



St. Paul Baptist Church
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Growth Occurs When Vision and Values Match

Isaiah 1:10 -17 NKJV

10 Hear the word of the Lord, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the law of our God, You people of Gomorrah: **11** "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? "Says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. **12** "When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? **13** Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies — I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. **14** Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me; I am weary of bearing them. **15** When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. **16** "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, **17** Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

God scolds the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, even calling them rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah, the wicked cities He wiped out in Genesis chapter 19-because they continued to perform religious rituals long after their hearts had grown cold and distant toward God. In other words, they continued to pursue a godly vision far from the values that birthed it. They had become empty, hollow leaders.

God resents perfunctory behavior. He doesn't want leaders who merely go through the motions. Leaders can look good while pursuing a worthwhile vision that they no longer consider valuable. Leaders find power only when:

- 1. Their vision and values match. Colossians 3:23** and whatsoever ye do.do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men.
- 2. Their lifestyle and lip service match. Matthews 15:8** This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honored me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
- 3. Their conduct and character match. 1 Corinthians 15:33** Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.
- 4. Their image and integrity match. Proverbs 10:9** Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but the person who makes his way crooked will be found out.

5. **Their promises and production match. Ephesians 6:6** Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.
6. **Their strategy and support match. Proverbs 15:22** Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed.

Note: God was unhappy with the attitude in which the sacrifices were being made to Him. God sees our heart and the intent of our character. We must have a love and passion for everything we do for the Lord and never allow the extraordinary to become ordinary.

Special Note: Based on the Word of God, a healthy vision is always rooted in and guided by godly values. Your values act as an unchanging foundation, while your vision is the outward expression of those values. When they are properly aligned a person's life is marked by direction, purpose and blessings.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Johnny Martin". The ink is black and the signature is fluid and elegant.

Rev. Johnny Martin