

OUR CHRISTIAN CHARACTER



S60A 0731 22P

Our Christian character must grow and develop until we are fully conformed to the image of Christ. To walk as He walked, talk as He talked, to have the same humble attitude He had, and the same loving trust in God. Philippians 2:5, “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*” 1 John 2:6, “*He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*”

This is something that we need to keep before us at all times, to be fully conformed to the very image of God’s own Son. Romans 8:29, “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*”

This cannot be done in our own strength, but in God’s strength alone, where His love flows through us unhindered, that will be the final result. We are to be open minded and willing to be taught, trained, and led by God through His Holy Spirit until His love does flow through us unhindered.

All God’s dealings with us are for the purpose of bringing us to a fuller knowledge of Himself and His true character. We are to come to the place where we will know God as He is and be sure and confident that He is as loving, thoughtful, and trusting as He says He is, and even more so.

When we come to a true knowledge of God and His Will and Word, not only will we begin to receive our many blessings here in this life, but our Eternal Life depends upon knowing God right.

When our Christian characters are fully conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, we will be in full obedience to the New Testament and will have a real knowledge of God and of all that He is and will do for

us which is of most importance for all blessings in this life as well as Eternal Life hereafter. The great and all-important thing in God’s sight is the perfection of our Christian character and being brought into the very image of Jesus Christ. Anything short of that will bring a curse instead of a blessing. We cannot come to that place in a day, but God is merciful and very patient with us, nevertheless that is to be our goal in this life. Without it, religion will only be a hindrance to us and will be used of Satan to send people to the Lake of Fire.

2 Peter 3:9, “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, (or very patient with us) not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*”

We must always remember there are three things that are all-important in God’s sight---the development and perfection of our Christian character into the image of Christ, a real knowledge of God, and a full obedience to the New Testament. These three are never separated; they walk hand in hand throughout the New Testament.

To make a total surrender of our life to God, we must make a right start by placing our lives into God’s hands unconditionally to do as He pleases with us. God alone will work to perfect our Christian character by His Holy Spirit, leading and guiding us into all Truth.

God cannot work unless He takes full possession of us. When we first come to God, everything about us is self, self-efforts, self-dependence, it’s all about what I can do, not on what God wants to do for us.

That self-life must be gotten rid of, fully destroyed, because that is one thing that will stand between us and a full knowledge of God and will come between us and a full obedience to the New Testament. Self will not obey God’s Word; it has no time for God or for the life of Christ. That must be changed entirely. When we don’t allow God to take full possession of us, that will allow Satan to take possession of us until all self-efforts are brought to an end; and that is not usually a very pleasant experience. When one first comes to a knowledge of God and His Will and Word, they are not aware of all the benefits of that

great work that Jesus provided for us when He went to that Cross.

1 Peter 2:24, “*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*”

Jesus has paid the price of sin for us, and by His stripes we are healed. Since they are not aware of these great gifts that have been provided for us so freely, they will depend on dieting, fresh air, sunshine, or even exercise for the health of their bodies.

Sunshine and fresh air were given for a well person, but God never intended them for the healing of those not feeling well. Throughout the entire Bible, it was always the Blood of Jesus Christ or a type of Christ and the power of God that was given to make a sick person well.

The best thing that could happen to anyone depending on medication, dieting, fresh air, sunshine or any other human source, would be to have that human help fail them rather than getting any better.

When we realize that the very thing that we have depended upon has failed us, we will turn from it, and when we allow God to work in our hearts, He will show us that the only profitable way would be to depend on the living God alone.

One of the greatest places where human dependence is entrenched is in financial matters. Finances seem to lie closer to the heart than any other matter. When one has a secure human source where they can set their own income, there is no financial trust involved.

When one becomes alarmed because their income is gradually decreasing or about to be cut off completely, it shows that they are depending on that income and not looking to God at all.

One of the greatest factors to the death of the self-life would be in financial matters-- to have our finances greatly reduced or cut off completely and to have no one or nobody but God alone as our only source for finances.

As we hold steady, God will use every trying temptation and circumstance to give us not only a greater knowledge of Him, but we will see that He is able and willing to deliver us and that He does love us more than any earthly parent could love their children.

Best of all, it will bring a great death blow to the self-life and bring us to the place of being more conformed to the image of Christ. It will bring us to a knowledge of God that we have never had before and will be a test of our obedience to God's Word.

Suppose our source of income was cut off, and we had nothing in the house for food. God's Word says in Romans 13:8, "*Owe no man anything.*" We are not permitted to go in debt for food, clothing, or anything else. We would be placing ourselves in debt if we would buy on credit. That's why Satan has instituted the credit card to get as many people as he can to go in debt and take them with him on that wide road which leads to eternal destruction.

Then in Hebrews 13:5 we are told to "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*" That means that if we are in a financial trial, we are not to give the least hint by word or action that we are in need. In fact, we are to hide our needs and to go out of our way to cover them up.

There could not be a greater factor in the death of self than a good financial trial. It is one of the best tests of our obedience to the Scriptures and our growth and development into the image of Christ and knowledge of God. Many times, Satan would tempt us to envy those who have a fine position and always have all they could need. On the contrary, they are not to be envied. From a Divine standpoint, they are more to be pitied above all people.

A person with a small income is in a position where if anything was needed, they would place their trust in God, a most valuable position in which anyone could be placed. Not only is it valuable for this life, but it is also one of the best means of being prepared for the coming of Jesus.

Another thing that God uses to perfect our Christian character is mean treatment. Satan loves to get into someone and use them to say or do something that would be hurtful and trying. It could be anyone, whether in the home, workplace, or even in the neighborhood.

There are two ways of meeting wrong treatment. The human carnal way, or God's way. 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.*" Also, Romans 12:17&19, "*Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of 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.*"

In other words, we are to forgive and forget any mean thing said or done to anyone. Whether it was done to us, a member of the family, or whether it be a friend or an acquaintance. Our responsibility is to have that same forgiving attitude that Jesus had when He went to that Cross to pay the price of forgiveness for everyone

The Scriptures do not permit us to resent anything in the least way. We obey the Scriptures when we turn our back on what we would naturally like to do and instead, to forgive them and ignore what they may have said or done and pray for them.

Jesus tells in 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.*"

There is resentment and finances touched on. And what is the result? "*And your reward shall be great.*" That means great financial reward. It has altogether to do with lending to those who ask of us and never expect it back again. And then, it even gets better. "*And ye shall be the children of the Highest.*" That means we will have the very image of Christ, the children of the highest. We are to have the character of God's children, like Jesus Christ. When we turn our backs on self and the carnal way of meeting things, we will become the real children of God. Then in Hebrews 5:8 it says of Jesus Christ, "*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*"

No matter what was done to Him, however much He suffered by wrong treatment, He obeyed the Scriptures by forgiving and forgetting and let God handle the whole situation.

1 Peter 2:21-23, "*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 Philippians 2:5-8, we are told how to perfect our Christian character. "*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.*" His obedience to God cost Him His life.

(Verses 9-15) "*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, (that is, in meeting these hard battles and mean things in a scriptural way) not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation (or be sure you meet things right) with fear and trembling. (With the greatest of care, thought, and attention) 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.*"

When our Christian character is fully conformed to the image of Christ, we will be a light that shines brightly in this spiritually dark world.



www.fcgchurch.org

PO Box 24283

Philadelphia, PA 19120

info@fcgchurch.org

S60A 0731 22P