

## Traits of a Learner

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: 10X<sup>2</sup>

**Text: Proverbs 1:5(AMP), Proverbs 9:9**

You always learn more from your **losses** than you ever learn from your successes. The key to achieving that is to approach and look at your losses the right way. To turn each setback into what ultimately becomes a step **forward**, you have to avoid the traps people fall into. Learning is not easy during challenging times and often it takes real discipline to keep learning when everything is going wrong but if you can do that, you will learn from your failures.

~ John Maxwell - You are enrolled in a full-time informal school called life. In it, there are no mistakes, only lessons. There is no part of life that doesn't contain lessons. Sometimes you will win. Sometimes you will lose. But every time you have the opportunity to ask yourself, 'What did I learn?' If you always have an answer to that question, then you will go far. And you will enjoy the journey.

- **Trait # 1 - Humility** - this is the spirit of learning. There are those who learn from failure and bounce back better than they were before. There are those who experience something negative and they begin to spiral downward because they do not learn from their fall, failure or mistakes. **Proverbs 24:16, 1 Peter 5:6, Proverbs 22:4**

Those who profit from adversity possess a spirit of humility and are more inclined to make the **needed** changes to learn from their mistakes, failures and losses. Humility brings resilience. It is the **prideful** who are unwilling to learn and continue to press forward. Pride leads to stubbornness. **Proverbs 16:18, Proverbs 29:1** Everyone experiences adversity. Some people are made humble by it and some are made hard. Pride is concerned about who's right, humility is concerned about what's right.

### Negative impacts of pride

- **Blame:** Instead of taking responsibility, prideful people believe that **someone** else is at fault.
- **Denial:** Prideful people **miss** what is obvious to everyone else. Instead of being objective they are unrealistic.
- **Closed Mindedness:** Instead of being **receptive** they are defensive, resistant and opposed to different ideas or ways of doing things.
- **Rigidity:** They are not **flexible**. It is my way or the highway.
- **Insecurity:** Prideful people will take **credit** for success and assign blame. The insecure do not foster a team spirit. They inflate themselves and deflate others.
- **Isolation:** instead of being **connected** they are out of touch. Pride makes people think that things are all about them when it is really about others.

Here's what humility does for you:

- 1) Humility gives you **perspective**: humility doesn't mean you think less of yourself, it means you think of yourself less. It will allow you to look at the bigger picture.
- 2) Humility enables you to **admit** a mistake: and then to learn and grow from your success and losses. It allows you to make the most of a mistake. Penicillin is the result of a mistake.
- 3) Humility allows you to let go of **perfectionism** and keep trying: contrary to prideful people, those with a spirit of humility aren't afraid of a mistake.

➤ Trait # 2 - Reality - the foundation of learning. When we accept that life is hard and difficult that we begin to grow. **John 16:33**

#### Three Realities of Life

- Life is **difficult**. We expect smooth but the reality is life is not supposed to be easy. 10X people don't shy away from difficulties, they learn to face them and move ahead in spite of them. Instead of fearing difficulties, we can welcome them as a test of character and use them to rise to the occasion. Facing reality and accepting the problem will not conquer it, but it's the very first step to overcoming it.

~ Alex Haley said - *"Either you deal with what is the reality, or you can be sure that the reality is going to deal with you"*.

- Life is difficult for **everyone**. Life isn't fair or easy. All of us have had tragic, unfair and bad things happen to us. We cannot avoid life's difficulties even if we try. All of us must face pain, unfairness, hurt, embarrassment and spiritual attacks. It is in these that we grow, learn and develop the character and skills needed to move ahead.

#### **Genesis 50:20**

- Life is more difficult for some than for **others**. Life is not a level playing field. All of us deal with hard things. Some more than others. Those who are 10X refuse to compare their pain or difficulty with what others face. They face their battles and fight their own fights. The sooner we face this reality the better.

➤ Trait # 3 - Hope - the motivation of learning. Hope is not optimism. Optimism is passive. Hope is active. Hope has a source and hope has a **focus**.

#### **Psalms 121:1, Hebrews 11:1, Psalm 62:5**

Hope is our greatest asset and the greatest weapon that we can use when the battle is fierce and the losses are mounting. It is the **difference** maker.

- Hope looks for the lesson in defeat instead of just leaving you defeated.
- Hope discovers what can be done instead of just what can't be done.
- Hope regards all problems big or small as opportunities.
- Hope lights a candle instead of cursing the darkness.
- Hope opens doors where despair closes them.
- Hope draws its strength from what can be instead of what was.
- With hope, failure is a stepping stone. Without hope failure is a tombstone.

Hope is a choice. Hope is in the DNA of those who learn from their losses. They chose to be a victor and not a victim. It takes courage to choose hope simply because life can be disappointing at times. Anyone can be optimistic. Hope is certainty in the God who is greater than we are. **Romans 5:5** Everyone is capable of choosing hope.

In order to have hope we must change our thinking. The main trouble with despair is that it is self-fulfilling. People who fear the worst tend to invite it. **Philippians 4:8** Helplessness leads to hopelessness but when we have God, we are never helpless and therefore never hopeless.

- Trait # 4 - Teachability - the “want to” to learn and grow. Being teachable is the pathway to learning.

#### Marks of a teachable person.

1. Teachable people possess an attitude receptive to learning. People with a teachable spirit approach each day as an opportunity for learning. They know that success is less about natural talent and more about learning. To learn means we are always increasing our capacity. This is an attitude you can develop. Too many people become comfortable with just enough. Attitude is actually more important than intelligence.
2. Teachable people possess a beginner's mindset. It can be difficult, so you have to remind yourself to take what you learn and not just store it away but to put it into practice. Learn to approach things as a beginner and not an expert. You can't learn anything new if you already think you know it all.
3. Teachable people take long, hard looks in the mirror. Always ask yourself “am I the cause?” If the answer is yes, then it's time to make changes. The most difficult person to lead is ourselves. This is why we must always follow Christ. All of us fight battles with being proud, lazy or stubborn. We all must ask – “am I following Jesus or my desires.”

4. Teachable people encourage others to spea into their lives. Surround yourself with people who know you well and will tell you the truth. This is even more important as you become more successful. Many people will tell us what we want to hear; very few will tell us what we need to hear.
  5. Teachable people desire to learn something every day. Any day will make you a little larger or a little smaller. The secret to becoming 10X is found in our daily routine. People do not tend to grow and improve in big leaps, there will be spurts, but by small increments each day. Those who are teachable realize that big differences happen a little at a time.
- Trait # 5 - Adversity - the catalyst for learning. Difficulties and challenges happen. Know that they will be there and plan for them. **John 16:33** The pain of adversity never leaves us the same. It is the catalyst for change. Without it we would just keep doing things the same way. You can be paralyzed by it, become bitter because of it or see it as an opportunity to grow smarter. If we respond well to it, we create advantages out of our disadvantages.

Adversity introduces us to ourselves. It helps us to see what God has placed inside of us and what attitudes we have that need to improve. It also introduces us to God. Adversity allows us to understand the grace, goodness, caring and power of God. We would never know these things in all of their splendor until we had to depend on them. 2

**Corinthians 12:9-10**

Many times, adversity comes in the form of problems. Life is a series of problems we can either moan about them or solve them.

Things to do with problems.

- Do not underestimate the problem. Take them seriously when you see that there is one. Do not underestimate your ability to cope with it or God's ability to give you wisdom for it.
- Do not overestimate the problem. Many times, our worry and fear magnify and exaggerate the impact. If you do this you are defeated before you even attempt to deal with the problem. Don't deny it but don't give it more power than God.
- Do not wait for the problem to solve itself. Patience is a virtue but procrastination is not. Problems demand that we pay attention to them because if we do not, they will just get worse. Those who are 10X understand this.
- Do not aggravate the problem. How we respond to a problem will either help them get better or get worse. Our attitude towards problems has two buckets. One has water and the other gasoline. One will put out the fire the other will make it bigger.

- Make sure to appreciate the problem. Turbulent winds are a fact of life. You can prepare for them. In the mid-west they build storm cellars. In Florida we build stronger houses and purchase good insurance. In life we respond to the “winds of change” with the attitude of an eagle. **Isaiah 40:31**
  - Turbulent winds cause the eagle to fly higher. They use the wind for lift and speed. So can we.
  - Turbulent winds give eagles a higher view. This gives him clarity to see longer and farther. They can see more because they have a better perspective.
  - Turbulent winds lift the eagle over harassment. Below there are the distractions of those crows, blue jays and smaller birds always poking and teasing.

A problem is only a problem if you see it that way. A problem is an opportunity if you can see it that way.

- Trait # 6 – Bad Experiences - the perspective of learning. Negative experiences happen to everyone. Some we cause and some are thrust on us by others.

How we think when we lose determines how long it will be until we win.

If you are ambitious, a danger for you is that you will quickly move past successes and focus on “what you should have done better”. Which way too often means you’re focusing on losses and building regret. Learn to celebrate and enjoy the wins. You can’t build on regrets. The capacity to manage disappointment and loss is key to living a fulfilling life.

Things to do with bad experiences:

1. Accept your humanness. We will fail sometimes no matter how hard we try. Why? Because we’re human. And that’s what makes you special.
2. Learn to laugh at yourself and at life. How much easier would your problem appear if you were able to laugh at them?
3. Keep the right perspective. Seeing difficulties as experience is a matter of perspective:

Don’t Base Your Self-Worth on a Bad Experience You are not your worst moment and you are not defined by your performance.

Don’t Feel Sorry for Yourself You are allowed a 24h grace period of feeling sorry for yourself, then pick yourself up (or you might get stuck)

Do Consider Your Failures as a Process to Learn and Improve

4. Don't Give Up If you want to succeed in life, you can't give up. Og Mandino said "Your capacity for occasional blunders is inseparable from your capacity to reach your goals. No one wins them all, and your failures are just part of your growth. Shake off your blunders. How will you know your limits without an occasional failure"

- Trait #7 - Maturity - the value of learning. Maturity is not a result of age but of learning and growing. Those who are 10X understand this. There are mature 20 somethings and incredibly immature 80 somethings.

Truths about Maturity:

- ❖ Maturity is the result of finding the benefit in the loss – we must learn from our mistakes and losses. **Proverbs 4:5-9**
- ❖ Maturity is learning to feed the right emotions. "Maturity is doing what you are supposed to do, when you're supposed to do it, in the manner you are supposed to, no matter how you feel." Action is the key to success. Too often we want to feel our way into acting when instead we need to act our way into feeling. If you take the right actions, you will eventually feel the right feelings.
- ❖ Maturity is learning to develop good habits. By acting on our feelings with positive action over a sustained period of time, we will form positive habits. As poet John Dryden put it: "We first make our habits, and then our habits make us." Good habits require time and discipline to develop.
- ❖ Maturity is learning to sacrifice today to succeed tomorrow. People are naturally inclined towards behavior that makes them feel good in the short term. Hence you have to cultivate the willingness to sacrifice. Delayed gratification is what sets the mature apart from the immature because they understand the long term implications and benefits of waiting.