**How To Interview for Moral Conduct and Emotional Health**

The moral failure of a minister is one of the most devastating events that can happen in the life of a minister and a church. Every time a minister falls, we all suffer with that minister and his family. And, our collective witness to the world suffers as well. Yet, surprisingly, most staff interviews skirt the issue entirely.

For Jesus’ sake, for the gospel’s sake, for the sake of your church family, and for the sake of your staff and their families, make a commitment that you will ask the following questions of prospective staff. And, even consider asking them periodically as part of an accountability process of your current staff.

**18 Moral Conduct Questions Every Interview Should Include**

Obviously, these questions alone may not reveal a lack of moral integrity, but they do open the door for conversation concerning expectations and biblical ways to maintain moral integrity in ministry. Further, a commitment to due diligence in the staff interview and selection process demands they be asked, either in writing or in face to face interviews.

1. In the last 12 months, have there been any times when you have been intoxicated from alcoholic beverages? If so, what is an approximate number of times?
2. In your life, have you ever used alcohol to the point where you felt like it was getting a bit out of your control or might have turned into an addiction? If so, did you seek treatment?
3. In the last 24 months, have you ever used any illegal substances or prescription drugs not prescribed by a physician? If so, what is an approximate number of times?
4. In your life, have you ever used non-prescribed drugs or illegal substances to the point where you felt like it was getting a bit out of your control or might have turned into an addiction? If so, did you seek treatment?
5. In the past 24 months, have you used any form of pornography or erotic fiction? If so, what is an approximate number of times?
6. In your life, have you ever used pornography or erotic fiction to the point where it had a visible effect in terms of broken relationships, job loss, depression or mental health? If so, did you seek treatment?
7. In the past 24 months, outside of a covenant marriage relationship have you had sexual intercourse? If so, how often.
8. In the past 24 months, outside of a covenant marriage relationship have you participated in sexting or phone sex? If so, how often?
9. In the last 24 months, have you had sexual contact with someone of the same gender? If so, how often.
10. Have you ever, as a juvenile and/or adult, been accused of, convicted or participated in: sexual harassment, sexual misconduct with someone you were helping, or sexual behavior with a child or minor? If so, please elaborate.
11. In the past 24 months, have there been any times where you have intentionally injured or harmed yourself.
12. In your life, have you ever had a pattern of self-injury where you felt like it was getting a bit out of your control or might have turned into an addiction? If so, did you seek treatment?
13. Over the past 24 months have you struggled with an obsession with food or weight? If so, please provide us an idea of when these periods of obsessing over food or weight occurred, how long they lasted and if there was any treatment.
14. In the past 24 months, have you gone through a time or times where you felt extremely sad or depressed on a level you think may have been more than normal? If so, please give us an idea of when these periods of depression occurred, how long they lasted and if you pursued any treatment.
15. In your life, have you ever considered or attempted suicide? If so, please elaborate.
16. Have you ever been separated or divorced? If so, please explain the general circumstances of your divorce or separation.
17. Have you ever, as a juvenile and or an adult, been convicted of a crime, pled no contest, or been a defendant in a civil action for an intentional tort? If so, please elaborate.
18. Are there any areas in your life that could be considered by Biblical standards to be out of balance or in excess? If so, please elaborate.

Rick Warren’s articles, **How to Avoid a Moral Failure in Ministry** and **How to Maintain Moral Integrity in** **the Ministry**, are practical resources to share and discuss with both prospective and current church staff as a follow up to the above questions.