

**Longview Baptist Temple**  
**Sunday School Lesson**  
**July 13, 2008**



**Christian Character Traits**  
**Initiative**

Ecclesiastes 9:10, Romans 12:21, Romans 16:19, I Corinthians 14:40

**Lesson Aims:**

- That your students should **know** that curiosity without counsel can be destructive.
- That your students should **show** a cautious and guided approach when it comes to exploring our world.
- That your students should **grow** as they learn to channel their initiative through Scriptural principles.

**Introduction:**

Dictionary definition of character = a person marked by notable qualities or traits of consistency; moral excellence and firmness.

Dictionary definition of initiative = recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked.

**From the Christian viewpoint character is:**

- The subconscious doing of right acts as prescribed in the Word of God.
- Consciously raising and improving your personal holiness.
- Implementing Christ like qualities into your life in order to bring glory to God.

**From the Christian viewpoint initiative is:**

- Taking steps to seek after God with my whole heart.
- Taking the lead in order to relieve pressure from those around me by following Biblical principles and methods.
- Responding quickly and wisely to situations of danger.
- Expanding my world, through the protection of guided godly counsel, by exploring new areas of interest.
- Being able to complete responsibilities without being reminded.

**Questions that will help to evaluate your initiative:**

1. Do you wait to be told something that you know needs to be done?
2. Do you introduce yourself to visitors at church and work, or do you wait to be introduced by someone else?
3. Do you share the Gospel with at least one person every week?
4. Do you explore areas of interest that are outside the boundaries of Scripture?
5. Do you have to be reminded two or three times before you complete your responsibilities?

The opposite character trait of initiative is **unresponsive** which is not giving the energy and needed action required to take care of situations and responsibilities.

**Memory verses:**

Psalm 18:1 – “I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.”

Psalm 63:1 – “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee...”

**Lesson:**

**Initiative**

**Bible examples of initiative:**

1. **Abigail** – In order for her to save her husband from being killed, she initiated a plan that would temporarily protect her husband's life and relieve the immediate threat, but only to precipitate his death. When she did tell him what she had done, he had an immediate heart attack and died ten days later. Her motives were sincere but her methods were wrong.  
Her initiative also robbed David from the necessary caution that he would have gained from his failure, which could possibly have prevented him from later killing another woman's husband in order to cover up his sin with her.
  - David was the leader of six hundred men – all distressed, in debt and dissatisfied with the government of King Saul. (I Samuel 22:2)

- Because of their need to move rapidly when being pursued by King Saul, they carried with them weapons, water and probably very little food.
  - During a temporary truce between Saul and David (I Samuel 24:8-22), he and his men offered protection to the farmers and herders of sheep and goats from the semi nomadic enemies of Judah, thieves and wild animals.
  - David felt justified in receiving modest provision from those he protected with which to feed his men. Most were probably grateful for the service they provided and gladly gave them food in exchange.
  - Nabal, a wealthy herdsman who did not fear God, was quite different. For many days, David and his men had helped protect his flock of 3,000 sheep and herd of 1,000 goats without one animal being lost. (I Samuel 25:2-3, 15)
  - Nabal was a descendant of Caleb and David may have expected this member of his own tribe of Judah to sympathize with his situation. (I Samuel 25:3)
  - When Nabal refused to initiate any help, David sent ten men to politely ask him for provisions at this festive time. Just as farmers celebrated at harvest time, so did sheep herders at the time of shearing. (I Samuel 25:4-9)
  - Nabal scoffed at the request of David and insulted his men feeling he was under no obligation to repay them in any way. (I Samuel 25:10-11)
  - This inappropriate action greatly angered David who now plans to kill Nabal and his entire household. (I Samuel 25:13, 21-22)
  - When Nabal's wife Abigail, who was wise and beautiful, heard of her husband's foolish decision, she was convinced that reason alone would not change his mind and decided to plead with David herself instead. (I Samuel 25:3, 14-17, 25)
  - She came up with a bold plan, and without her husband's knowledge, she hurriedly left and brought David and his men plenty of food and presented three well planned pleas in an attempt to save the life of her husband and avert the destruction of their household. (I Samuel 25:18-31)
  - Although she was sincere with good intentions and her plan was successful, the course of action she initiated involved taking matters into her own hands, bypassing the authority of a foolish husband and limiting the possibilities of God to deal with the situation in a more creative way.
    - ✓ She should have confronted her husband with all of the facts, as she knew them, even though she did not think he would listen.
    - ✓ She could have asked the shepherds, his employees, to confirm the facts if he still refused to listen.
    - ✓ She could have cried out to the Lord for justice and mercy to be granted.
2. **Dinah** – A naive young girl in her teenage years, without the protection of wise counsel, used her uncontrolled initiative to explore new areas of interest in a city whose moral standards had been perverted through the immoral practices of pagan worship.
- How Jacob failed his daughter:
    - ✓ Because of the preferential treatment that was shown to his second wife Rachel, over his first wife Leah, who was Dinah's mother.
    - ✓ He did not demonstrate a high level of concern for her protection when she was placed in front of his favorite wife's family when they nervously waited to meet whom they thought was an angry uncle Esau and 400 hundred of his men. (Genesis 33:1-2)
    - ✓ He allowed his own wives and household to possess idols and wear pagan jewelry. (Genesis 31:19, 35:4)
    - ✓ He delayed his journey to Bethel and camped right in front of the prosperous heathen city of Shechem, thus exposing her to unnecessary temptation.
    - ✓ His example of doing business with the heathen did not instill in his daughter a healthy fear of associating with the enemies of God. (Genesis 33:18-19)
  - How Dinah dishonored her father:
    - ✓ There is no indication she asked her father's advice before going into the city.
    - ✓ Discounting her father's advice and opinions because she reasoned that he didn't love her as much as some of the other children.
    - ✓ By exposing herself to the dangers commonly found in a large sinful city, which she was not fully aware of or properly prepared for.