

# SCANNING YOUR DASHBOARD

WARNING LIGHTS  
& HOLY HABITS

==== *for* ====

A LEADER'S SOUL

ROWLAND FORMAN

## Dashboard Indicator #7

Am I Pretending, or Leading with Integrity?

## Caring for Your Own Soul

Effective leaders care deeply for the souls of others. Yet this often comes at the expense of their own soul's well-being—and sometimes that of their family as well.

***Scanning Your Dashboard*** invites you to regularly attend to your inner life. Just as a driver watches the dashboard for warning lights and fuel levels, wise leaders learn to notice what is happening beneath the surface of their lives.

Each **Dashboard Indicator** in this mentoring resource pairs a Warning Light with a Holy Habit—helping you not only to recognize areas of vulnerability, but also to respond with practices that cultivate a healthy, Christ-dependent life.

A dashboard doesn't only warn you when something is wrong—it also reassures you when things are functioning as they should.

**Begin by processing Warning Light #7 and Holy Habit #7 on your own.** Then, if possible, meet with a mentor-friend or small group, to share what the Holy Spirit is bringing to your attention. **Working with Warning Lights and then Holy Habits, helps you not only to see what you need to work on, but to step into a grace-filled response.**

### WARNING LIGHT #7:

#### **INAUTHENTICITY: *Am I Pretending to Be What I'm Not?***

Just like isolation, inauthenticity is a drift rather than a decision. Leaders like King David were upheld as examples of integrity over long periods of their lives, then gradually and tragically slid into pretense and deception.

How could David conceal his affair with Bathsheba for months? He who spoke of his integrity (Psalms 7:8; 25:21; 41:12), and of whom it was said, *And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them* (Psalm 78:72). Integrity is not lost overnight. It is usually compromised in small, hidden ways.

What hints at David's lack of authenticity in the biblical narrative?

Was it his prideful disobedience? Although Deuteronomy 17:17 taught that the king must not have many wives lest his heart be led astray, David had eight.

Was it his prayerlessness? As David reflected on the cause of his downfall he said, *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away ...* In other words, for an extended season my prayer life withered. Instead of confessing, I remained silent (Psalm 32:3-4).

Was it his isolation? Not only was he silent in confession, but for about nine months he avoided mentor-friends like Nathan the prophet. When we hide, we invariably hide alone. When no one really knows us, it is tempting to give the impression that all is well.

Might it have been a heart issue?

James 1:5-8 goes beneath the surface and diagnoses the disease:

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.*

James identifies the condition as doublemindedness (literally 'two-souled'). It is his way of describing a divided heart—a heart that teaches on holiness but fails to practice it.

Only ten percent of an iceberg is what we see. Ninety percent is below the waterline. Leaders may project an image of purity, while secretly engaging in sinful behavior patterns.

What people see is a spiritually healthy leader, not realizing that their leader may lack grace, compassion, and truth in the hidden places.

Jesus called this hypocrisy. In his Sermon on the Mount, he gave the example of Pharisees who were paragons of virtue in their day. They created the

impression of being generous, but it was all an act. Speaking to his disciples he said, *Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them.* They were doing godly deeds, with the secret motivation to be noticed and approved by others.

Outwardly the Pharisees would have passed the test of prayerfulness. They would drop to their knees on the street corners and pray long and eloquent prayers. Jesus called them hypocrites—actors, wearing a mask of piety. It was inauthenticity—leadership from the outside in.

How is it with you? Is there a growing gap between who you appear to be and who you really are before God? Allow the Holy Spirit to do his work of conviction and restoration. Make David's plea be yours: *Create in me a clean heart O God ...* (Psalm 51:10).

### **Reflect & Discuss**

1. If inauthenticity is a drift rather than a sudden failure, what small shifts or compromises do you think may often initiate that drift in leaders?
2. Where do you feel the greatest pressure to appear spiritually healthy? How might that pressure tempt you to hide rather than to be honest?
3. David spoke of keeping silent and wasting away. What keeps leaders silent when confession and transparency would bring healing?
4. Using the iceberg image, what aspects of your life are most visible to others? What aspects are mostly below the surface? Whom do you allow to see below the waterline?

### **Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, Bring me out of hiding. Where I have performed instead of abiding in you, gently lead me back. Free me from the need to impress, defend, or pretend. Make me whole, truthful, and at rest in your love. Amen.

## HOLY HABIT #7

### INTEGRITY: *Leading From the Inside Out*

How would you describe the part of your life that no one sees but God?

Does what people see on the outside match what is true on the inside? Are you living honestly when no one is watching? Do you lead with integrity?

The reality is that many highly regarded leaders start the race strongly but don't finish well. And the problem is rarely something visible. More often it begins in the hidden places of the inner life.

On the outside, things appear to be going well. On the inside, there may be compromises, secret sins, or unresolved fractures of the soul. Integrity is not lost in a moment, but through an unexamined life.

Jesus named the problem with piercing clarity:

*Now then you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. (Luke 11:39)*

He compared them to a dishwasher that cleans only what can be seen, while leaving the inside still soiled. The Pharisees appeared clean, but behind closed doors their hearts were divided.

So, where do we look for an example of integrity over the long haul? No biblical character was sinlessly perfect apart from our Savior, but one other stands out to me.

#### **Passing the "Little" Test (Daniel 1:3-21)**

Daniel, the Hebrew exile in Babylon, was a beacon of integrity in a dark place. He was among the brightest and best of Hebrew youths conscripted into King Nebuchadnezzar's service.

Far from home, Daniel *purposed in his heart* not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, likely offered to the Babylonian gods. He chose vegetables and water instead. He could have reasoned, "No one back home will know." Or, "It's just a small compromise." But Daniel stayed true to God in the "little things." And in time, those small decisions revealed his integrity.

At the end of the training period, Daniel and his three companions were ten times wiser than the other trainees. They embodied Jesus' words in Luke 16:10: *Whoever is faithful in very little is faithful in much.*

## **An Open Window: Integrity Under Pressure (Daniel 6:1-28)**

Integrity over the long haul, begins with integrity in small decisions—but it will eventually be tested.

Later in life, Daniel was promoted to become one of three commissioners over the kingdom. He was so capable that the king planned to set him over the whole realm.

With promotion came jealousy. The other officials searched for grounds to accuse him, but they could find nothing—because Daniel was trustworthy. They were so desperate that they resorted to setting a trap. Anyone who prayed to any god, would be thrown into the lion's den.

Daniel went home, opened his window and prayed three times a day, just as he'd always done.

There's a quiet strength in him. A humility. Prayerfulness. A consistency. A life that is not performative, but whole.

“Lord, make me like that.”

In the face of certain death, Daniel refused to compromise. He lived with integrity, which meant that his life was not split between sacred parts and hidden parts. His private devotion matched his public leadership.

Even then, Daniel was not perfect. I'm sure, he would echo the words of another person of integrity, the Apostle Paul:

*Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on ...*  
(Philippians 3:12).

Integrity is less about never failing. It's about being honest with ourselves, trusting others, and God.

**Integrity is choosing character over convenience; it's choosing wholeness, over a divided heart.**

**Reflect & Discuss:**

1. Why might Christian leaders be tempted to live a split life—one version public, another private?
2. What are some little compromises that could slowly erode leaders' souls over time?
3. Which aspects of Daniel's life of integrity inspired you most?
4. What steps in the direction of integrity might the Holy Spirit be prompting you to take?

**Prayer:**

Lord, you see the parts of my life no one else sees. You know where my life is whole and where it is divided. I don't want to polish the outside and ignore what is happening on the inside.

Give me Daniel's courage in my small choices and the strength to remain faithful when my integrity is tested. I long for my private life to match my public life. Give me an undivided heart.

Please make me whole.

Amen.

## The 7 Dashboard Indicators

- Indicator #1**      Am I Drifting, or Abiding in Christ?
- Indicator #2**      Am I Praying Less, or Praying More?
- Indicator #3**      Am I Proudful, or Humbly Serving Others?
- Indicator #4**      Am I Running on Empty, or Learning Unforced Rhythms of Grace?
- Indicator #5**      Am I Slipping Morally, or Guarding my Heart?
- Indicator #6**      Am I Isolated, or Investing in Others?
- Indicator #7**      Am I Pretending, or Leading with Integrity?



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