

HOPEPOINT

FOUNDATIONS

We're building
more than a
house, we're
making a home





culture

written by R Tobar | Revised 2022

Every people group, organisation or home has a certain culture about it. Many of these are “unspoken” ways of life that have been passed down from one person to another over a period of time. We realised that it was time to clearly define the unique leadership culture at HopePoint and to create signposts that would guide the leaders of today and tomorrow for our church family. There’s an old adage that says, “culture eats vision for breakfast.” Meaning, we can have a clearly defined vision, but if we aren’t creating the right environment then the vision won’t actuate. Take a plant for example. A plant has the potential inside of it to become something beautiful and productive.

The potential to grow and multiply is contained in the seed. But what happens if the seed isn’t planted in good soil and nurtured to grow? The seed remains a seed. But on the flip side, if the seed is placed in good soil and nurtured then the seed turns into a plant that can produce fruit and sustenance.

The “leadership culture” or atmosphere of our church teams provide the soil that is being used to nurture our vibrant faith community. The pioneers of this culture are our leadership team, they are the soul of our church. How they respond to situations and lead in the different environments communicates the values we hold strongly to.



To develop culture it takes: time; dedication and commitment. It requires repeated behaviours and lots of communication. The starting point for these values is this book. We may not be there yet, but they are statements to help us define our leadership behaviours and to establish what we value. Jesus spent three years teaching the disciples the “culture of the Kingdom of God”. He used many different stories, analogies and descriptives to paint a picture of what it meant to represent the Father well. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, “We are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us”. How we speak and act is important to God! We represent Christ and His values. The atmosphere we create says a lot about who we are as leaders, what our church is all about and ultimately who Jesus is. What a reminder for us to guard our hearts, and keep a right spirit in all we do.

We love that you are a part of our church family and willing to serve God and others in our community. This short book has been designed with you in mind. To help you grow in your leadership skills and to help guide you as you, make decisions and represent HopePoint Church.

The Culture we have outlined in this book provides the blueprint of what “leadership should look like” at HopePoint, in every area of our church family. No matter where you serve, someone should be able to clearly recognise the same heart and spirit in the atmosphere.

Have you ever read those warning labels on kid’s clothes about the material used? The ones warning parents not to let their kids sit too close to the fire as the material is flammable. The culture points we talk about come with a warning of their own:

1. No leader will “get these right” EVERY time. We make mistakes and we learn. THAT’S OKAY!
2. They are meant to help us “course correct”. Sometimes when you are sailing you can be a degree off course on the compass, but the actual distance that the “one degree” can represent can be kilometres and kilometres. We use these values to help us get back on track.
3. They are meant to be used for us to create a healthy environment, not for us to play judge and jury with one another. Take Jesus’ advice and “take the log out of your own eye before you get the speck out of someone else’s
4. It doesn’t mean we don’t have hard conversations, but we err on the side of mercy and grace EVERY TIME.

Many of the values we will go through, are simply statements and principles that we have been taught over the last ten years. You won’t master them in one session. In fact, we all will probably take a lifetime to achieve all of them to the level that we would like to. But as we embrace them in our lives, the result will be a collective culture that will see people’s lives flourish and grow.

culture guide

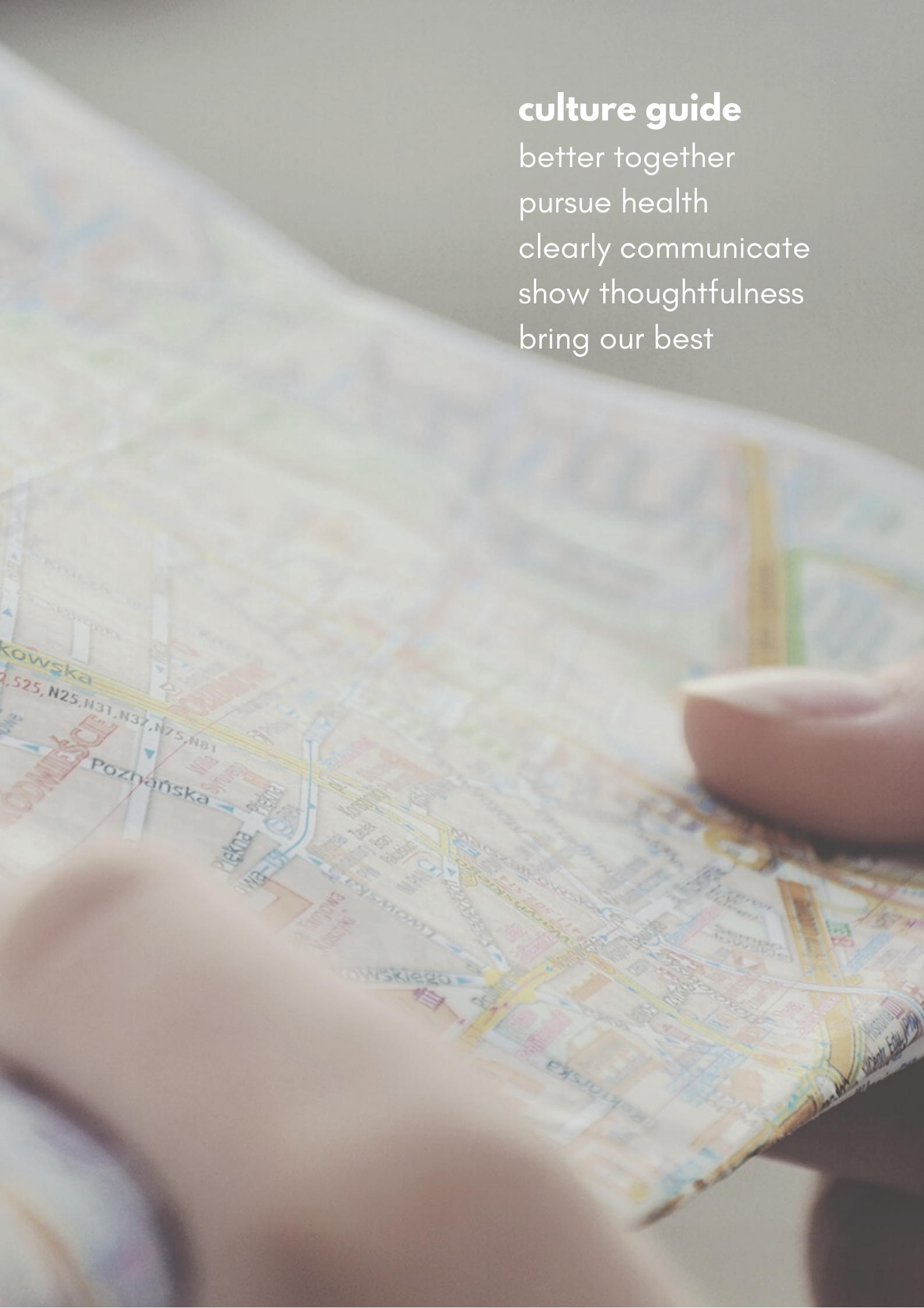
better together

pursue health

clearly communicate

show thoughtfulness

bring our best



better together

No Lone Rangers allowed. We need each other and we want to be able to go the long distance.

At HopePoint we “do church as a team”. There are things we could do alone, but we CHOOSE to do them together. We are not “lone rangers” but committed to discipling and growing together. A lot of this growth happens as we serve alongside each other, fulfilling the assignment the Lord has given us. These days at HopePoint Church, close to 80% of the congregation are involved in serving in one way or another. We LOVE doing life together, and there’s no better way to make friends. Ecclesiastes 4:9, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour.”

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church in Corinth, and addressed this very thing!

"You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in every-thing. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive. The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance. You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body".

1 Corinthians 12 (msg)



lessons from the geese

Dr. Robert McNeish

When you see geese flying along in "V" formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are travelling on the thrust of one another. When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone – and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front. If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those people who are headed the same way we are.

When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs, whether with people or with geese flying south. Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

What messages do we give when we honk from behind? Finally – and this is important – when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies, and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group. If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.



You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in every-thing. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptised.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive. The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance. You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body".

1 Corinthians 12 (MSG)



Tim Hansel, *Holy Sweat*, 1987, Word Books Publisher, p. 104-105.20

There's a wonderful story about Jimmy Durante, one of the great entertainers of a generation ago. He was asked to be a part of a show for World War II veterans. He told them his schedule was very busy and he could afford only a few minutes, but if they wouldn't mind his doing one short monologue and immediately leaving for his next appointment, he would come.

Of course, the show's director agreed happily. But when Jimmy got on stage, something interesting happened. He went through the short monologue and then stayed. The applause grew louder and louder and he kept staying. Pretty soon, he had been on fifteen, twenty, then thirty minutes.

Finally he took a last bow and left the stage. Backstage someone stopped him

and said, "I thought you had to go after a few minutes. What happened?"

Jimmy answered, "I did have to go, but I can show you the reason I stayed. You can see for yourself if you'll look down on the front row." In the front row were two men, each of whom had lost an arm in the war. One had lost his right arm and the other had lost his left. Together, they were able to clap, and that's exactly what they were doing, loudly and cheerfully.

Teams are not a new concept. Jesus created a team to spread the gospel and to build His church throughout the Earth. He personally invited them, coached them, cast vision, gave them opportunities to learn, empowered them and sent them out. Jesus lead his team One thing is for sure, we are BETTER TOGETHER!

am I a team player?

Here's a simple checklist for you to see if you are a Team Player. If you answer YES to these, well done! You've obviously been working hard. Any questions you answer NO to, can act as a reminder for you to be aware and to develop in that area:

- When I am given a task, I will ask, "Who can I bring along to help me complete it?"
- When I am in a meeting setting, I try to listen
- When I delegate to someone, I take great care to delegate the task and not dump it in their lap
- I have a "big picture" view not just a view of how a decision will affect my department area
- I am keen to share resources that I use for my ministry
- If another group has an event on, I show my support and encouragement
- I often turn up to serve in the area I lead, even when I am not rostered on
- I look forward to being with my team
- I take time to understand the WHY behind a decision I don't agree with
- I respect the other team members by turning up "on time"
- I address my "heart issues" quickly before bitterness takes hold
- I am truthful and don't lie to cover my tracks
- My posture on a Sunday, or in a setting where I am receiving, is one of engagement and "leaning in".
- My actions back up what I am saying to my team
- I take ownership over the facility that our team uses
- I pray for my leaders and those in my team
- I take time to receive instruction and guidance from the Holy Spirit on decisions
- I can name the two or three people that I have given permission to say NO to me, without fear of us reacting.

How did you do?

I'm sure if we're all truthful, there are many times that we have missed it in one of these areas. Keep these questions somewhere to act as a heart checklist for you and the teams you belong to.



pursue health

Christian maturity is the goal of every believer in Christ.

As followers of Jesus, our desire should be that each day we become more and more like Christ, being transformed into his image.

But mature Christians don't just happen. For many years there was an assumption that if you called yourself a Christian for a long time, then you were mature. Sadly this is not the case. It is possible to travel around lap one, 25 times rather than be on your 25th lap around the Son. To be healthy spiritually, emotionally, physically is important for our well being and our growth and development.

Healthy communities are made up of healthy people. We realise that there we never get to a place where we have arrived, but we can make a commitment to pursue health and to be lifelong learners. Continually being shaped by our Heavenly Father, the master potter.

What does "pursuing health" look like?

- Taking responsibility for our own growth
- Following Jesus and living life as part of His Kingdom
- Refusing to lead on empty
- Including spiritual disciplines in your daily life
- Partnering in true community
- Keeping a balanced approach to service and rest





spiritual
+ emotional
physical health

maturity

spiritual foundations

Eugene Peterson from his audio series, "Follow the Leader,"

Leadership that is not well grounded in followership—following Jesus—is dangerous to both the church and the world.

Leaders influence followers far more by the context out of which they live—body language, personal values, social relationships, dress, consumer choices, chosen companions—than the text they articulate.

Leadership is not primarily a skill, although it employs skills. Leadership is a way of living that suffuses everything we do and are. Leadership is a way of being in the family and marriage, a way of being among friends, a way of going to work, a way of climbing mountains; most basically, a way of following Jesus.

And so in a culture in which there is an enormous attention to leadership, it is essential that we take a long hard look at what is previous and foundational to leadership, namely, "followership"— following Jesus (Mark 1:17).

Followership gets us moving obediently in a way of life that is visible and audible in Jesus, a way of speaking, thinking, imagining, and praying that is congruent with immediate realities of "kingdom" living.

Following enters into a way of life that is given its character and shape by the leader. Following involves picking up rhythms and ways of doing things that are mostly unsaid. Following means that you can't separate what the leader is doing and the way she or he is doing it.

For those of us who are in positions of leadership—as parents, teachers, pastors, employers, physicians, lawyers, homemakers, students, farmers, writers— our following skills take priority over our leadership skills.



"I wanted others to do what only I could do: take responsibility for my own spiritual health and nourishment".

Wayne Cordeiro
The Divine Mentor



spiritual disciplines

Developing your relationship with God is vital to your spiritual health. Coming to church, being a part of a small group and serving are all great, but if we are not developing a daily walk with Jesus, then we are like a person who eats once a week. It's not enough. To nourish ourselves, we need to "be" with God.

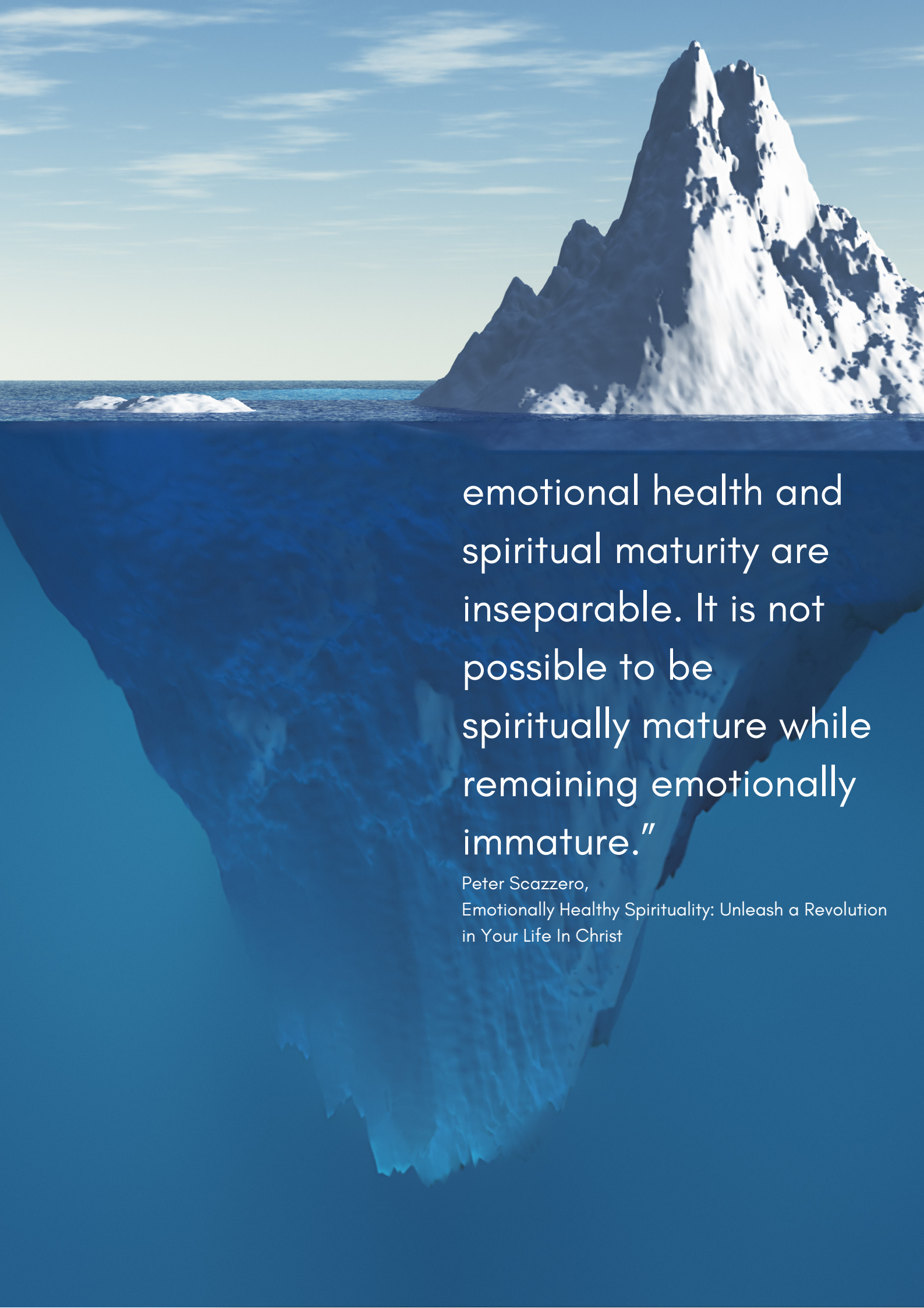
Taking responsibility for our own walks with Jesus is a mark of maturity. Learning to feed ourselves on the word of God and follow Christ in our everyday lives, is essential for wholeness.

How will we lead people to Jesus if we aren't doing that ourselves? We realise that we are all wired differently, that's why we talk about spiritual rhythms.

We encourage you to find a pattern that works with your schedule and your personality.

What do you mean by Spiritual Rhythms? When we talk about Spiritual rhythms, we are talking about the practise or disciplines that you add into your life to walk with Jesus. These may include:

- Prayer and Fasting
- Bible Reading and Journalling
- Silence/Solitude
- Worship
- Meditating on the Word of God
- Rest / Sabbath (creating space to enjoy God and His creation)



emotional health and
spiritual maturity are
inseparable. It is not
possible to be
spiritually mature while
remaining emotionally
immature."

Peter Scazzero,
Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash a Revolution
in Your Life In Christ

levels of spiritual maturity

Taken from Peter Scazzero with Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: Updated and Expanded Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

**How do I
discover
where I am
emotionally
in my walk
with Christ?
Here are a
few
indicators.**

Emotional infants. I look for other people to take care of me emotionally and spiritually. I often have difficulty in describing and experiencing my feelings in healthy ways and rarely enter the emotional world of others.

I am consistently driven by a need for instant gratification, often using others as objects to meet my needs. People sometimes perceive me as inconsiderate and insensitive. I am uncomfortable with silence or being alone.

When trials, hardships, or difficulties come, I want to quit God and the Christian life. I sometimes experience God at church and when I am with other Christians, but rarely when I am at work or home.

Emotional children. When life is going my way, I am content. However, as soon as disappointment or stress enter the picture, I quickly unravel inside. I often take things personally, interpreting disagreements or criticism as a personal offense. When I don't get my way, I often complain, throw an emotional tantrum, withdraw, manipulate, drag my feet, become sarcastic, or take revenge. I often end up living off the spirituality of other people because I am so overloaded and distracted. My prayer life is primarily talking to God, telling him what to do and how to fix my problems. Prayer is a duty, not a delight.

Emotional adolescents. I don't like it when others question me. I often make quick judgments and interpretations of people's behaviour. I withhold forgiveness to those who sin against me, avoiding or cutting them off when they do something to hurt me. I subconsciously keep records on the love I give out. I have trouble really listening to another person's pain, disappointments, or needs without becoming preoccupied with myself. I sometimes find myself too busy to spend adequate time nourishing my spiritual life. I attend church and serve others but enjoy few delights in Christ. My Christian life is still primarily about doing, not being with him. Prayer continues to be mostly me talking with little silence, solitude, or listening to God.

Emotional adults. I respect and love others without having to change them or becoming judgmental. I value people for who they are, not for what they can give me or how they behave. I take responsibility for my own thoughts, feelings, goals, and actions. I can state my own beliefs and values to those who disagree with me without becoming adversarial. I am able to accurately self assess my limits, strengths, and weaknesses. I am deeply convinced that I am absolutely loved by Christ and, as a result, do not look to others to tell me I am okay. I am able to integrate doing for God and being with him (Mary and Martha). My Christian life has moved beyond simply serving Christ to loving him and enjoying communion with him.

self awareness

Self awareness is the key to self control, decision making, creativity, learning and growth. It is a vital step on the path to wholeness and a building block toward emotional health.

God himself has emotions. God weeps, laughs, grieves, delights, gets angry and feels compassion. We are created in His image, and we all experience the full range of feelings at different times in our lives.

Regulating our emotions and aligning them with the truth of God's word is a sign of maturity and brings stability to those around us.

In the scripture we are instructed to "guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Prov 4:23, NIV).

As leaders, we will all face times when we struggle with our emotions. Each person has a fuel tank with a certain capacity. We drain our emotional tank as we give energy to work, our families, and other responsibilities. Each person has to expend a part of their tank to make progress, maintain stability or create change in their lives.

For many, we don't realise we are leaking until it's too late.





before it's too late

Empty.

What image comes to mind when you think of "empty"?

(The first image that comes to my mind is running out of Petrol).

You've been looking down at the dash for a day at the warning light that has been on the gauge. When it starts to flash you know you are in trouble.

You have a limited time to fill up before the tank is EMPTY and you cannot move at all. Momentum ceases and you find yourself stranded and in desperate need of help. So often even when the warning signs appear, we refuse to "fill up".

Cars run on empty for many different reasons:

- Forgetting to refuel
- Getting detoured
- Not watching the gauge
- Not starting out with a full tank
- Assuming that you have enough to make the journey without stopping
- The load you're carrying is heavier than you thought
- You can't find a place to fill up
- Driving too far without refueling
- Too much acceleration
- Wrong substance in the tank
- Leakages and/or blockages



refuse to lead on empty

People run on empty for many of the same reasons:

- We assume we will make it without stopping
- We get detoured off of our assignment
- We're not watching the gauges of our lives
- We didn't start the journey with a full tank
- The load we're carrying is so heavy that we require more energy than we have
- We leak fuel instead of using it to fuel our purpose
- We burn too much fuel because we are trying to keep up a hectic pace
- Our fuel tank is blocked The list could go on and is probably quite unique to us all.

John 7:37b-38, "Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." (NIV)

We can not lead effectively on empty, when emotionally we are drained of all energy. Taking time to recoup and fill up (spiritually and physically) is **ESSENTIAL** to healthy emotions.

If I could give you a gauge that measured the fuel that drives you, what would your reading be?

Paul reprimanded the Galatian church, "You began your life in Christ by the Spirit. Now you are trying to make it complete by your own power. That is foolish. We need to live our lives full of God's abiding presence and enablement.



It's Bigger Than You!

Paul commanded the Ephesian church in Ephesian 5:18 to 'BE FILLED with the Spirit'. The original readers would have seen the text 'be filled' in capital letters. This was not just a suggestion, it was in capitals so it was a commandment. Paul's command to BE FILLED was a continuous collective command, so it can be read, 'be filled and keep on being filled'.

It is a daily privilege and collective invitation because it is offered to all. 'You all be filled with the Spirit'.

Why do I need to be full?

Filling up is not just for you. When you take the time to fill up, it not only benefits you, it directly benefits those around you. We are to be His influencers in the world. Acts 1:8 says, "You will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and YOU WILL BE My witnesses" My influencers. My ambassadors. The direct result of being filled with the Spirit of God should be that you have an abundance to give! That's why Paul was so adamant for us to be BE FILLED!

There's a hurting, dying world that are counting on you, whether they know it or not, to be filled.

In Australia, summer brings with it "bushfire season". As fires rage through forest areas, firefighters pull long hoses attached to a supply of water to combat the flames. The firefighters need to be prepared so that when the time comes, they have something to put the fires out. What would happen if the firefighters had neglected to fill their tanks?

You are meant to give FREELY, receive so that you can GIVE in the same spirit you have received.



physical health

Most of us could recite the safety instructions given by the cabin crew when we are flying. The big rule for adults is, "in case of an emergency where oxygen is required, put your own face mask on first".

Instinct would often tell us to forget ourselves, but if we do that, we will be no help to anyone else, particularly the vulnerable.

Looking after ourselves is like this picture. If we are depleted in mind and body then we will sideline ourselves from helping others. But if we are well then we will be able to fulfil the call of God on our lives.


The Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 6:19, "Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own." (NLT)

Therefore, if God lives in us, then we need to take care of our bodies, which is the temple and dwelling place of God in our lives.

We are to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God. We can do that in different ways. Everyone is on their own journey in this area. The bottom line is this, God wants us to look after ourselves because he made us and he loves us!

We are all works in progress, and this can be a particularly tough area (of challenge) for many. God wants us to be good stewards of our bodies so that we can carry out the assignments he has for us to do.

Ask God to show you how to do just that. Talk to medical professionals and do all you can to be around for the next generation!



“Healthy
things grow

clear communication

clear is kind. unclear is unkind. | Brene Brown



clarity builds trust

In a family, communication is key to the effective working of daily life. The same is true for our church family. In order for us to work together and be on the same page with one heart and mind, we need to work on our communication skills.


Most of us avoid clarity because we tell ourselves we're being kind; when what we're actually doing is being unkind and unfair. In other words, we fear being uncomfortable, and that self-protection is harmful. Clear communication is about: articulating expectations, using the appropriate form of communication for the information and taking the time to clarify understanding.

Communicating promptly and clearly is a mark of integrity, respect, and leadership. Playright and critic George Bernard Shaw is quoted in Marlene Caroselli's book, *Leadership Skills for Managers*: "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place".

Being clear with our words minimises confusion. The general rule of thumb is: the more clean, clear, and concise, the better chance your message will be understood and remembered.

Language matters. Taking the time to choose the right words, at the right time is a sign of respect and love.

Ephesians 4:29, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." (NIV)



resolving conflict in a healthy way

Conflict isn't comfortable. Sometimes it's because of misunderstandings or personality clashes. Other times it is as a result of a bad attitude, a refusal to compromise or a rebellious spirit toward authority. The bible is full of people who had conflict in their lives and ministries. It's not new. Conflicts happen because we are all different. We're not robots and each person brings different perspectives to different matters.

There are many different resources on conflict resolution in the workplace and even help on how to resolve conflict within the home, from well known mediators and counsellors. The difference with us as believers and especially leaders in the church, is our commitment to follow the pattern for conflict that is outlined in scripture.

Our problems arise when we let ungodly thinking on conflict infiltrate our conversations and attitudes.

Because we are all human, conflict is inevitable but it doesn't have to be damaging or hurtful.

Effective leaders don't ignore conflict. They manage it by creating an environment in which people are enabled to work through relational friction on a one-on-one basis. Only after such efforts have failed do we enter the conflict, and then only for the purpose of bringing about reconciliation. Conflicts can't be avoided, but they can be managed.

A wise leader will devote him or herself to learning how to do just that.

We aren't perfect and we will all make mistakes in this area. The key is having a right spirit, clean conscience and a listening ear to the Spirit of God. Resolving conflict doesn't always mean that we will end up agreeing with each other, but it does mean that we submit to one another and to the different spiritual authority God has assigned to each one.

It's a choice

Words are important

The average person spends one fifth of his or her life talking. If all of our words were put into print the result would be: a single day's words would fill a 50 page book, while in a year's time the average person's words would fill 132 books of 200 pages each. There are 800,000 words in the English Language, 300,000 are technical terms. The average person knows 10,000 words and uses 5,000 in everyday speech. Words get spoken out of our mouths without a second thought. Emails, facebook comments, SMS and zoom conversations happen often without a thought as to the effect of our words. Sarcastic comments, dirty jokes, sniping remarks, complaints, arguments, and we don't even blink. All in a day's speech really and it's not hurting anyone, is it? If only those words were true. The problem is that even as believers we can easily be out of control and live with the same standards as the world (we lie to cover our tracks, we use our words to meddle, manipulate and "fix").

Words matter

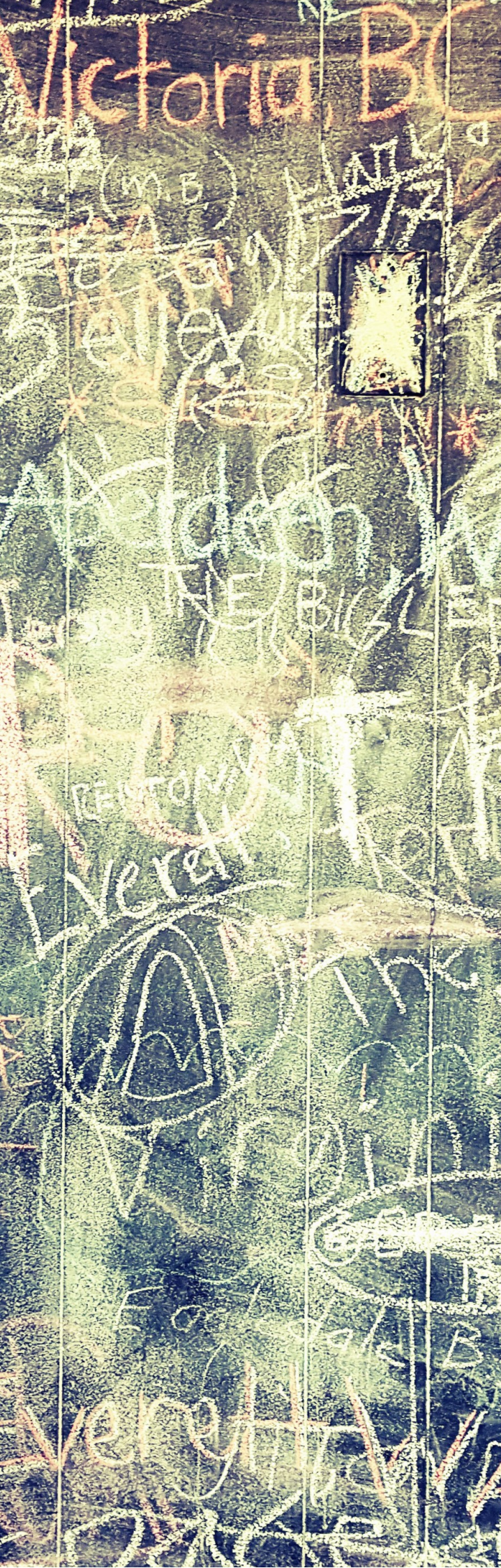
And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you." Matthew 12:36-37 (NLT)

The psalmist's prayer in Psalm 19:14 was, 'May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.'

Words create

Proverbs 18 says death and life is in the power of our tongue. Words are powerful and we need to take them seriously. They contain creative power to bring life and healing or death to any situation. We are created in God's image and when He spoke the world was born. What are you birthing with your words today?





Words reveal

Luke 6:45 says, "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. (NIV)

"Instead of showing love among yourselves you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another" Galatians 5:15 (NLT).

"The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things" Proverbs 15:28 (ESV)

Words affect

In fact, the impact of words on our bodies, families, church and community can be so powerful that James took the trouble to use seven word pictures in the hope that you'd read it and relate to one of them and understand how important the words

Words can destroy

Words are like stones. If they contain beauty, people will treasure them. But if they contain hurt, accusation, pain, slander or lies, then people toss them aside after they have caused damage.

Proverbs 11:17, "Your own soul is nourished when you are kind, but you destroy yourself when you are cruel."(TLB)

Proverbs 11:9, "Evil words destroy one's friends; wise discernment rescues the godly". (NET)

Proverbs 15:1, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but hard words stir up anger." (NIV)

Proverbs 15:4, "Gentle words bring life and health; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit". (NET)

Words can build up

1 Thessalonians 5:11 , "Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up..." (NIV)

Proverbs 16:24, "Kind words are like honey-sweet to the soul and healthy for the body." (NLT)

By your words you can create an environment where faith can live, hope can breathe and dreams can come true!



a parable

An elderly man had serious hearing problems for a number of years. His family tried again and again to convince him to get a hearing aid. Finally he relented. He went to the doctor and was fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed him to hear 100 percent. A month later he went back to the doctor.

The doctor said with a smile, "Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again. The old man replied, "Oh, I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to their conversations. I've changed my will three times!"

1 Peter 3:10 (AMP), "For let him who wants to enjoy life and see good days keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile (treachery or deceit)."

Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." (NIV)

The 10 commandments of handling conflict

BY JOHN C. MAXWELL

1. Obey the 101% Principle

What's that? "Find the 1% that you agree on and give it 100% of your effort."

2. Love people more than opinions

It's my belief that anyone who loves his opinions more than his friends will defend his opinions and destroy his friends.

3. Give others the benefit of the doubt

I've often said that to handle yourself, you should use your head. But to handle others, you should use your heart.

4. Learn to be flexible

Ask yourself two important questions: "Does this really make a difference?" and "Will I care about this tomorrow?"

5. Provide an escape hatch for the other person in the conflict

It's tempting in a conflict to try to argue the other person into a corner, to try to force them to agree with you. But it's more realistic and effective to gently persuade them.

6. Check your own attitudes

Perhaps it's time to take a look in the mirror and see if your actions or attitudes are the cause of the recurring conflict.

7. Don't overreact

When conflict arises, it's important to keep it in perspective and react appropriately. How big of an issue is it, really? Does your reaction match it in intensity?

8. Don't become defensive

Avoid the blame game, and you'll have a clearer head for approaching the problem logically.

9. Welcome the conflict

Rather than running from conflict, or reacting with horror when it comes up, focus on resolving it together and making it a learning experience.

10. Take a risk

This is the hardest part. When faced with the potential for conflict, we may be tempted to disconnect and distrust. We think that will avoid pain. But the reality is that everyone in relationship gets hurt.

show thoughtfulness

kindness | generosity | appreciation | gratitude | courteous | considerate



People often forget what you say but they remember how you made them feel.

A good meal often has a "secret sauce". It's a distinct flavour that is unique to the restaurant, something special that makes the meal memorable and makes you want to come back again and again.

If our teams at HopePoint had a "secret sauce" it is to "show thoughtfulness". We have watched time and time again as this one distinguishing feature moves a team from good to great. When a leader or team member shows thoughtfulness intentionally to show genuine care and appreciation, teams begin to flourish. People want to turn up and want to be a part. Volunteers know that they won't be taken for granted and that we care more for people, than we do the task we are fulfilling.

We care and LOVE people. Not just for what they can do, but for who they are. We are commanded to LOVE God and LOVE people. Those people may be inside the house of God or outside. Either way, we want to demonstrate the love and care of the Father toward all those we come in contact with.

To show thoughtfulness to those around us means we are intentional and considerate in our appreciation, generosity, kindness, love and care. Thoughtfulness is personal. It's not a cookie cutter approach. It's not a chore. It's genuinely thinking about ways to encourage, appreciate and build the people that we serve alongside in our church family.

Thoughtfulness is not just for the team leaders. Thoughtfulness is found in all areas of teams that are flourishing, from teenage volunteers encouraging adult team members through a kind text message or note of thanks.

The bottomline is this: we don't want to wait until it's too late to show people how much they mean to us. We take every opportunity to get creative in how we show honour to each person.

Some of the ways we can do this practically are:

- Encourage and show appreciation of people
- "Turning up" and "helping out" when they need it most
- Showing a genuine interest in people and their families
- Not "using" people for what they can do for us• As much as we can, do things "with people"
- Be friendly
- Celebrate accomplishments and successes
- Don't hand over a task too quickly



I will Prioritise People Over A Task

"Grace has to be the loveliest word in the English language. It embodies almost every attractive quality we hope to find in others. Grace is a gift of the humble to the humiliated. Grace acknowledges the ugliness of sin by choosing to see beyond it. Grace accepts a person as someone worthy of kindness despite whatever grime or hard-shell casing keeps him or her separated from the rest of the world. Grace is a gift of tender mercy when it makes the least sense." Charles Swindoll.

The grace that God gives grants us first the power to receive love, and then the power to give it. A grace that changes us, shapes us, and leads us to a life that is eternally altered. You are a work in his hands. A work in progress. The truth is everyONE matters! You serve a God who is looking for ways to be good to you, and to show you His goodness with his kindness. Will you pass it on?

KINDNESS = Goodness in action

In the New Testament, the Greek word translated "kindness" means "goodness in action". The kindness of God, therefore, refers to God's goodness in action. It is God's goodness expressed in deeds of kindness towards man. Nothing demonstrates genuine kindness and how to prioritise people over a task like the story Jesus told called, "The Good Samaritan".

To show thoughtfulness is to see people for who they are and who they are becoming. In the Good Samaritan story that Jesus told in Luke 20, we see a man stop and help someone he didn't need to, when others who should have turned a blind eye. We can learn a lot about what thoughtfulness looks like from this parable.



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Everyone wants a place to belong and to be seen. Really seen. For who they are and not just what they do



The Samaritan chose to SEE what others refused to look at and he FELT something they didn't. As verse 33 says, "He took pity" on the man lying in the ditch. All of the normal hostility between Jew and Samaritan was swept away as he allowed what he saw to affect his emotions. But it was not just a feeling. The Samaritan allowed his feelings to lead to action. He bandaged the man's wounds probably tearing up his own garments for this purpose. He poured on wine to cleanse his wounds and oil to soothe the pain. Both of these elements were highly prized and expensive remedies in this day. Then he placed the man on his own donkey and led the animal down the hot, dusty road to an inn. This meant the Samaritan would have to walk and we should note that this was also an act of great courage.

After all, this was Jewish territory and a Samaritan transporting the Jewish victim of a mugging would be subject to all kinds of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The Good Samaritan felt his pain. He touched him. He put the man on his own donkey. If you walk a donkey you are a servant.

To someone he doesn't know, he says to him, I will serve you". He takes him to an inn to take care of him. He sits by his bedside. He pays accommodation for the man and promises to cover any expense. Robbers took everything and abandoned him versus the Samaritan who paid for everything, stays with him and promises to return. SO LIKE JESUS!!

Is it like us?



show honour

The Greek word for honour is “time”. It means to treat as precious, weighty, valuable, to ascribe worth, esteem and value. The opposite of this, is the Greek word “atimos”, which literally means to dishonour or to treat as ordinary or common. When we honour someone, we are esteeming them for their value and the value they add to our lives. If we are not careful, familiarity can breed complacency and an attitude of entitlement.

What happens when you treat what is valuable as common? In Mark 6 there’s a recount of when Jesus went to his hometown. In verse 3, it is noted that they refused to show Jesus honour and they refused to believe that anything good could come from Nazareth! As a result, verse 5 says that Jesus could not do any miracles among them. Without honour, Jesus could not fulfil His assignment among them. Honour is the soil for the miraculous to take place.

In our faith community, we understand that each person is made in the image of God. The signature on each person’s life is that of the Master Himself.

You Honour someone when you:

1. **Prioritise them**

Where you place someone says how you honour them. Romans 12:10b “Honour one another above yourselves”.

2. **Praise them**

Don’t withhold praise. Honour cannot be “stored” up. Honour can’t just be thought about. It must be expressed. Released. Poured out. Don’t be quick to express the negative and withhold the positive. Our words either honour or dishonour. Our tone can honour or dishonour. Honour is not unbridled flattery. Honour is looking for the best, focusing on the good and expressing it with your words. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing”.

3. **Protect them**

When you value something, you protect it. You protect it from being stolen! You protect it from being destroyed. Be aware that there is an adversary who is out to steal, kill and destroy. Prowling around like a burglar, trying to entrap those who call themselves Christ followers.



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Showing
thoughtfulness
to others is what
makes a good
team, great.

bring our best

We refuse to bring anything short of our best.

The commitment to "bring our best", is all about making a commitment to making things better. Whether that be a process, ministry event, program, attitude or facility space. We should always be asking ourselves, "how can I make IT better"? To have this commitment, there needs to be a foundational understanding, that there is always room for improvement!

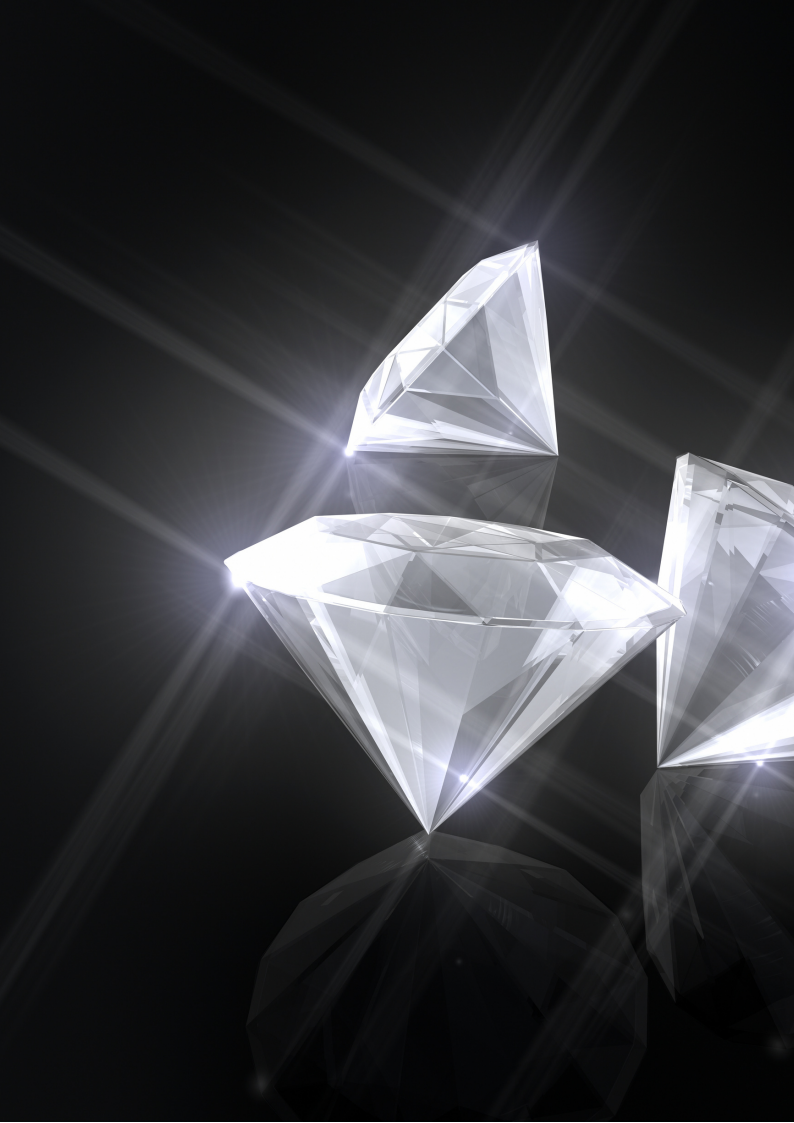
Although our message remains, the methods we use change. "Bringing our Best" is all about offering to God our very best effort in a spirit of excellence. God wants His people to excel in both who they are (inward character) and in what they do (behaviour or good deeds).

Bringing our best is a collective commitment. It's more than just one person's best. It's all of us, coming together to offer to God our worship through service and ministry. Refusing to settle for, "near enough".

It doesn't mean perfection. Excellence is about doing our best and holding nothing back in our effort. We want to make sure that we are demonstrating being a people who do things with an excellent spirit.

The Bible tells us more than once that Daniel was a man who had an excellent spirit. What is that excellent spirit and how can we hope to have the same excellent spirit and attitude that Daniel had? Daniel's spirit was the result of the way he handled himself, and the way he treated other people, and most of all, the manner in which he served his God. These are all key factors in the development of Daniel's character and nature.





Characteristics of leading with an excellent spirit:

- Repentant heart
- Person of integrity
- Obedient to the call of God on your life, living on assignment
- Person of prayer
- Be courageous
- Refuses to let the spirit of the world influence decisions!

A person with an excellent spirit, gives God's Spirit room to produce in us the fruit that will remain.

At HopePoint, we believe that to produce things with excellence we can follow a simple three step process. To work on it we take time to:

1. Clarify the Win
2. Evaluate
3. Celebrate

These are outlined in detail in the book "7 Practices of Effective Ministry" by Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner and Lane Jones and "Making Vision Stick: Celebrate it Systematically" by Andy Stanley.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, "And may the Lord cause you to increase and excel and overflow in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; so that He may strengthen and establish your hearts without blame in holiness in the sight of our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints (God's people)" (AMP)

1 Thessalonians 4:1, " Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more." (NASB)

1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God". (NET)



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So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.

Romans 12: 1-2 (MSG)



Charles R. Swindoll, author of the widely read book, *The Grace Awakening*, writes this about attitude, "The longer I live the more I realise the impact of attitude on life. Attitude is more important than the past, than education, money, circumstances, failures and successes and much more than what other people think, say or do." He goes on to write that, "neither our appearance, giftedness or skills impact our lives as much as our attitude. Our attitude, unlike other facts in our lives, is something we can control. We are all in charge of our attitudes".

At HopePoint, three attitudes help us "bring our best" in everything we do:

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To bring our best we demonstrate a CAN DO attitude and an EXTRA MILE SPIRIT

a can do attitude

Before you sign up for a team to serve in, we are all members of the "Whatever it takes" team. Nothing is "beneath us". We are servant leaders and it is a privilege to serve God by looking after His people.

A person who has a "can-do" attitude is a blessing to be around. They foster creativity and big thinking. They are positive and look for solutions rather than focus on the problems. It doesn't mean they never say no to someone or a task, but rather than washing their hands of a task that they have to turn down, their attitude is different. They still choose to help with uplifting conversation, solutions, prayer and encouragement.

A can-do attitude, doesn't "pass the buck" and it doesn't say "that's too hard". It's not "airy fairy" or "pie in the sky" either, but it shows a genuine passion for the house of God and the people of God. It shows interest in things that don't necessarily affect them. It combines FAITH with a passion to serve. We can all DO something!



do it with the right spirit

In leadership, integrity is a prerequisite to credibility

At HopePoint our desire is that we would be transparent leaders who operate with open hands and open hearts. That we have clean hearts and a right spirit before the Lord. C.S. Lewis said, "Integrity is doing the right thing when no one is watching".

Many people today view integrity as an out-dated idea. As Christ followers, integrity is essential to our character.

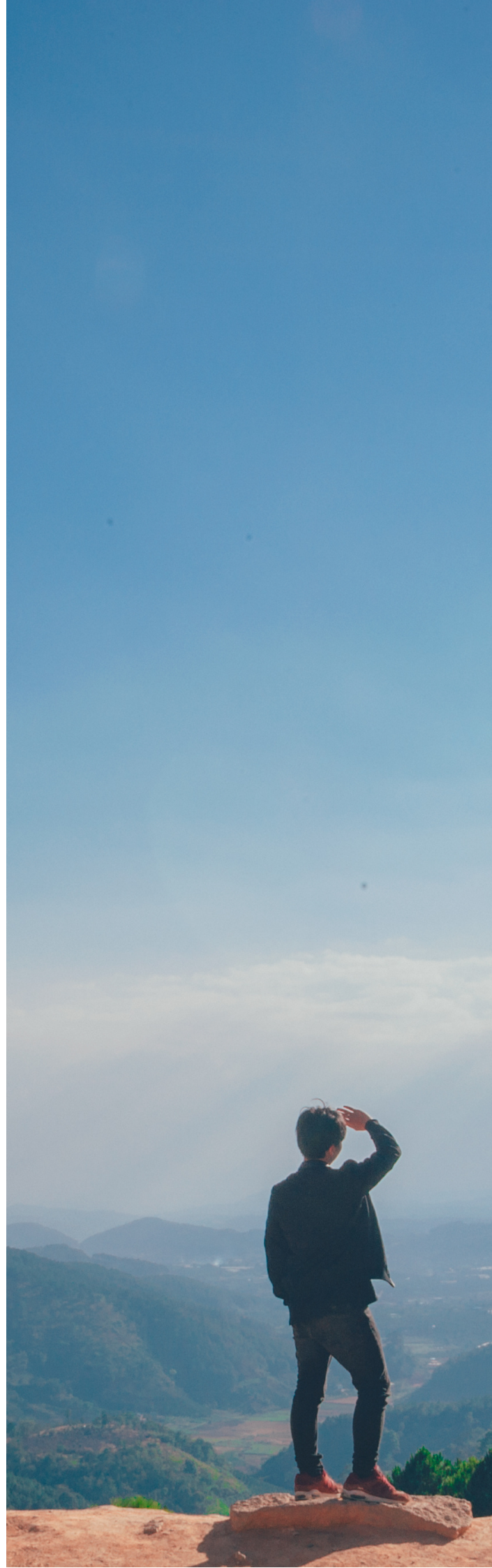
Our talk must match our walk. We don't live with masks on. We live our lives the same wherever we are and whoever we are with. We are people of great authenticity without any sense of pretense.

When we think no one is watching, we should remember that GOD is always watching.

The little choices we make, and the heart and spirit behind our decisions are known by our Heavenly Father. The Psalmist instructs us that not a word is on our tongue that God doesn't know what we are going to say (Psalm 139). God knows all about you. Where you go, where you rest, what you say and where you let your mind wander.

Jesus instructed the first century disciples that their intentions and desires were important, that motives matter (Matthew 5:28). What was Jesus doing? He was advising the people that their intentions, and desires are known by the Heavenly Father!

Who we are when we think no one is looking MATTERS!





the extra mile

The term “extra mile” has become a well-known phrase used in society. The Collins dictionary defines “extra mile” as a “phrase used to say that someone is willing to make a special extra effort in order to achieve something”. The phrase however, originated in a sermon that Jesus told at his famous “sermon on the mount”. Jesus gathered listeners on the side of a mountain overlooking the Sea of Galilee, a crowd that consisted of Jewish peasants, farmers, rural artisans and nationalistic Roman-haters. He instructs them on how the Father wants us to live. He wants us to be giving, loving, forgiving, gentle, extra-mile type of people. He takes the Ten Commandments and then says to “do more”. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.

Matthew 5:41 (NIV), The Roman mile was about 1.9km. In ancient Rome a centurion could command those who were not Roman citizens to carry their equipment for a mile. Generally the conquered citizens resented the forced labour, but first century Christians began a tradition of “going the extra mile”. Not only would they do what they were required by law to do, but they would do more – by choice.

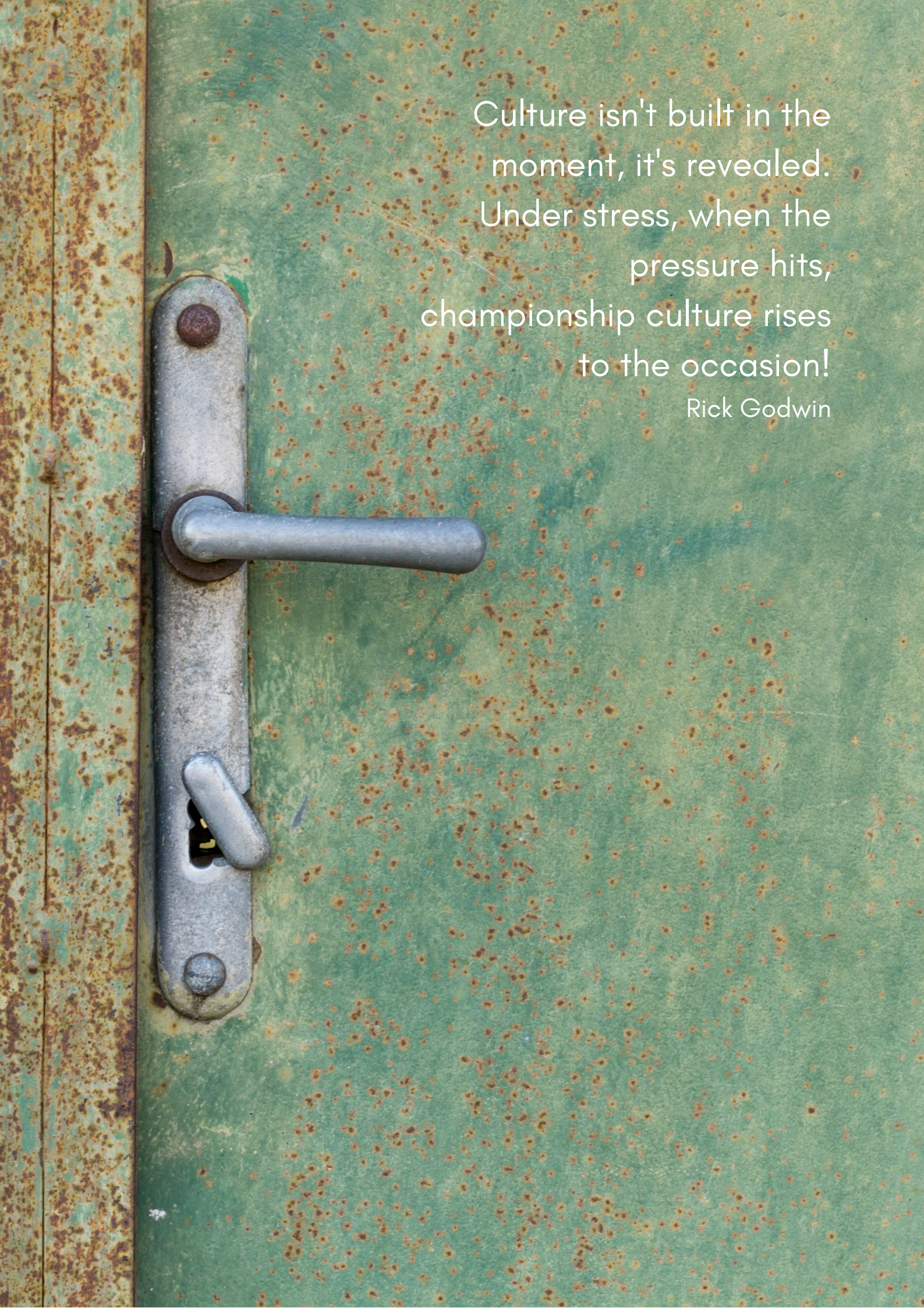
However, notice the wording that Jesus uses. He doesn’t say anything about a Roman soldier.

He says, “If anyone”. To you and I today this would mean, “If a neighbour” or a “co-worker” or a “church member” would compel us to do a certain thing then we should do twice as much as they expect us to do.

As HopePoint leaders, we do things with a “can do, above and beyond” spirit. When we are asked to do a task, we are reminded of Jesus words in Matthew 5:41. The extra mile refers to acts of service for others that go beyond what is required or expected. As much as you give a cup of water in HIS name, you do it unto Jesus (Matthew 10:42, NIV).

People may not notice that you go the extra mile. Of course there will be times that if you do choose to go the extra mile other people will notice. You may even be rewarded for it. A raise, a bonus, or a simple thank you. However, there will be other times when you go the extra mile and no one else will see it. But you know what? Somebody will know. And that somebody is YOU.

What does going the extra mile say about you? At the end of the day we want to be around people who show passion and really want to make a difference. When you choose to go the extra mile it immediately shows you have initiative. Going the extra mile shows you care about quality work, that you take responsibility seriously. In a nutshell, it shows that you care!

The background of the image is a close-up of a green-painted metal door. The paint is heavily weathered and covered in numerous small, brown, circular rust spots. On the left side, there is a vertical silver metal handle and lock assembly. The handle is a simple, cylindrical bar. Below it, there is a lock mechanism with a small, rectangular keyhole. The overall texture is rough and aged.

Culture isn't built in the
moment, it's revealed.
Under stress, when the
pressure hits,
championship culture rises
to the occasion!

Rick Godwin

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