. On his altar was a lamb. God told Abel to bring this lamb as a gift to Him. Nearby, Cain bowed at his altar. But on Cain's altar there was fruit instead of the lamb God asked for. Both brothers brought gifts to God. But only one brother brought what God asked for. God accepted the lamb Abel brought. But God rejected the fruit that Cain had grown from the ground. Both brothers understood very clearly what God wanted them to do. But only one brother obeyed the Lord's command (Genesis 4:1–5).

“Abel died because Cain refused to obey God or accept His plan to be saved by the blood of Jesus. The lamb that Abel put to death pointed to Jesus' future death on the cross. Cain refused to accept this gift of blood. This blood pointed to the blood Jesus would someday give to all the people who have ever lived on this earth.”—Ellen G. White Comments [Thoughts], *The SDA Bible Commentary [Explanation]*, volume 6, page 1109, adapted.

Obedience starts in the mind. It means doing what God commands us to do. The power to obey comes from God. And we must be willing to obey Him. Yes, we choose to obey God. But God never forces us to obey Him. Instead, we choose to obey Him because we love Him. When we love God and serve Him, then we will want to do everything God asks. Obedience also means that God decides what we must do, not us. Cain's choice is a warning. It shows us what happens when someone does what he or she wants to do instead of what God asks.

**Read 1 John 5:2, 3; Romans 1:5; and Romans 10:16, 17. What do these verses teach us about the meaning of obedience? We are saved only by faith. We are not saved by any good works that we might do or by obeying the law. So then, what does true obedience mean to the Christian?**

We do not obey to be saved. We obey because we believe and trust God as Abraham did. Obedience shows our faith. Samuel told Saul, “‘Is the Lord pleased as much with burnt gifts as He is when He is obeyed? See, it is better to obey than to give gifts. It is better to listen than to give the fat of rams’ ” (1 Samuel 15:22, NLV).

**What does Samuel mean by “‘it is better to obey than to give gifts’ ”? How can this saying help us not to fall into the trap of believing we can be saved by our works?**



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## SOMEONE GOD CAN TRUST (Luke 16:10–12)

**What does Luke 16:10–12 teach us about why we need to be dependable? Why is it so important for a loyal servant of God to be someone God can trust?**

The importance of being dependable is seen everywhere in the Bible. In one Bible story we read about four top leaders of the family of Levi who were asked to guard the sanctuary. The sanctuary was the place where people worshiped God in the Old Testament. The family of Levi guarded the rooms full of treasure at night. They also had the keys that opened the doors every morning (1 Chronicles 9:26, 27). They had this job because they could be trusted.

People need to be able to trust us. Trust is part of being a good manager. Good managers also trust God. They will do all they can to be dependable and to show they are worthy of God's trust too (Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Kings 8:56). Being dependable means that you always can be trusted to do what you say you will do (2 Kings 12:15). So, it is important for us to be someone other people can trust. Then other people will see God in our lives and come to know Him.

Daniel is another example of a dependable person. The rulers of two kingdoms depended on Daniel to tell them the truth. Often what Daniel said did not agree with the magicians and wise men who also served the kings. But Daniel shared the truth without any fear. Daniel's life shows us how important it is to be someone that people can trust. This trust is one of the best gifts we can have. Other people will see that our beliefs are very good because they can trust us. Now, we cannot get people to trust us right away. It takes time. But we start earning their trust by staying loyal in even the little things in life.

Soon others start to notice we can be trusted. They notice that we will not change our behavior because of false praise or what others think of us. We do not let lies lead us to do wrong. So, people begin to respect and depend on us. We show them who we are and who we are becoming. We show them we are ready to live in heaven. "We must be loyal, dependable citizens of the kingdom of Jesus. Then people who are not Jesus' followers will see a true example of the riches, the goodness, the mercy, the tenderness, and the kindness of God's kingdom."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies [Messages] for the Church*, volume 6, page 190, adapted.



**The family of Levi guarded the rooms full of treasure at night. They also had the keys that opened the doors every morning (1 Chronicles 9:26, 27). They had this job because they could be trusted.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** This week, we learned about being a good manager. Managers obey God and can be trusted. They are loyal. But did you know that good managers also understand they are responsible for their behavior? “Satan’s plan always has been to steer minds away from Jesus to man. It is also Satan’s plan to make men feel they are not responsible for their actions and the choices they make.”—Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, page 213, adapted.

Jesus must become the reason we live our lives and the reason for who we are. Then we will accept His leading. Faith, loyalty, a guilt-free heart and mind, being dependable, and feeling responsible for what we do will be shown in our lives. In this way, God makes us new people in Him (Psalm 139:23, 24).

So, to be a good manager, you must be responsible for your actions. You must be willing to accept blame when you do wrong. The Bible teaches that this duty is an important law in life. In the same way, Jesus was responsible for the things He did (John 8:28) while He lived on earth. We also must be responsible for the things we do. We must be willing to accept the blame for every “‘empty word [we] have spoken’” (Matthew 12:36, NIV) and “‘every word [we] have spoken that was not important’” (NLV). “‘The man who receives much will have to give much’” (Luke 12:48, NLV). What is the biggest danger to our success at being responsible for what we say or do? It is wanting to give to someone else the work God gives us. “Let us always remember that we have been trusted to take care of things that do not belong to us. If these things were ours, we could do anything we want with them. We could choose to give our duty to other Christians and leave our work to them. But we cannot act in this way. The Lord has made each one of us His managers.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies [Messages] for the Church*, volume 7, page 177, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How do the different parts of a manager’s job connect? What if we were lazy in one part of our job as managers? Could this cause us to be lazy in another part? If yes, how?
- ② Loyalty is valuable. But can we be loyal to someone or something in a way that is not good? If yes, how can we be sure that we do not place our loyalty in the wrong person or thing?



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