



## *Let's Consider . . .*

### **A Man Of Character**

We have been given many examples of men of Character in the Bible but in today's times one has to look a little harder to find such men.

It is said, there are only three sports in Texas, high school football, college football and professional football, so Tom Landry worked in the major venue that is Texas. It was here he produced a team that was not only winners because of their ability but because of his strength, his standards and his integrity as their coach. This is what kept him as coach for 29 years, which is unheard of in football. But as great as he was as a coach, football was third on his list of priorities behind God and his family.

"Through sports, competition helped him to create and shape his self-identity. In his senior year at Mission High School, he was named the team's "Most Valuable Player." Mr. Landry in his autobiography wrote, "He convinced me success always requires effort. Self-respect demands your maximum effort at all times. And that your best effort always made you a winner because it meant you'd never lose your pride." Upon high school graduation, Mr. Landry received a football scholarship to The University of Texas at Austin; however, after one semester, he left school, in 1943, to join the Army Air Corps. During World War II, he flew thirty B-17 missions with the Eighth Air Force. Tom Landry returned to The University of Texas at Austin, in 1946, where he helped the Longhorn football team win the Sugar Bowl in 1948 and the Orange Bowl in 1949. In 1959, Tom Landry was named the head coach of the new NFL franchise in Dallas. During his twenty-nine years as the head coach of the Dallas Cowboys, the team posted twenty consecutive winning seasons, eighteen playoff appearances, thirteen division championships, five National Football Conference titles and two Super Bowl championships. In 1990, Coach Landry received the highest honor awarded when he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Tom Landry was a man of character. Known throughout the world as a brilliant coach, Tom Landry was a true gentleman who exemplifies the word "leadership." His strong basic values, his commitment to excellence, his respect for his fellow man and his integrity are his lasting legacy". <http://cfbstaff.cfbisd.edu/tomlandry/coach1.htm>

He kept his distance from his players so he could maintain objectivity in case he had to fire someone. When asked if he'd ever seen Landry smile, former Cowboys running back Walt Garrison replied no, "but I was only there nine years." David Romness, a journalism senior who played golf with Landry during the Ex-Students' Association's 50-Year Reunion, says, "He was really quiet and nice. If you didn't know who he was, you wouldn't have known he was anybody." Landry was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia. According to Braden, Landry displayed a calm demeanor during the reunion, one of his last public appearances. "Obviously he was

already very ill," says Braden, "but he was there for UT and his class, and not a word was spoken about it." *By Cora Oltersdorf, from The Alcalde (May/June 2000)*

In only two articles I looked at from the Internet where individuals were interviewed about Tom Landry, these are the descriptions they used about him: quiet and nice, dignified, trusted, excellence, respect, integrity, moral strength, man of values, loved, leadership, self respect, cared, fiercely competitive, hard working, award winning, rock of Gibraltar, coolness under pressure, innovator, gentleman.

### What is character?

"Isn't character something that a person is born with? Isn't it true that someone either has character or does not have character? No, the truth is that everyone has character. Our character defines who we are. But it is true that in some people some of the traits, or qualities, that make up their character are more fully developed."

"One dictionary defines character as "the complex of mental and ethical traits marking a person." In another dictionary, character is said to be "the stable and distinctive qualities built into an individual's life which determine his or her response regardless of circumstances."

"Football Hall of Fame coach Tom Landry said that he had seen the difference this factor makes in individual football players. He said that, given a choice between an outstanding athlete without this factor and a lesser athlete with this factor, he would choose the latter every time. Tom Landry said that the athlete with this underlying success factor will often perform to his fullest potential and be a successful football player; while the outstanding athlete without it will usually fail to play up to his potential and often won't even achieve average performance".

"There are many aspects of the underlying success factor, and every person who has ever achieved greatly in life has done so because they demonstrated one or more of its aspects".

- Abraham Lincoln had it and it enabled him to become president of the United States.
- Thomas Edison had it, and because of it his inventions have changed the world.
- Albert Einstein had it. He was a genius, but without the underlying success factor in his life he would never have formulated his theory of relativity.
- Joe Namath became a great football quarterback because he had it.
- Alexander the Great had it. He conquered the known world at that time.
- George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and the other founding fathers of the United States of America were able to lead a young nation to become the greatest the world has ever known because of it.

"This is not just for great men and women of history or for football players! The same ideas that Tom Landry expressed about football players can be applied to any area of life. The person with the underlying success factor will often perform to his fullest potential and be successful in whatever he undertakes; while the person with outstanding talent but without the success factor will usually fail to live up to his potential and often will not achieve even average performance". <http://www.character-training.com/>

When we put on Christ, we become a new creature; the old habits and character traits are gone. Paul paints for us a picture of the new character taken on by Christians in the following passages:

1Corinthians 13:3-8 “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the spirit is love, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Against such there is no law.”

Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things.”

Colossians 3:12-17 “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

*“Everyone tries to define this thing called Character. It's not hard. Character is doing what's right when nobody's looking.” Unknown*

*“You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him.” James D. Miles*

*“Any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain but it takes character and self control to be understanding and forgiving. Dale Carnegie*