

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

NOT VIOLENT

We are measuring a godly man by looking at the spiritual characteristics required of leaders in the church. Even if you do not aspire to a position, your practice should be the same if you want to be a maturing, godly man.

Our ninth characteristic is “not violent.”

1 Timothy 3:1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;

1 Timothy 3:3 not given to wine, **not violent...**

The KJV translates “not violent” as *striker*. It is describing someone who uses physical force to subdue another person. In context it means someone who is ready to go to blows.

This was quite controversial in the first century culture of Rome. Christian masters would need to take note of this. Beatings were allowed as punishment. Could a Christian master strike his slave? It makes for a very interesting discussion since the beatings were legal and disciplinary.

For example - This characteristic of a godly man doesn't nullify spanking your children. It means you must do so properly with patience. I'm just not sure how this was applied in the master-slave relationship.

It seems like this is a characteristic that ought to be so obvious it doesn't need to be listed. We'll see it is far more common than we initially might realize.

Two of the Bible's greatest heroes struggled as strikers.

Exodus 2:11 Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren.

Exodus 2:12 So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

Exodus 2:13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?"

Exodus 2:14 Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!"

Exodus 2:15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

Wow. He struck and killed a man. He broke man's law and God's law.

Later we read of Moses,

Numbers 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)

Forty years in the desert as a shepherd had given Moses plenty of re-training!

David was a striker. He took Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. After trying to cover his sin in other ways David arranged to have Uriah killed on the battlefield. He struck him by his power as king. Afterward it brought disaster into David's family culminating with his own son, Absalom, rising up against David to challenge him for the kingdom.

Violence is a big part of our culture. Most of the really good movies resolve conflict through violence. Something happens at the beginning, the bad guys do something 'bad,' and you know that the good guy is gonna have to kill them. Often brutally and usually more than once because they're not really dead the first time!

Violence in our homes is a sad reality. These stats are a little dated - 2005 - but they will paint the distressing picture for us.

- Approximately 95% of the victims of domestic violence are women. (Department of Justice figures).

- Every 9 seconds in the United States a woman is assaulted and beaten.
- 4,000,000 women a year are assaulted by their partners.
- In the United States, a woman is more likely to be assaulted, injured, raped, or killed by a male partner than by any other type of assailant.
- Every day, 4 women are murdered by boyfriends or husbands.
- Prison terms for killing husbands are twice as long as for killing wives.
- 93% of women who killed their mates had been battered by them. 67% killed them to protect themselves and their children at the moment of murder.
- 25% of all crime is wife assault.
- 70% of men who batter their partners either sexually or physically abuse their children.
- Domestic violence is the number one cause of emergency room visits by women.
- 73% of the battered women seeking emergency medical services have already separated from the abuser.
- Women are most likely to be killed when attempting to leave the abuser. In fact, they're at a 75% higher risk than those who stay.
- The number-one cause of women's injuries is abuse at home. This abuse happens more often than car accidents, mugging, and rape combined.

I don't have any stats for Christians but I know from experience that Christian wives are battered by their believing husbands. I find it necessary to ask the question up-front when doing marriage counseling.

Verbal abuse would fit into this context of not being a striker. It is admittedly harder to nail down but I think we all know it exists as a way of manipulating and controlling others.

There is a lot of striker-activity going on in churches and among Christians that you may not ever hear about.

Several years ago a couple in our fellowship was involved in a serious dispute over child custody with grandparents. Rather than go to court I got the grandparents (who were believers) to agree to Christian mediation. They happened to attend a Bible study by a well-known and well-respected Christian teacher and pastor and suggested he mediate.

It was awful! It wasn't mediation; it was accusation and confrontation. The 'mediator' used fear and manipulation. We weren't given much opportunity to talk let alone defend ourselves. It was an example of being a striker in a situation that called for spirituality.

Another time a husband who had started attending our fellowship asked me to accompany him to a counseling session. Another church was

counseling he and his wife. I went, by permission, but was told I could not speak or interject - only observe. I finally couldn't take it anymore and started to answer a rhetorical question. It was not received well and I was soundly cut-off. It was a clinic on being a striker while seeming to appear spiritual.

Not long ago I was counseling a couple. In a heated moment the husband got up and sort of 'charged' me as an intimidation tactic. Striker.

Maybe one way to understand this is to say you should not be a bully and then hide behind some veneer of Christianity. Actual blows are just the tip of the iceberg that can include words and body language as well as manipulation techniques.

Be a real man and swear-off being a striker on any level.