

# Managing My Family, Thinking and Commitment

*“If anyone does not know how to manage his own family,  
how can he take care of God’s church?”*  
I Timothy 3:5

*“Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.  
Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do,  
you will save both yourself and your hearers.”*  
I Timothy 4:15-16

Remember: Decisions help us start in the right direction. Discipline helps us finish.

Three more areas we must master in our personal growth are the management of our family, our thoughts, and the commitments we make as leaders.

## Our Family: My Family Today Gives Me Stability

My family is my primary network for expressing grace and truth. Everyone needs family. Let’s begin our study by assessing how well we’ve managed and cared for our families:

1. What percentage of your waking hours do you give to your family? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Do you manage your ministry/career better or your family better? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. If you listed one regret you have about how you’ve led your family, what would it be?
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More than any other single factor in a person’s formative years, family life forges character. As Perry F. Webb noted, *“The home...is the lens through which we get our first look at marriage and all the civic duties; it is the clinic where, by conversation and attitude, impressions are created with respect to sobriety and reverence; it is the school where lessons of truth or falsehood, honesty or deceit are learned; it is the mold which ultimately determines the structure of society.”*

The Apostle Paul asks a sobering question in I Timothy 3:5: *“If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?”* God intended for our spiritual leadership to begin in the home—then, expand from there. We’re not to form categories and separate our leadership in the home from our leadership in our careers. The home is the “laboratory” where we practice leadership first, and if it doesn’t work at home, we shouldn’t try to export it!

### Biblical Case Study: Lot (Genesis 13, 19)

These two chapters reveal much about a man named Lot, Abraham’s nephew. Although he was a fine public servant, he failed at leading in his home. Note his fatal mistakes:

1. He placed emphasis on financial rather than spiritual prosperity (13:8-11).
2. He assumed his family could live in Sodom and not be affected (13:12-13).
3. He thought he could change society without taking a stand (19:1-11).
4. He felt his family would accept his words instead of his lifestyle (19:12-14).
5. He didn’t realize how much the world had ensnared them (19:12-26).

**Lot Could Have Benefited From Making These Three Decisions:**

1. Establish Family as a Priority.  
Where does your family fit in your list of priorities?
2. Develop a Problem-Solving Strategy.  
How do you deal with adversity at home?
3. Establish a Strong Values Base.  
What are the values you will cultivate over the years?

**Managing the Disciplines of Family:**

If you desire to strengthen your family life, try practicing these disciplines:

1. Put your family on your calendar \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Create and maintain family \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Find ways to spend \_\_\_\_\_ together.
4. Keep your \_\_\_\_\_ healthy.
5. Express \_\_\_\_\_ for each other.
6. Resolve \_\_\_\_\_ as quickly as possible.

**For Thought or Discussion**

- Choose two actions from the list above and list or share how you'll practice them.

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**Our Thinking: Today's Thinking Gives Me an Advantage**

Developing my mind may be the one asset that sets me apart from others. One author said: "What is important are ideas. If you have ideas, you have the main asset you need, and there isn't any limit to what you can do with your business and your life."

Effective leaders develop their minds. They become good thinkers over time, and they think differently than followers do. A clinical psychologist by the name of Dr. J. Robert Clinton said, "*The primary difference between followers and leaders is perspective. The primary difference between leaders and effective leaders is better perspective.*" It is a discipline, however, that very few people possess. Take a moment and assess your present thought life:

1. Do you set aside time for disciplined thinking about certain issues?
2. When do you take time to think? When is your best time?
3. What prevents you from the discipline of a strong and healthy thought life?

**Biblical Case Study: Solomon's Priorities (I Kings 3:4-15)**

Solomon had just assumed his reign over God's people, following his father, King David. God told King

Solomon He would give him whatever he asked. In that pivotal moment, Solomon had the good judgment to ask for wisdom instead of selfish gifts that most men want. He knew that his thinking would make or break his life and leadership.

Solomon based his thinking on God’s perspective:

1. His agenda was not his own, but a grateful response to God’s goodness (v.6).
2. His incentive revolved around his God-given leadership responsibility (v.7).
3. His request was for wisdom that would match his large task (v.8).
4. His perspective recognized that the people he led were not his people, but God’s people (v.9).
5. His thinking was rewarded with more than he expected (v.10-13).

**Different Kinds of Thinking**  
(Based on John C. Maxwell’s book, *Thinking for a Change*)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to think beyond yourself and your world in order to be more objective
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to think with clarity by removing distractions from your mind
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to break out of your “box” of limitations and explore totally new ideas
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to build a solid foundation on facts in order to think with certainty
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to implement plans that give direction and increase your potential
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to unleash your enthusiasm and hope to find solutions for the impossible
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to revisit the past in order to gain perspective and understanding for the future
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to reject the limitations of popular thought to gain uncommon results
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to include the ideas of others in order to gain compound results
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to consider others and their journey in order to achieve collaboration
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking  
The ability to focus on maximum results to reap your thoughts’ fullest potential

**Discussion:**

- Which kind of thinking is your strongest?
- Which kind of thinking would you like to improve the most?

### Managing the Discipline of Thinking

Here are some practical steps to take to begin the discipline of thinking.

1. Find a place to think.
2. Set aside time every day to think.
3. Find a process or system that works for you.
4. Capture your thoughts and record them.
5. Put your thoughts into actions quickly.
6. Try to improve your thinking every day.

### Our Commitment: Today's Commitment Gives Me Tenacity

What were you born to do? What do you think your future holds? Do you believe you have a purpose or a destiny? If so, will you fulfill it? To become the person you have the potential to be, you will need great tenacity. That quality comes from commitment. Take a look at these truths concerning commitment:

**1. Commitment can change your life.**

Discussion: Think about a time in your life when you made a real commitment to do something differently. How did that change the course of your life?

**2. Commitment helps you overcome many of life's obstacles.**

Discussion: What is a past adversity that you overcame by making a commitment?

**3. Your commitment will be tested every day.**

Discussion: Commitment is not a one-time event. What is one decision you made that was tested? How did you do in daily committing yourself to keeping that decision?

### Biblical Case Study: Noah and the Flood (Genesis 6-8)

Noah might be the epitome of commitment. His classic story about building an ark to prepare for a flood required quite a step of determination. Consider the situation he found himself in, when he made his commitment to obey God:

1. Society was corrupt, so Noah had no outside friends to encourage his decision.
2. Noah was instructed to build an ark, something he'd never done before.
3. It had never before rained on earth, so the possibility of a flood seemed illogical.
4. With no evidence of water, he gathered every kind of animal to board the ark.
5. The ark took several decades to build, and Noah was likely ridiculed.

### So What Enabled Noah to Keep His Commitment?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ to God
2. Protecting his \_\_\_\_\_
3. A vision bigger than himself: \_\_\_\_\_

## Managing the Discipline of Commitment

Commitment comes with the territory of leadership. You cannot lead well without it. Once you count the cost of a decision and decide it is worth the price—stick with it. Consider these statements as you make commitments:

**1. Expect commitment to be a \_\_\_\_\_.**

The greatest honors are reserved for those who endure the biggest struggles. Often, the higher the stakes, the higher the reward. Decide that the prize is worth the price. Every great committed leader in the Bible had to struggle.

**2. Don't rely on \_\_\_\_\_ alone.**

Your talent can blind you to the need for commitment. We often get lazy in our areas of talent because it comes easy to us. Apply discipline especially in your strength areas. Continue to develop your spiritual life and your skills.

**3. Focus on \_\_\_\_\_, not conditions.**

Be focused on your inward choice, not on outward circumstances. Conditions change and you cannot control them. Your choices are all you can control.

**4. Be \_\_\_\_\_.**

Nothing enhances commitment like single-minded effort that results in achievement. Remove distractions and options once you've decided what is right. "This one thing I do."

**5. Do what's \_\_\_\_\_ even when you don't feel like it.**

Nothing is easier than saying words. Nothing is harder than living them day after day. Don't let your fickle feelings prevent you from keeping a right commitment. Let the examples of Daniel, Joseph, and Moses encourage you to persevere.

**6. Finish what you \_\_\_\_\_.**

Don't make excuses. When you start something—follow through until it is finished. Commitment enables you to finish even when things are inconvenient. Be grateful for Genesis (how it all began) and Revelation (how it all ends).

### Assessment and Application

Assessment: How would others describe you when it comes to . . .

- Prioritizing family?
- Good thinking?
- Keeping commitments?

Application: List one decision and action step you can take in each of these areas.