

Sins That Wreck Ministries

The main sins that leaders have to guard against in the New Testament are sex, money, and power. These sins are especially serious because they disqualify from leadership and discredit the gospel. Many pastors and leaders of Christian organisations have fallen in these ways. How can we guard against these temptations and avoid falling into sin? There is a need for proper accountability structures – both personally and organisationally. How do we ensure that we follow Christ' pattern of servant leadership, avoid sexual immorality, and make sure we observe the highest standards of financial probity in fundraising, budgeting, staff salaries, and accounting?

John Stevens is the National Director of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, a family of over 500 Bible-centred churches in the UK, a position that he has held since 2010. Prior to this he was one of the founding pastors of City Evangelical Church Birmingham, which was planted in the centre of the UK's 2nd largest city in 1999. He was instrumental in starting the Midlands Gospel Partnership, was the course Director of the Midlands Ministry Training Course and is a visiting lecturer at Oak Hill Theological College. John is also one of the pastors of Christchurch Market Harborough, a church he helped to plant when he took up his current role. He was converted whilst studying law at Cambridge University, and after taking a post-graduate degree at the University of Oxford worked for 16 years as a University Lecturer, ending his career as Deputy Head of the Law School at the University of Birmingham. John is married to Ursula and they have four children aged between 16 and 11. He blogs at www.john-stevens.com on theology, church life and ministry, culture and politics.

1. Sin in the Life of Christians

- All Christians struggle against temptation
- All Christians fall into sin – 1 John 1v8-2v2; Romans 7
- All sin is equally deserving of death – Romans 1
- All sin has been forgiven by the death of Jesus

2. Sin in the Life of Christian Leaders

- 1 Timothy 3v1-7; Titus 1v5-9
- A higher standard is expected of Christian leaders
- Christians leaders are expected to be mature and stable
- Some sins may disqualify leaders from ministry
- False teaching disqualifies leaders from ministry
- The great temptations for leaders are: Sex, Money and Power
- Public and notorious sins
- Damage to the work of the gospel
- Why are Christian leaders prone to sin?
 - Opportunity
 - Status
 - Loneliness

3. False Teaching

- Leaders must remain faithful to the gospel/faith
- Leaders who lose their faith
- Leaders who redefine the faith

- Leaders who become false teachers

4. Sexual Immorality

- 1 Corinthians 5v1-13; 6v12-20
- Billy Graham as a model of sexual integrity
- Examples of moral failure
 - Tullian Tchividjian
 - Andy Savage
 - Frank Page
 - Roy Clements
- Warnings against sexual immorality
- What is sexual immorality?
 - Adultery
 - Fornication
 - Homosexual sexual acts
 - Using prostitutes
 - Child sex abuse
 - Sexual harassment
 - Persistent use/addiction to pornography

5. Financial Impropriety

- Acts 5v1-10; 2 Corinthians 8v16-9v4
- Deceit and misuse of funds
- Misappropriation of resources
- Greed and personal extravagance

6. Sobriety

- Lack of self-control & moderation
- Addictions
- 1 Timothy 3v3
- Alcoholism
- Drug use
- Pornography

7. Sins of Power

- 1 Peter 5v1-4; Mark 41-45; 1 Timothy 3v2-3- Titus 1v7
- Dominance over others
- Exploitation
- Temper and anger

8. Resisting Sin

- Romans 6v1-14; 8v12-13; James 1v13-15
- Christians are set free from the power of sin
- God provides a way out of temptation

- Leaders need to hate sin
- Leaders need to mortify the flesh
- Leaders need to flee from sin
- Leaders need to be accountable to the local church
- Leaders need to seek help and support from others
- Leaders self-care
- Denominational and organisational support
 - Pastoral support
 - Accountability

9. Dealing with Leaders Who Sin

- 1 John 1v8-2v2
- Pastoral Care
- Repentance and forgiveness
- Church discipline if unrepentance
- Removal/resignation from ministry
- Restoration
- Possible disqualification from future ministry
 - Denominational and organisational policy

Further Reading:

John Armstrong, *The Stain That Stays: The Church's response to the sexual misconduct of its leaders* (Mentor)

Richard Foster, *Money, Sex and Power: The Challenge of the Disciplined Life: The Challenge to the Disciplined Life* (Hodder & Stoughton)

Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Zondervan)

John Piper, *Living in the Light: Money, Sex and Power* (Good Book Company)

John Piper, *Brothers We Are Not Professionals*

Gordon MacDonald, *Ordering Your Private World*