
Protégé: “DIAKONOS”

Key Takeaways:

- 1. Those who are given representation and leadership of an organization speak louder about it than any other attribute of that organization.*
- 2. Being "above reproach" means conducting yourself in a way that goes beyond just following rules - it's about considering how your actions are perceived by others.*
- 3. Leaders in the church (elders, deacons, and all members) are called to live lives worthy of respect.*
- 4. Respect is earned slowly and lost quickly. It cannot be forced or claimed, only given willingly by others.*
- 5. The church's credibility in society has been damaged by leaders who failed to live above reproach.*
- 6. All Christians, not just official church leaders, represent the church to the world around them.*

Discussion Questions:

- 1. What does it mean to you to be "above reproach"? How is this different from simply following rules?*
- 2. Pastor Daniel mentioned Billy Graham's practices to remain above reproach. What are some ways we can apply similar principles in our own lives?*
- 3. The sermon highlighted how respect is earned, not claimed. Can you share an experience where you've seen respect earned or lost in a leadership context?*

4. *How do you think the church's reputation in society has changed over time? What factors have contributed to this change?*
5. *Pastor said, "We are not people that operate within a church...rather all that we are and all that we represent is the church." How does this perspective change how we might live our daily lives?*
6. *What are some areas in your life where you feel you need to be more mindful of living "above reproach"?*

Practical Applications:

1. *Conduct a personal inventory: Identify areas in your life where you might be technically "following the rules" but could improve in being above reproach.*
2. *Establish accountability: Share with a trusted friend or family member one area where you want to improve in living above reproach, and ask them to hold you accountable.*
3. *Practice transparency: Look for opportunities this week to be more open and transparent in your interactions with others, especially in areas where misunderstandings could occur.*
4. *Reflect on your influence: Consider the circles of influence in your life (work, family, friends) and how your actions as a Christian might be perceived in each of these areas.*
5. *Develop a personal code of conduct: Based on the qualifications for elders and deacons mentioned in the sermon, create a personal set of guidelines to help you live a life worthy of respect.*
6. *Pray for discernment: Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal any blind spots in your life and for the strength to address them.*

QUICK-HIT Questions (for less formal discussion)

Pick and Choose from any questions that might fit your discussion

1. How can we as Christians ensure our actions align with our words, living 'above reproach' as Paul instructs? What specific steps can we take in our daily lives to be worthy of respect?
2. In what ways has the church's reputation been damaged by leaders who failed to live up to biblical standards, and how can we work to restore trust?
3. How does the concept of being 'above reproach' challenge us to think beyond simply avoiding sin to considering how our actions might be perceived by others?
4. What are some modern-day examples of Christians setting boundaries in their lives, like Billy Graham did, to maintain integrity and avoid even the appearance of impropriety?
5. How can we balance being firm in our convictions while still maintaining a temperate and respectful approach when interacting with those who disagree?
6. In what ways does our behavior as church members impact how others view the church and Christianity as a whole?
7. How can we apply Paul's instructions for elders and deacons to our own lives, even if we don't hold official leadership positions in the church?
8. What are some practical ways we can earn respect in our communities while staying true to our Christian beliefs and values?
9. How does the idea that we are representatives of the church in all areas of our lives change how we might approach our daily interactions and decisions?
10. In light of Paul's teachings, how can we cultivate a church culture that values integrity and character as much as knowledge or charisma in its leaders?