

Good and Faithful

Performance and character are critical for effective camp ministry

*Is your ministry
influencing lots of lives
but not your own?*

by Dan Bolin,
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A friend of mine once joked that he didn't care if the pilot of his airplane was moral or immoral—he just wanted him to take off and land the plane safely. I can understand. In a sense, I really don't care about the character of a surgeon as long as he can remove my appendix and stitch me up successfully.

In certain professions, function may be enough to succeed on a certain level. But in some ways, Christian camping is more complex; performance matters, but character is essential.

Godly character is critical in all ministries—certainly those that relate to children, and especially those involving overnight supervision of minors. In Christian camping, there is an inseparability between who we are and what we do; both are critical.

Returning home after a long absence, the master in the biblical parable of the talents (see Matt. 25:14–30) evaluates the performance of his three servants. The first two earn the labels of good and faithful. The third, however, is pronounced to be wicked and lazy. All three servants are judged first on character, and second on performance.

Before the master evaluated his servants' accomplishments, he put their hearts under the microscope and judged them for quality. Then he reviewed his servants' work—particu-

larly the style and effort. His comments were direct and precise: faithful or lazy.

The first two servants demonstrated the goodness of their hearts with a faithful work ethic, successfully doubling their resources. The third servant had no profit to bring to his master because his wicked heart found excuses to avoid work, which supported his lazy lifestyle.

Camp is a place of growth and development for both campers and staff. Performance reviews and formal evaluations are often a central part of the maturation process.

As leaders, we tend to review behaviors and evaluate activities; sometimes we miss the condition of the heart. Even the descriptor *performance* keeps our focus on the visible fruit rather than the root.

Don't settle for merely an inspection of results. Look through the successes and failures to find the motives that drive the behavior, and identify the character traits that need to be encouraged or eliminated.

Look at your own heart as well. Perform an internal assessment of your character and productivity. Is your ministry influencing lots of lives but not your own?

Don't settle for godly character without impact and don't give in to successful ministry from a compromised heart. Keep striving for our Master's double pronouncement: good and faithful. ■

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