

OUR CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

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Our Christian character is to be fully conformed to the image of Christ. To walk as He walked, talked as He talked, to have the same humble, loving and kind thoughts that He had, and with the same loving trust in God.

Philippians 2:5, *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”*

This cannot be done in our own strength but in His strength where His love flows through us unhindered.

All God’s dealings with us are for the purpose of bringing us to a fuller knowledge of Him and His will and Word. We are to come to the place where we will know Him as He is and to be as sure and confident that He can and will do all that He says He will do.

1 John 2:6, *“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”*

The great and all-important thing is to have our Christian character perfected, to grow and develop into the very image of Christ. Receive a full knowledge of God and brought to the place of full obedience to the entire New Testament.

Of course, we don’t come to that place all in one day, but God is very patient and merciful with us, as 2 Peter 3:9 (WEY) tells us, *“The Lord is not slow in fulfilling His promise, in the sense in which some men speak of slowness. But He bears patiently with you, His desire being that no one should perish but that all should come to repentance.”*

Nevertheless, that is to be our goal, to have our Christian Character perfected. As we go through our trials successfully and meet them in the strength and wisdom that God provides, and not of ourselves, God will work with us and guide us unto perfect victory.

We must remember, there are three things that are all-important in God’s sight.

One: the development and perfection of our Christian Character.

Two: to gain a real knowledge of God.

Three: to be fully obedient to the New Testament.

These three should never be separated and are obvious throughout our study of the New Testament.

We need to make that right start by placing our lives in God's hands no matter what the situation and let Him do as He pleases with us. God is to perfect our Christian character through His Holy Spirit and have Him leading and guiding into all Truth.

God cannot do this until He gets full control of us. That self-life must be fully gotten rid of because that is the one thing that stands between us, and all that God wants to do for us.

Another thing that God uses to perfect our Christian character is in our finances. Financial trials are very unpleasant and one of the places where human dependence is usually entrenched. While one has a sure human source of income, they rest in peace about it. But when that starts to become uncertain, then comes worry, fear, and anxiety.

God's Word says that we are not to go in debt for anything. Romans 13:8 Paul tells us, "*Owe no man anything.*"

Then in Hebrews 13:5 it says, "*Let your conversation be without covetousness.*" That means that if we would be going through a financial trial and in need of anything, we are not to give the least hint by word or action that we are in need and even go out of our way to hide the fact.

Many times, Satan will tempt us to envy someone who may have a fine position or always seem to have more than they need. But, on the contrary, they are more to be pitied than envied, that is from a divine standpoint.

A person with a small income and their trust is in God for all their extras, is in the most valuable position anyone could be in. Not only is it valuable for this life but it is also valuable for our eternal welfare also.

Another valuable step God uses to perfect our Christian character, is mean treatment. We have our choice of two ways to meet mean treatment. The human carnal way, and God's way. God's way of meeting wrongs right is brought out in several places in the New Testament

Matthew 5:44-45, *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.*

Romans 12:17-19 & 21, *“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. ²¹ Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

We are to forgive and forget any mean treatment said or done to us and never let it affect our relationship toward anyone. The devil makes it so easy to change our attitude toward someone who has said or done some mean thing toward us; resent it and be cool and resentful toward them.

The scriptures do not permit us to act or to react in this way. To obey the scriptures, we would turn our back on what we would like to do and forgive them from the heart, ignore what they have said and pray for them, treat them as good or better than they were ever treated before this happened.

Jesus tells us in Luke 6:35, that if we would react in this way, we would become the children of the Highest.

Satan would like for us to say something back to those who have wronged us, tell them just what we thought. But with that attitude, if not repented of, would eventually land us in the ‘lake of fire’ forever.

We need to be kinder and more loving toward them than ever before, pray for them and ask God to work with them. That will not only work in perfecting our Christian character, but it will enable God to work with them as well, to convict and expose Satan’s power and control in their lives.

We are to be fully conformed to the very image of Christ, whatever was done to Him, however much He suffered by wrong treatment, He obeyed the Scriptures by forgiving and forgetting it, and He let God handle the situation.

Hebrews 5:8, *“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;”*

When we follow His example, we will be conformed to the image of Christ. We will have the very character of God's children. When we turn our backs on self and Satan's way of meeting wrongs, we will become the 'children of the Highest'.

Luke 6:35, *"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."*

Again in 1st Peter 2:21-23 we are told to follow the example that Jesus left for us. *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"*

Then in verses 18-20, we are told how we should be meeting things in the workplace. *"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."*

It shouldn't matter what kind of task we are asked to do; we should do it with all of our heart. Working as unto the Lord, not as unto man. God will take care of the results, which will be blessings beyond compare.

Philippians 2:13-15 tells us, *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"*

We are given another example that we must follow, in following the example that Jesus set for us in verses 5-8, *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

Jesus laid aside the glory He had while in Heaven, to come down, being totally obedient to His Father, unto death, even the death of the Cross. He preferred that to the glory He had in Heaven, just for our sakes.

Hebrews 12:2, *“who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

Isn't that love, to choose to come down and suffer such disgrace and humility at the hands of cruel and heartless men, just to deliver us out of all our troubles and to give us that happiness that He laid aside.

Let us be more determined to lay our wrongs at the feet of Jesus, to let Him handle all wrongs for us. To claim and accept the peace and happiness that He suffered so greatly to give to us.

Moses had the same thoughts when he came to deliver the children of Israel from the hands of a wicked ruler.

Hebrews 11:24-27, *“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”*

Moses could have had anything or any position he wanted if he remained in the land of Egypt, even to become the next Pharaoh, as he was called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. *“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”*.

Imagine, living in a desert, income shut off, those he was trying to help, calling him names, and always complaining about what he was doing. It wasn't just one or two friends saying and doing things that would hurt his feelings. There were over two million people for him to handle murmuring and complaining when he could have stayed in Egypt, riding around in the finest chariot.

That was the same attitude that Jesus took, thinking about others first, giving and forgiving, not resenting, and holding hard feelings.

Hebrews 12:14-15, *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;”*

That root of bitterness starts with talking about someone and they in turn tell another, it isn't long then before many become defiled. It isn't safe to listen to or say anything about someone at any time or anywhere. Instead of talking about them we should be praying for them.

We can ask God to show them any area where they may not be in the center of His will, but we have to be very careful what we say to others about anybody else. We need to realize that whatever they may be going through, God is working in them.

This is one thing to remember, that everything that happens to us, regardless of what it may be, whether it be a temptation, or some mean thing said or done to us, as we meet it in the true Bible way, it will develop our Christian character into being fully conformed into the very image of Christ.

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