

CONCLUSION

The Apostle Paul prayed that the Ephesian church would truly know Christ in a special way (**Ephesians 1:15-20**). To know Him is to love and serve Him. This can only come from spending time with Him in prayer, Scriptures, and in fellowship with other saints. The last days, in **II Timothy 3:1-5**, show the bankruptcy in the area of character. May we be obedient to God's word in **Romans 13:14**, "*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*" Amen.

"You can no more blame your circumstances
for your character
than you can blame the mirror
for the way you look."

- Anonymous

"The test of your character
Is what it takes
To stop you."

- Bob Jones , Sr.

*"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ
also suffered for us, leaving us an example,
that ye should follow his steps."*

I Peter 2:21



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*" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
Acts 16:31*

The Riches

OF GRACE

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"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Character

"Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool."

Proverbs 19:1

+ Christian Character +

There is no substitute for Christian character. It is of the upmost importance in the eyes of God and is spoken of much in Holy Scripture. Even though we do not find the word character in the Authorized Version, a similar word is used, the word integrity. Integrity has the meaning of soundness, completeness, honesty, or truthfulness. It has the idea of being transparent, nothing to hide. Another way that illustrates the meaning of integrity is "not being divided". As a Christian, our desire should be that we walk in integrity before God and our fellowman.

"A good character is the best tombstone. Those who love you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots have withered. Carry your name on hearts, not marble."

-C. H. Spurgeon

The Scripture plainly shows us the importance of a good name in **Proverbs 22:1**, “*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.*” A good name can only come when we are people of integrity. As one writer said, “Character is a victory, not a gift.”

CHARACTER COUNTS

The importance of character is seen throughout the Bible. There are those who lacked character. For example, Samson, a judge, chosen by God and dedicated at birth, was raised in a godly home, but he had a single character flaw—a weakness for women. He became very lustful and arrogant and his life ended blinded, broken, and bitter as he prayed for revenge upon his enemies. He was not only a slave to the Philistines, but also to his lustful passion.

In **Ezekiel 14:14**, three men of character mentioned, Noah, Daniel, and Job, “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.” In **Genesis 6:9**, God said that Noah was perfect in his generations. He was blameless, holy, and complete in moral excellence. The entire world was destroyed because of wickedness (**Genesis 6:1-13**), but only Noah and his family were preserved.

Another man of character was Job. According to **Job 2:1-3**, he was perfect, upright, feared God, and eschewed evil. God used this man of integrity to show Satan that there were saints of God on earth that would not deny Him (**Job 2:1-6 - 29:12-16; James 5:11**).

Daniel was also a man of godly character (**Daniel 1:8; 6:10**). He purposed in his heart to serve God in every area of his life. Daniel was not for sale and no thought of compromise ever crossed his mind. He was a saint that settled the issue of belief long before decisions had to be made. He was a great man of godly character.

Character is the inner reality and quality from which all things come (behavior, thought, speech, decision making, etc.). When we speak of someone’s character, we are speaking about what’s in the heart. In **Matthew 12:33-35**, the Lord said the tree is known by its fruit and that the fruit of a man reveals what is in his heart. As other writers have said, “Character is what we are, reputation is what others think we are”; and “Character determines our behavior, just as behavior demonstrates character. Another writer said, “Character is what you are in the dark.”

In other words, it is simply doing what is right while nobody is looking. Please understand that circumstances don’t create character; rather, circumstances reveal character. Character is like a strong foundation that gives stability to a house when the storms come (**Matthew 12:14-29**). Other people can ruin your reputation, but only you can ruin your character.

CHARACTER BUILDING

Character is built, not born. Faith is the foundation of character. Character building is a process, a life long cycle of spiritual growth (**II Peter 3:18**). There are no short cuts to character, the building blocks are placed one upon the other for the Glory of God.

In **II Peter 1:5-7**, there are seven things that are to be added to our faith in this process of building, “*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*” If these things are so in our lives, then we will be fruitful in our Christian walk. The Lord Jesus Christ will grant to us power for character transformation if we surrender to his will.

As we have already stated, character is a victory, not a gift. Another quote, “Character is made by many acts, it may be lost by a single act.”

CHARACTER PERFECTED

In **I Peter 2:21-25**, the Lord Jesus Christ is our greatest example of true character. His life manifested love, humility, compassion, and faithfulness. In **Philippians 2:3**, we are told, “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*” The context (**verses 1-8**) reveals the servant attitude that Jesus had that we are to imitate. In **Matthew 11:29** He said of Himself, “*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*” We see integrity perfected on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are commanded to walk in meekness, longsuffering, and to love one another (**Ephesians 4:1-3, 17; 5:2; II Corinthians 10:1, I Peter 4:8**). May Christian character be seen in our lives as we serve the Creator.