



# Design For Ministry

Depth Perception

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## Ethics Review

Scenario #1 : Two co-workers, one male the other female, discuss the wedding of the woman's brother the week before. Without hesitation, the woman reveals her remaining brothers took the married wedding photographer home with them for casual sex. The photographer's cuckolded husband is kept in the dark, but everyone within the social circle of the adulterers gets to gossip about it. No problem.

Scenario #2: At an electronics store, the manager makes small talk with a customer while changing a calculator battery. In doing so, he reveals that two of his clerks at his former store paid a savvy friend to take their math placement tests at a nearby state university. The customer remarked that this ought to be troubling to a manager since the employees didn't care about integrity. The manager shrugged it off. "I don't work at that store anymore," he said.

### *Are you troubled by these scenarios?*

What offends you the most? The fact these indiscretions were revealed? The fact these immoral activities were treated as normal behaviors? The fact these deceptive actions took place at all?

Christian leaders need their concern to go even deeper. The leader should find offense in a culture that develops people toward immorality, dishonesty and deceit.

The apostle Paul lived in such an era. Prostitution was a fixed institution. The churches he planted on the Isle of Crete ministered in a culture celebrated for its dishonesty. Political intrigue was everywhere. Slavery was widely practiced.

In Romans 1, Paul surveyed the catalog of ugly behaviors he had witnessed, and called it all sin – sin that separates us from God. We can read his list of sins in Romans 1 as a staircase downward into indecency. Notably, the first sins Paul lists are sexual ones. This is understandable because Paul points out we have a God-sized hole in our souls that needs to be filled. Where else would we turn but to other people? But at the tail end of Paul's list, the people most deeply immersed in sin, are those who develop other people's corruption. Paul considered influencing the culture toward immorality as the greatest stench there is in God's nose.

As we lead the church and in ministry, and make our plans to influence the world for good. We need to go after the real cancer, not just the surface abrasions of immorality. Leaders don't just practice their own integrity. They develop people who develop others.

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