

On Integrity in SBC Leadership

WHEREAS, Integrity in leadership is consequential to the furtherance of God's mission and the health of the flock of God, whether the authority is over the family, the church, the state, or private institutions, (Psalm 78:72; Proverbs 10:9, 11:3); and

WHEREAS, Scripture teaches that leaders must uphold the highest standards of integrity, live above reproach (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), serve others (Matthew 20:26), walk in a manner worthy of imitation (Hebrews 13:7), set an example in godly speech and doctrine (Titus 2:7-8), remain faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2), fear God, be trustworthy, hate a bribe (Exodus 18:21), feed the sheep (John 21:15-17), model humility (James 4:10), be honest (Proverbs 11:3), love from a pure heart (1 Timothy 1:5-6), and continually practice genuine repentance and sincere faith (Psalm 51; Luke 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:5-6); and

WHEREAS, Scripture also reminds leaders that they must pay careful attention to themselves (Acts 20:28) because they will give an account to God (Romans 14:12), who will expose the deeds done in darkness and judge more strictly those who lead (Ephesians 5:11-14; Hebrews 13:17; James 3:1); and

WHEREAS, God also pronounces woes and warnings to those leaders who fail to uphold the highest standards of integrity, destroy and scatter the sheep (Jeremiah 23:1), set their heart on gain (Ezekiel 33:31), neglect the hurting (Ezekiel 34:4), rule with harshness (Mark 10:24), lead others to stumble (1 Corinthians 8:9), and demonstrate false piety (Matthew 23:1-36); and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists have been blessed with countless leaders who have walked in integrity of heart in individual churches, local associations, state conventions, national entities, and other ministries to cooperate for the sake of the Great Commission (Psalm 101:2; Matthew 28:19-20); and

WHEREAS, We celebrate the legacy of faithful leaders who bolster the faith of others, model holiness that others strive to imitate (1 Corinthians 11:1), and call others to salvation in Jesus, who is able to keep us from stumbling and present us blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy (Jude 1:24); and

WHEREAS, The legacy of faithful leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention has been tarnished by public failures of leadership that have exposed private sin, indifference to abuse, financial impropriety, sexual scandals, deceptive practices, and abuse of power; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, affirm and thank God for the righteous and godly leaders within this Convention, acknowledging the faithful service of those, many in obscurity, who are worthy of double honor (1 Timothy 5:17); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call to repentance leaders who have engaged in public or private sin, abused their power, misused Convention funds, committed crimes, engaged in deception, covered for the sin of others, resisted God-ordained authority, or violated trust; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reject the notion that giftedness, charisma, or influence supersede character and qualification, knowing that “man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reaffirm our 2018 Resolution “On The Holiness and Integrity of Ministry Leaders,” which states that “leaders are to be examples by their faith in Christ and their lives of ongoing repentance of sin” and should be “held to a high standard for their doctrine, speech, and conduct, the standard being the very character and example of Jesus Christ”; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge leaders to cultivate a sincere dependence on Jesus, imitating him in servanthood, humility, and obedience, and to resist prioritizing results over character; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we implore leaders who are in disqualifying sin to examine themselves, call upon the Lord in repentance, and voluntarily remove themselves from their position in order to pursue conciliation, knowing that they might be permanently disqualified; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we entreat Southern Baptist churches to call their leaders to be above reproach, subject those in unrepentant sin to church discipline, and remove those who have disqualified themselves, understanding that accountability by the church is a grace from God (Matthew 18; Galatians 6:1; 1 Timothy 1:19-20); and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we call on all leaders to cultivate integrity as they “Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” (1 Timothy 6:11-12), knowing that “the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).

