

# Seven Keys to Personal Growth

## Loyalty

1 Cor. 15:58

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. I want to begin this morning, first of all, by thanking you for the opportunity to be with during this Gospel Meeting. I want to thank the elders, as well, as Saul for the invitation.
2. The elders have asked that I address the area of “Personal Growth.”
3. We are going to discuss “Seven Keys to Personal Growth.”
  1. Loyalty
  2. Responsibility
  3. Courage
  4. Determination
  5. Initiative
  6. Orderliness
  7. Decisiveness
4. A “key” is used to lock or unlock something. It is also used in the sense of importance. In our study we are trying to unlock seven traits that will lead us to be a person who is mighty in the eyes of God.
5. This morning we will be discussing “Loyalty.” Root “loyal”: “steadfast in allegiance or duty.” Although the English word Loyal is not found in KJV, the concept certainly is.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **1. EXAMPLES OF LOYALTY.**

1. 2 Sam. 23:1-39
2. Army Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Service, Honor, Integrity, & Courage.

#### **2. HOW TO DEMONSTRATE LOYALTY.**

1. I Must Adjust My Schedule to Meet God’s Plans (Heb. 10:25). Example: Owl
2. I Must Stand with God and His people (Ex. 32:1ff). Example: Goose
3. I Must Be a Reliable Messenger (Balaam (Num. 22-25). Example: Honey Bee
4. I Must Know and Follow Jesus (Mat. 16:24; Mark 1:17). Example Grizzly Bear (Hos. 13:8).

# Seven Keys to Personal Growth

## Responsibility

Heb. 5:8-9

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. We are continuing our series on “Seven Keys to Personal Growth.”
2. Our first key was “Loyalty.”
3. Our second key is “Responsibility.”
4. Brethren, we must learn to accept responsibilities if we are ever going to grow properly.
5. We are, obviously, living in a time when people are unwilling to accept responsibility for anything they do. The current economic and political situation is a clear example of people denying responsibility.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **1. EXAMPLES OF RESPONSIBILITY.**

1. Mat. 25:14-30
2. Mat. 28:18-20
3. An article in the Harvard Business Review called “Market Myopia” talked about how some people didn’t understand what business they were in.
  - a. For example: The railroad people didn’t realize that they were in the transportation business; they thought they were in the railroad business. Had they realized they were in the transportation business they would have invested in airplanes. The telegraph people thought they were in the telegraph business instead of the communication business. In 1886 they could have bought all the telephone patents for \$40,000. So obviously these people didn’t know what business they were in.
  - b. I use to think that these guys were really dumb because they didn’t know what business they were in. Then I asked myself, “What business am I in?”

#### **2. HOW TO DEMONSTRATE RESPONSIBILITY**

1. Use All My Energy to Fulfill God’s Plan (Phil. 2:25-30). Example: Woodcock or Timber Doodle.
2. I Must Complete the Tasks I am Given (John 4:34; 5:36; 19:30). Example: Pied-billed Grebe.
3. I Must Realize the Importance of the Task Assigned to Me (1 Sam. 15). Example: The Crow.

# Seven Keys to Personal Growth

## Courage

Joshua 1:1-9

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. We are continuing looking at seven keys to personal growth.
2. Thus far, we have considered loyalty and responsibility.
3. This morning we are going to notice that if we are going to grow personally into the warrior that God wants us to be; we must have courage!
4. "The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity. The fears are paper tigers. You can do anything you decide to do. You can act to change and control your life; and the procedure, the process is its own reward" Amelia Earhart.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **1. EXAMPLES OF COURAGE.**

1. Num. 13.
2. Josh. 14.

#### **2. HOW TO DEMONSTRATE COURAGE.**

1. I Must Respond to Danger without Thought of Retreat (1 Sam. 14).

Example: Weasel.

2. I Must Follow Difficult Instructions in the Face of Danger (2 Kings 5).

Example: The Wood Duck.

3. I Must Confront My Opponents with the Confidence that I Will

Ultimately Succeed (1 Sam. 17). Example: Skunk.

# Seven Keys to Personal Growth

## Determination

Acts 11:27-29

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. We are here to help us develop certain characteristics or traits that will help us be the mighty men and women of God that He wants us to be.
2. Determination: "is the quality that you show when you have decided to do something and you will not let anything stop you." A Texas Ranger once said that there is no stopping a man when he is right and he knows it.
3. We are going to look at some lessons learned from the book of Nehemiah about determination.

### **DISCUSSION:**

1. **THEY FOLLOWED A WELL DEvised PLAN**
  1. Nehemiah 2:12ff, Nehemiah made a
2. **THEY WORKED AS A DETERMINED BODY**
  1. 1 Corinthians 15:58
  4. We must be determined not to allow persecution, gossip, difficulty, failures, or anything - to keep us from accomplishing much for the Lord
3. **THEY WORKED AS A UNIFIED BODY**
  1. They worked as a unified body - the men working with their hands, the guards who placed their lives between them and the enemy, and the rulers backing the work in every way.
  2. They achieved a common goal - working together, and not against each other
  3. We can never live up to our full potential until we work together as a unified body.
4. **THEY LOOKED ON THEIR WORK AS SERVICE TO GOD**
  1. These mentioned in Nehemiah 3 looked on the work - not as a menial task, not as a project of Nehemiah - but as service to God.
  2. Remember Nehemiah 2:18-20 ... they realized that this was the Lord's work
  3. Colossians 3:23

# Seven Keys to Personal Growth

## Initiative

Mark 2:1-5

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Initiative: “readiness to embark on bold new ventures.”
2. Brethren, we have noticed that if we are going to be the mighty men and women of God that He wants us to be we must first be loyal, then responsible, then courageous, and last week we noticed that we must be determined.
3. Today we are going to notice that we must have initiative to accomplish God’s Will in our lives.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **1. We Must be Revived!**

1. There is a need to be revival: If all the SLEEPING folks would WAKE up,
2. And all the LUKEWARM folks would FIRE UP,
3. And all the DISHONEST folks would CONFESS up,
4. And all the DISGRUNTLED folks would SWEETEN up,
5. And all the DISCOURAGED folks would CHEER up,
6. And all the DEPRESSED folks would LOOK up,
7. And all the ESTRANGED folks would MAKE up,
8. And all the GOSSIPERS would HUSH up,
9. And all the DELIQUENTS would PAY up,
10. And all the MEMBERS would STUDY up,
11. And all the DRY BONES would LIVEN up,
12. And all the PREACHERS would SPEAK up,
13. And all the TRUE SOLDIERS will STAND up,
14. Then THERE WILL BE A GREAT REVIVAL!

#### **2. Example of Initiative.**

1. The four friends of the paralyzed man in Mark 2:1-28.
2. Notice that Jesus SAW their faith.

#### **3. The Kind of Faith that Saves.**

1. James 2:14-26
2. John 6:28-29
3. Acts 10:34-35

# Seven Keys to Personal Growth

## Orderliness

1 Kings 6:1-14

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Thank you for your attendance this morning.
2. Today we are studying something a little different than you might have expected to hear.
3. We are going to study “orderliness.” Orderliness: the quality of appreciating method and system; a condition of regular or proper arrangement.
4. Every mother or grandmother in this room this morning can appreciate a subject of this nature.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **1. Organizing and Utilizing My Resources to their Greatest Efficiency.**

1. Most of us are familiar with the groundhog, often called by the name woodchuck, marmot, or simply varmint.
2. What most do not know is that it is one of the cleanest animals in the world.
3. Contrary to the popular myth, the groundhog is not an accurate weather forecaster.

#### **2. Scripture Lesson.**

1. King David wanted to build a house for God (2 Sam. 7:5; 1 Kings 8:18).
2. God told him that he could not (1 Chron. 17:4).
3. But David made all the preparations (1 Chron. 28-29).

#### **3. Teach Our Children to Maintain Cleanliness and Good Grooming.**

1. The Beaver is an unusual animal to say the least. He has a unique way of ridding himself of lice and other vermin.
2. The Beaver will find an ant mound and then lie on top of it and then begin to shuffle around. The ants come out and instead of stinging the Beaver they will clean all the vermin off the Beaver!

#### **4. Scripture Lesson.**

1. Luke 7:36-50
2. What a wonderful example of love and devotion.

#### **5. We Must Remove Items that could Hinder Our Achievements.**

1. Black-Headed Gull will clean out the hatched egg shells out of the nest so predators will not be attracted by the whiteness of the freshly hatched eggs.
2. 2 Kings 18:1-6.

# Seven Keys to Personal Growth

## Decisiveness

Colossians 3:16-17

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. We have discussed loyalty, responsibility, courage, determination, initiative, and orderliness. Tonight we are going to discuss “decisiveness.”
2. Decisiveness: having the power or quality of deciding.
3. “The way to develop **decisiveness** is to start right where you are, with the very next question you face”
4. “**Decisiveness** is a characteristic of high-performing men and women. Almost any decision is better than no decision at all.”
5. “The percentage of mistakes in quick decisions is no greater than in long-drawn-out vacillation and the effect of **decisiveness** itself 'makes things go' and creates confidence.”
6. Decisiveness, that ability to make quick and unambiguous decisions, is a trait often associated with great leaders, especially great military leaders.

### **DISCUSSION:**

1. **Refusing to Reconsider a Decision which I Know is Right.**
  1. The children of Israel had been wandering in the wilderness for almost four decades. The nation had over 600,000 warriors; various nations had tried various ways to defeat them, all to no avail. Now two powerful Amorite rulers, Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, tried open combat to match the army. They were defeated. So king Balak tries another method.
  2. Num. 22-25.
2. **I Must Make Decisive Commitments for Future Successes.**
  1. Brethren, we must make the commitment to attend all services and activities of the church and then when conflicts arise in my schedule, the decision is already made.
  2. Dan. 6:10; How? Dan. 1:8.
3. **I Must Devote all my Energy to a Course of Action which I Know is Right.**
  1. Ruth 1:16-18.
  2. Nothing could dissuade Ruth from going with Naomi.
4. **I Must Evaluate Courses of Action Quickly and Accurately**
  1. Brethren, we must learn how to review a situation and then make an appropriate decision without vacillation.
  2. Neh. 2:11-20

On September 6, 1863, forty-eight Confederate soldiers, commanded by Lieutenant Richard “Dick” Dowling (who was only twenty-five years old), waited for the Union invasion of Texas on the muddy banks of Sabine Pass. The Union had sent four gunboats, and seventeen transport ships that contained 1500 troops. Dowling and his men were holed up in a few ramparts made of mud. They called these mud barricades Fort Griffin and although they were not made from the most costly fort material, they still stand today. Dowling’s men were not professional soldiers. They were ordinary working men. However, they had practiced to fight, and they were ready. The Union boats attacked, but their shells could not penetrate the solid walls of Fort Griffin. The Union soldiers tried to land, but they could not for they sunk up to their knees in mud. The Union gunboats moved closer to the fort. This was their mistake. Lt. Dowling gave the order to fire and one Union gunboat was destroyed. Upon seeing this, one of the other gunboats flew the white flag, however another was persistent. It continued to attack the fort. Dowling’s men fired upon this vessel and sunk it. And even though the barrels of their guns were so hot they blistered their hands, they continued. And soon, the captain of the gunboat surrendered. Lt. Dowling accepted his surrender. Forty-eight non-professional soldiers had defeated four gunboats and seventeen transport ships containing 1500 men. They had captured two gunboats, 350 men and wounded or killed over 100 federal soldiers. It was a decisive victory. This battle was the biggest upset of the Civil War. Look at some of the lessons we learn.

1. The number of people involved in a conflict does not itself determine the outcome. Forty-eight men destroyed two Union gunboats, killed or wounded over 100 men and captured close to 350 men. 2. Preparation is necessary to win the battle. These men probably never expected Union soldiers to come their way, but they prepared for that day, whether they expected it or not. 3. A solid, defendable stronghold is necessary for protection from the enemy. Although it was made of mud, sticks and concrete, Fort Griffin was solid and defendable. This stronghold provided these men with protection and safety from the enemies’ projectiles. 4. Perseverance and steadfastness are necessary qualities of victorious soldiers. Lt. Dowling did not send attack as soon as he saw the Union boats coming, instead, he played cards and patiently waited for the enemy to make the first mistake. 5. A person does not have to be a “professional” to put up a victorious defense. The men of Fort Griffin were regular everyday workers. They were not professional soldiers. However, they did not let that stop them. They went ahead and fought like soldiers. The bullets they fired were just as real as the “professional” soldier’s bullets.

Notice too that the Bible contains many great “upsets” from which we can learn these same lessons. Remember Joseph (Genesis chapters 38-50)? Remember Moses and the children of Israel (Exodus chapters 1-14)? Remember Gideon and his 300 soldiers (Judges chapter 7)? And what about David when he defeated Goliath (1 Samuel chapter 17) and Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego ([Daniel 3](#)) and Mordecai (The book of Esther)? And there are many more which are not as well known. However, we can see the above five principles involved in these situations. Now, the New Testament Christian soldier is also concerned about these principles. The Christian soldier knows that he will be in the minority ([Matt. 7:13,14](#)). The Christian soldier knows that he must prepare for spiritual battles yet to come ([2 Tim. 2:15,16](#); [Eph. 6:15](#)). The Christian soldier knows that the faith is his solid ([Heb. 11:1](#)), defendable ([1 Peter 3:15](#)), stronghold and is able to protect him from the fiery projectiles of Satan ([Eph. 6:16](#)). The Christian soldier knows that he must be patient, steadfast, and persevering ([Heb. 12:1](#)). And the Christian soldier knows that he does not necessarily need to be a “professional” preacher, or a

graduate of this university or that, in order to victoriously defend the word of God. Truth will ring just as clear in the ears of honest hearts whether it be taught by a man with a wall full of degrees or by a small country farmer (Paul was a graduate of the Rabbinical School [Phillipians 3:5] but Peter was a fisherman [[Mark 1:16](#)]).

The Bible teaches that each and every Christian must be concerned about spiritual warfare ([Ephesians 6:10-18](#)). Further, the principles above are just some of the principles that regulate the life of the Christian soldier as he engages in spiritual warfare. As we have seen, a person does not need to be a “scholar” to be a Christian soldier. However, he must love the truth, apply it to his life, and be willing to defend it. In doing this, he can become a warrior of the truth. And together, applying the principles of the Christian soldier to our lives, God’s army can win decisive victories for the truth.

Brethren, if there is one thing the church needs now, the church needs people who are willing to contend earnestly for the faith ([Jude 3](#)); the church needs spiritual warriors; the church needs Christian soldiers. In this book, we want to focus upon the Christian soldier. We want to look at the two focal points of the Christian Soldier’s life—his armor and his army. These will comprise the two sections of this book. Each section is divided into seven chapters. This gives us a total of fourteen chapters. Please realize that one should only believe the things that are written in these pages in so far as the things written herein are in harmony with God’s word. So, in these fourteen chapters, we do not hope to exhaust the study of the Christian soldier, but rather, provide a basis upon which the individual Bible student may build his knowledge of the Christian soldier. Then, as the student learns more about Christian warfare, he will be able to boldly defend God’s truth and able to wield God’s sword against the onslaughts of atheism, agnosticism, humanism, Kierkegaardian existentialism, denominationalism, and any other “ism” that might pop up. Please realize that the aim of this book is not to expose any one false teacher, false doctrine, or false philosophy. However, we do aim to set forth some positive principles through which the individual Bible student may deal with these false teachings. Also, with the principles set forth in this book, the student will be aided to fight and be victorious over his own trials and temptations that he is assured to face in this life. In doing these things he will become a faithful Christian soldier—faithful to his army (the church), faithful to his Captain (the Christ) and faithful to God.