

CHARACTER BASICS

Called To Character

Foundation Statement: As believers, we are called to be people of character-Matthew 5:48

I. We are called to be people of character

A. We are called to character and to be people of character (2 Peter 1:3)

1. Called – To command, order, summon – call by authority to attend to a duty
2. Glory – Romans 3:23, 2 Corinthians 3:18
 - a. Light is one manifested form of glory, but when you're walking in character that's glory
3. Virtue – Manliness, Excellence, Moral excellence/goodness, impression made on others

B. This call to character not something that we take lightly

1. We take this as seriously as we do the calling of God on our lives
 - a. This is my duty and call, to develop in character
2. God didn't suggest that you did this or invite you to do it; he called you to it and commanded it

C. We got to get out of this idea that staying the way we are in character is okay

1. Stop blaming it on, "that's just my personality."
 - a. Any part of your personality that isn't like Jesus should be in the process of being changed
 - 1) Any part of me that's not like Him has to change and get line with what he's like
 - b. When people say that they're saying it's okay for me to be like this because that's just who am I
2. People say, "God loves me the way that I am." God loves you, but he doesn't love your way.
 - a. If the way you are isn't the way He is, then God doesn't love it
 - b. That gives the impression that we don't have to change and we can stay the way we are and God's okay with it
 - c. Our calling and goal in life is not to do things to earn God's love
3. People accept faults in character and deem them as personality traits and that's being unrepentant
 - a. Staying the way that you are and not growing and developing in character is not okay
4. This call to character is not optional
 - a. Staying the way you are and not being like Jesus is not an option
 - b. Here's your options: 1) Be like Jesus

II. What level of character are we called to?

A. We are called to be just like Jesus in character

1. Ephesians 5:1 – Imitate God in character; that's not a suggestion
 - a. I want to be just like my daddy; Jesus is my hero

- b. The student's mark is to be just like his master
 - 1) EX: In a golf lesson (Tiger Wood video)
- c. Am I supposed to be a little like Him, a lot like him, or exactly like him?
 - 1) Conybeare – Therefore be followers of God's example
 - 2) Knox – As God's favored children you must be like him
 - 3) Phillips – As children copy their fathers you as God's children copy him ---- A copy is the same
 - 4) Message - Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents
 - 5) New Living – Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do
 - 6) Contemporary English – Do as God does. After all, you are his dear children.
 - 7) New International Readers – You are the children that God dearly loves. So be just like him.
 - 8) Rick Renner – Be constantly in the process of becoming more like God making it your aim to act like Him, duplicate Him, and exactly copy Him in every area of your life.
- 2. 1 John 2:6 – Our conduct and character in life should be the same as his
 - a. "Even As" means the same, not a little different
 - 1) A scale that's even is exactly the same on both sides otherwise it's not even
 - b. New English – Bind himself to live as Christ himself lived
 - 1) I'm bound to do only what Jesus did – Limit yourself to only talking, thinking and acting like him
 - c. MOFFAT – Ought to be living as he lived
 - d. GOODSPEED – Must live Just as he lived
 - e. KNOX – Must needs live and move as he lived and moved
 - f. English Standard – Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.
 - g. Contemporary English – If we say we are his, we must follow the example of Christ.
 - h. Holman Christian Standard – The one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked.
- 3. He is the standard of character; he is who we are supposed to be like, but what is he like?
 - a. Hebrews 1:1-3 – Express image – Precise reproduction in every respect
 - 1) ROTHERHAM – And an exact representation of his very being
 - 2) PHILLIPS – Flawless expression of the very nature of God
 - 3) MOFFAT – Stamped with God's own character
 - a) The stamped outline matches the stamping tool
 - 4) BECK – Is the copy of his being

- 5) NLT – The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God
 - 6) ESV – The exact imprint of his nature
 - a) When your foot imprints sand the imprint is exactly like your foot
 - 7) Contemporary English – Is like him in every way
 - 8) New Century – The Son reflects the glory of God and shows exactly what God is like
 - 9) Worldwide English – He shines as bright as God. He is just like God himself.
 - b. Romans 8:29 – We are predestined to be conformed into the image of Jesus (which is the express image of the Father)
 - 1) KNOX – To be molded into the image of his Son
- B. Is it really possible to be just like Jesus in character?
1. Matthew 5:48 (AMP)
 - a. BASIC ENGLISH – Be complete in righteousness
 - b. NORLIE - You must become spiritually mature
 - c. MSG – In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity.
 - d. Contemporary English – But you must always act like your Father in heaven.
 - e. We are called to be people who are constantly growing and developing in the character of God striving to the place where we are complete in our development and like him
 - 1) You reach perfection by going through the process of being perfected
 - 2) You don't stay the same; if you're not becoming more like him today, then you're becoming more different than him
 2. Luke 6:40 – We'll never develop beyond him, but we can develop to a place of maturity and completeness and be like him
 - a. Revised Standard – But every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher
 - b. New English – But everyone, when his training is complete, will reach his teacher's level
 - c. NIV – A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.
 - d. New Living – Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.
 - e. Don't base the chances of you getting to that place on your ability as the pupil, but on his ability as the teacher
 3. Ephesians 4:11-14
 - a. ASV – Unto a full grown man
 - b. TCNT – Until we reach the ideal man-the full standard of the perfection of Christ

- c. NEB – To mature manhood, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ
 - d. NLT - That we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ
 - e. NCV – We must become like a mature person, growing until we become like Christ and have his perfection
 - f. CEV – Then we will be mature, just as Christ is, and we will be completely like him.
 - g. WE – They are given so that we will be really grown-up Christians, like Christ himself.
4. 1 John 4:17 – We can be just like him on this side of eternity
- C. We've held ourselves to such a low standard of character
1. Our standard has been so low that we haven't even reached for this and if we have reached we reached in doubt and unbelief thinking there's no way we'll get to that type of character
 - a. We've responded with, "We are only humans and that was Jesus," as if Jesus had some special power to do right that we don't have.
 - b. We've assumed a position of defeat in this area before even striving towards it and it's kept us from reaching our potential and seeing just how close we can get to this mark
 - c. We got to believe that we can do it; faith is the foundation to this
 - 1) If believe you can't win the fight before the fight starts you'll never win
 2. Much of this defeat mentality has stemmed from the idea that if a person says they can be like Jesus in character, in some way they are being prideful because nobody could be like perfect, holy Jesus
 - a. If Jesus is telling me to be just like him in character and I'm striving towards it with all my faith believing that I can do it, that's being humble; Saying that you could never be like Jesus when he's telling you that you can that's prideful
 3. In this deception that we are weak little humans we've gotten the idea that it is okay to be slack in this area of character
 - a. In other words, we could never reach the mark of being like him anyway so our falling short where this is concerned is okay and even expected because we're just human
 - 1) It's almost like we accept failure in this area; Failure in this area is not okay
 - 2) 1st of all you're not just human; 2nd of all Jesus was no less human than you and he never sinned
 - b. God is not unreasonable and he knows exactly where the standard should be set and if He told you to do something, then you can do it
 - 1) You've been given His spirit, His Word, and His help and you're expected to sin not
 - 2) You're not some weak little Christian (Ephesians 6:10, 2 Timothy 2:3, Philippians 4:13)
 4. Stop make allowances for yourself in to fail in this area; stop blaming it on your humanity

- a. We all don't make mistakes because Jesus didn't
 - b. Somebody is perfect Jesus is
- D. As believers we have to begin to demand excellence out of ourselves in character. We've expected so little of ourselves.
1. Don't hold yourself to a different standard than God; he's expecting you to be just like Jesus
 - a. People have fallen back on this idea that their just little old imperfect Christians who are going to try their best and most likely come up short (That's a defeat mentality)
 2. Demand excellence out of yourself this area of character
 - a. Jesus never missed it and he was the perfect example of the Father in the Earth (Hebrews 4:14)
 - 1) He didn't do what he did as God, he did what he did as a man proving that it could be done and showing us how to do it (Hebrews 2:18, Philippians 2:6)
 - b. Daniel 6:3 – Mediocrity and average is not okay
 - 1) We need to stop making allowances for average; Get the mindset that average is not okay
 3. 1 John 2:1 – He gave us this word so that we would not sin; he didn't give you this word to not sin sometimes, he gave it to you so that you would stop sinning
 - a. ASV – That you may not sin
 - b. MONTGOMERY – That you may not continue in sin
 - c. KNOX – To keep you clear of sin
 - d. PHILLIPS – To help you avoid sin
 - e. NLT – I am writing this to you so that you will not sin
 - f. MSG – I write this, dear children, to guide you out of sin
 - g. CEV – I am writing this so that you won't sin
 - h. WE – I am writing these things to you so that you will not do wrong things.
 4. Stop expecting to sin and start expecting to do what's right
 - a. Believers have gotten over into an attitude of expectance where sin is concerned expecting to miss it
 - b. You give thought to failing and then you fail (Romans 13:14)
 - c. John 14:9 – We should be able to say the same thing
- E. Developing in character has to be our treasure
1. Isaiah 33:6
 2. Philippians 3:9-16