

THE RIGHTEOUS PURSUES HOLINESS

Chapter 2 Lesson 12

Chapter's Subject: Created Anew in Righteousness and True Holiness

Main Point: Character of the Children of God

Sub-Point (Today's Study):

1. **Characteristics of the Born Again Christian**
2. **Characteristics of the Believer's Walk**
3. **Christian Character**
4. **Pure Religion and undefiled (James 1:27)**
5. **The Christian's Influence (Matt. 5:13-16)**
6. **An Analysis of 1 John 3**

Time is available only for a brief discussion of review questions from previous lesson.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

1. **The song: "Holiness" by Micah Stampley (Partial Quote)**

Holiness, holiness is what I long for
 Holiness, is what I need
 Holiness, holiness is what
 You need for me

Righteousness, righteousness is what I long for
 Righteousness is what I need (that's what I need)
 Righteousness, righteousness is what
 You need for me
 So take my heart and mold it

So take my heart and mold it (so take my heart and mold it)
 Take my mind and transform it (take my mind transform it)
 Take my will conform it (take my will conform it)
 To Yours, to Yours, O Lord (take my will conform it)

Brokenness, brokenness is what I long for
 Brokenness is what
 You want for me
 So take my heart and mold it

Take my heart, mold it (take my heart, and mold it)
 Take my mind transform it
 Take my will conform it

To yours, to Yours Oh Lord

2. Character

(a) There is a lot of information available as it relates to the topic of "Character."

- (1) Some of these presentations are based on being "Politically Correct," which we know leads to moral depravity and therefore not acceptable.
- (2) There are other sources and some with good information but still not relying on nor built upon the Word of God.
- (3) One source that has a good presentation is the Josephson Institute Center for Youth Ethics. This source gives a definition for "character" then breaks down each point listed. Below I have made a partial quote of this presentation. Keep in mind the quote is not from a Christian Institution (as far as I know); however, there are some very good thoughts and it allows us to have a variety of information on this very important subject.

The Quote:

- **"A Person of Character"**
 - Is a good person, someone to look up to and admire.
 - Knows the difference between right and wrong and always try to do what is right.
 - Sets a good example.
 - Makes the world a better place.
 - Lives according to the Six Pillars of Character (*These "Six Pillars of Character" are the main guidelines by which they train young people*). The six pillars are: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship.
- The article goes on to break down (*i.e. explain in details for better understanding what is being discussed*) each of the "Six Pillars of Character." **For example they discussed "Trustworthiness," under the following pointers: (a) Reliability" and (b) Loyalty.**
- I am deeply impressed with the structure and objectives of this institute especially the effort made in which they have taken time out to present their curriculum. Obviously, this effort is carried out in helping those under their care.
- This I will note and not in a critical/callous way, and as you may observe, I am impressed with this institute; however and as seen in so many similar institutes, recovery programs, etc. God has not been given priority or has been left out as the source of real victory.
 - As we have seen in chapter 1 and throughout this study, "Only God can put a special touch on something that changes it from common place to something special, different and sacred."
 - Only God can change man's inherited depraved disposition and make him pure (Rom. 5:12; 1 John 3:1-17; Isa. 1:16-19; etc.)

- All “born again” believers can join Paul (the apostle) by saying: “But by the grace of God I am what I am ...” (1 Cor. 15:10a).

(b) **Statements to consider as relate to “character”**

As noted above, there are many views in regards to character; below I have listed four with which you may be acquainted.

(1) **“Show me your company and I will tell you who you are.”**

(2) **“Birds of a feather flock together.”**

(3) **“Someone may damage your reputation but they cannot damage your character.”**

- This has been proven by so many individuals both as seen in the Bible and otherwise; for example this was powerfully demonstrate in the life of Joseph.
- Despite the lies, smear campaign, etc.; the reality is, no matter who attacks our integrity, etc. our responsibility, with the help, of God is to live a life of holiness, maintaining integrity and it will prove who we really are (1 Peter 3:14-17).

(4) **“Character is who you are in the dark.”** (D. L. Moody)

- Light shines effectively in the dark; but sad to note that there are far too many believers who are lights ONLY among fellow believers. In the dark their lights either become dim or are extinguished by the dark.
- What this proves is that **“No one can walk on tipped toes forever!”**

(5) I know that it is early in the lesson but it must be made known that there is “good news!!” If there is anyone conscious of sin or in a backslidden condition, etc. there is help if he sincerely seeks God (Isa. 55:6-7; etc.), and turn away from sin (John 8:11; Rom. 6:12; etc.). As noted several times: “There is life for a look at the Crucified One!!”

(c) **I am including two other quotes on character for your consideration** (*Other quotes will be presented as we continue this lesson*)

(1) One author states: **“While a good man is always hard to find, he is easy to recognize.”**

(2) A German Jewish Proverb: **“A good man cannot be corrupted by the tavern, nor a bad one reformed by the synagogue.”**

- This Jewish proverb was meant to provoke our thoughts. My thought on the tavern issue is: “Do not tie your buggy by the tavern (“bar”).
- We know that a building does not change anyone but God’s presence in the church building does wonders to His glory!! Bless His holy name!!

3. **Summarized Review for Lessons 1 through 11 (Chapter 2)**

Due to the volume of material covered in these lessons, I will only be noting the topics covered. If you desire more information, review your highlighted notes and review questions for each lesson.

(a) **Chapter’s Subject: Created Anew in Righteousness and True Holiness.**

(b) **Main Point 1: Cheap Grace?**

- (1) **Sub-Point 1:** Allurements of the World (Lesson 1)
 - (2) **Sub-Point 2:** Abuse of Divine Grace (Lesson 2)
 - (3) **Sub-Point 3:** Adapted to the Evil Environment (Lesson 2)
 - (4) **Lesson 3: Additional Information** (relating to lessons 1 and 2)
 - (c) **Main Point 2: Called Out**
 - (1) **Sub-Point 1:** The Walk of the Believer (Lesson 4)
 - (2) **Sub-Point 2:** The Word in the Believer (Lessons 5 to 8)
 - (3) **Sub-Point 3:** Wholesome Life of the Believer (Lessons 9 to 10)
 - (4) **Lesson 11:** Additional Information relating to lessons 4 through 10.
 - (d) **Main Point 3: Character of the Children of God** (*Our Current Lesson*)
4. **As a reminder the study (The Righteous Pursues Holiness) has three main divisions:**
- (a) **Chapter 1: Clothed in Christ's Righteousness**
 - (b) **Chapter 2: Created Anew in Righteousness and True Holiness**
 - (c) **Chapter 3: Committed to a Life of Obedience in Pursuit of Holy Living**
 - (d) There are two Additional Chapters due to volume of material
 - (1) **Chapter 4: The Christian's Influence** (*Based on Chapter 2 Lesson 12*)
 - (2) **Chapter 5: The Parable of the Vineyard** (*Based on Chapter 3*).

Today's Study: CHARACTER OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

Eph. 4:20-24 (*You are encouraged to read Eph. 4 for context.*)

NKJV

"But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

New Living Translation

"But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you heard about Jesus and learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy."

Good News Bible

"That was not what you learnt about Christ! You certainly heard about him, and as his followers you were taught the truth that is in Jesus. So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to – the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which was created in God's likeness and reveals itself in true life that is upright and holy."

Eph. 4:22-24 Amplified Bible

"Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your unrenewed self] which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that

springs from delusion; and be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh and spiritual attitude], and put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image, [Godlike] in true righteousness and holiness."

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN

This will be a brief listing of various references relevant to the distinguishing traits of a genuine "born again" believer. Limited comments will be made as a more detailed presentation is not possible at his time.

THE BORN AGAIN BELIEVER:

1. Imitates God Eph. 5:1

He imitates God showing genuine love for Him and for others (Deut. 6:5; Mark 12:29-31; etc.). His practical life is a reflection of Jesus Christ's love (Eph. 5:2) and he avoids the perversion of love which in essence is lust (Eph. 5:3-7).

2. Obeys the Lord, John 14:15

(a) **The acid test seen here is: genuine love for Christ results in genuine obedience (1 John 5:3).**

(b) Please read 1 John 5:3-5; NB. v. 3

(1) Jesus never promised that obeying Him would be easy.

- But the hard work and self-discipline of serving Christ is no burden to those who love Him.
- And if our load starts to get heavy, we can always trust Christ to help us bear it (Matt. 11:28-30).

(2) Someone said, "I am serving the Lord a long time and I am not tired yet!" Someone said, "The longer I serve Him the sweeter He gets!" And do not forget: His grace is sufficient!! (2 Cor. 12:9)

3. Does not Conform to the World's Standards Rom. 12:2

(a) The transformed Christian has an attitude of resistance to the values, goals, and activities of the world which would pressure us into its shape.

(1) He is continually being molded from within by the power of God.

(2) The thoughts of his mind are renewed.

(3) Thus he will find out and accept what God wants for him.

(4) The will of God is always morally good and acceptable to those who think as God thinks and accordingly strive for a perfection of love.

(b) The Greek text, for Rom. 12:2 could also be translated to mean that, "the good and acceptable and perfect;" are guidelines by which we discover what God wants us to do and enabling us to find out . . .

(1) . . . what is morally good and thus produces a good affection for others (Rom. 12:9-21).

(2) . . . how we can use our opportunities, gifts, and resources to produce the greatest effect for God's kingdom (Rom. 12:3-8), then this becomes the will of God for us in that particular situation.

4. Exercise Power Over the Enemy Mark 16:17-18

NOTE: *Despite the many controversies, confusion, etc. surrounding these verses, I will briefly note a few pointers.*

- (a) **“These signs...”** done by genuine followers of Jesus Christ, confirm that the gospel message as being genuine, coming from God in power and that Jesus Christ is present with His people, working through them (Acts 3:11-26, NB Vv. 11-16; Acts 4 NB Vv.10-14; etc.)
 - (b) Jesus defeated Satan, fallen angels and demon spirits at the cross (Col. 2:14-15.
 - (c) There is so much more to these verses than we can possibly share at this time, however, I will close by noting:
 - (1) These supernatural signs or manifestations are intended to continue within Christ’s churches until He returns.
 - (2) It must also be noted that these signs are not for a selected few but were to follow believers who have sincerely committed themselves to Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15-20).
5. **Walk in Love John 1 John 4:7-12**
- (a) The topic of “love” has been extensively covered throughout this study, for example see lessons 6 and 7 (chapter 2), as well as other lessons.
 - (b) I have also done a study on 1 Cor. 13 which is available upon request.
 - (c) At this time I will highlight two pointers from previous lessons:
 - (1) The genuine “born again” believer will experience and demonstrate fervent love for one another naturally (1 Peter 1:22-23).
 - (2) Genuine love will prove whose we are; whether of God or of the devil (1 John 3, NB Vv. 10-15; 1 John 4. Etc.)
6. **Bears Good Fruit Matt. 7:17-20**
- (a) Actually the passage (Matt. 7:18-20) addresses “False Prophets” or “False Teachers.” **However it should be realized that all believers are teachers and we teach by the way we live.**
 - (b) If our lives do not bear good fruit of obedience to Jesus’ teaching, we are false prophets/teachers. Without any doubt our practical lives say who we are, read again 1 John 3:4-10; James 3:11-12; etc.
 - (c) There are those who are quick to say that we judge only by what we see on the outside. We are here to judge no one, condemn, nor criticize no one, but it’s obvious from Scripture that our manner of living shows who we are, for example see Luke 6:37-49, and note carefully Vv. 43-46. See also Matt. 5:16; Jams 2:18; 1 Peter 2:12; etc. *If spiritual help is needed, God is willing, ready and able to help: 1 John 1:5-10; 2:1-2; etc.*
7. **Glorifies Jesus Christ in all Areas of Service Col. 3:23-25**
- (a) Obviously, the apostle was addressing the issue of masters and servants; see also Eph. 6:6-8.
 - (b) However, this I find helpful, whether my service that is been rendered, relates to my secular job or doing anything at church, the end goal is to glorify God in what I do and how it is done!!

- (c) We cannot go into details, but as believers our focus need to be on God and not men; it is such a pity that so many are men pleasers whose service is based solely on getting the approval of men and thereof they will get the praise of men (John 12:43).
- (d) In reference to Col. 3:23-25, note the following:
Despite who we are, our service should be done sincerely and heartily because we are responsible to please and to glorify God and not be limited solely to human masters. Our service is unto the Lord Jesus Christ, He is the one who will give us our eternal inheritance or punish us without partiality for wrong doing. May all that we do and say glorify Him!!

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BELIEVER'S WALK

In essence this is akin to the above pointer; it is also a listing but not exhaustive and you can also add to if you so desire.

In regards to the "Believer's Walk," this was discussed in Lesson 4 (Chapter 2) under the main point "The Walk of the Believer" based on Eph. 4:20-24. In today's study we are highlighting some characteristics of the believer's walk.

Some Characteristics of the Believers Walk are:

1. He Experiences a New Life Rom. 6:4

- (a) Rom. 6:1-4 was discussed in chapter 1 lesson 4 and related facts to this passage (Rom. 6:1-4) have been discussed throughout this study. The "new life" is what this study covers and is seen in comparison to the life we lived in alienation from God. In this new life we enjoy a personal and intimate relationship with the true and living God through Jesus Christ our Savior.
- (b) Emphasis has also been placed on the necessity of getting rid of the "old man" and putting on the "new man." Unfortunately, so many do not understand the mandatory aspect of this transformation and would rather cling to manmade religion which tickles the ear instead of heeding to what changes the old sinful nature with which we are all born (Rom. 12:5; etc.). Yet, God be praised there is still hope before the door closes! There is life for a look at the crucified one!!
- (c) As Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, even so we who by exercising true saving faith in Him experience the "newness of life!" (Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:4; 7:6 etc.).

2. Exercise Faith 2 Cor. 5:7

- (a) The whole concept of Christianity is built upon faith and for those who have exercised faith in the redemptive work of Christ and all God's promises, have not only believed but have received of God and can testify that indeed "in Him" is abundant life (John 10:10; 2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 3:20; etc.). Here is something else that is a blessed reality: "At ALL TIMES" we have a friend that sticks close than a brother!! (Prov. 18:24; John 15:15).

- (b) 2 Cor. 5:7 has been used a lot but the essence of the message remains unknown to many. Time wouldn't allow for details. We could tie facts noted in 2 Cor. 5:7 with 2 Cor. 4, noting Vv. 8-18 and lifting verse 18 (*this will be home work for you and also note that there are other related Scriptures*).
- (c) For 2 Cor. 5:7, I encourage you to read the chapter with emphasis on Vv. 1-10. Here are some of the things to be noted (limited highlights from Vv. 1 and 6-8)
- (1) In verse 1 Paul speaks of the temporary aspects of our earthly life (***it is like a tent ... tabernacle KJV***). On the other hand life in heaven is eternal because it is like a house built by God.
 - (2) We have also seen that Christians should always be confident, knowing that we have a hope beyond the grave; death is not to be feared as seen in Paul's example because it brings a grater experience of the presence of Jesus Christ (v.6).
 - For Paul, death did not produce any anxiety because life in Jesus Christ had given him hope and confidence.
 - We should allow this hope in Jesus Christ to give us confidence and inspire us to faithful service!!
 - (3) As Christians we live in relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, not by what we see or by appearances (2 Cor. 5:16), but by faith in "the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:1).
 - (4) Paul's experiences were many (see 2 Cor. 4:8-18) but amidst it all he was confident (2 Cor. 5:8a) because of his faith in Jesus Christ!!!
 - (5) Etc.
- (d) **Heb. 11:6 Amplified Bible**
 "But without faith it is impossible to please and be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him [out]."
3. **Maintain a Spirit Controlled Life Gal. 5:16**
- (a) This is yet another subject thoroughly discussed in this study. We have placed emphasis on "Abiding in Christ," "the seed (nature, principle, etc.) of God remaining in us," etc. These are all beneficial in maintaining a healthy spiritual life; and these also include continued obedience, humility, renunciation and surrender, to the perfect will of God.
 - (b) **To be led by the Holy Spirit involves the desire to hear, the readiness to obey God's Word, and sensitivity to discern between your feelings and be guided by the Holy Spirit.**
 - (c) This enables us to live each day controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit. It is then that the Words of Christ will be in our minds, the love of Christ will be behind our actions, and the power of Christ will help control our desires.
 - (d) **How do we summarize Gal. 5:16?**
 The need is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit: "Walk in the Spirit ..." is God's admonition and glorious promise. If our way of life is controlled by the Holy Spirit, we will not be controlled by the desires of the sinful nature.

4. **Consistency Eph. 4:1, 2.**
- (a) Satan has done everything possible to obliterate the Church (Universal) but he has not succeeded and will never!!
 - (1) The most destructive weapon against the Church is inconsistency within!
 - (2) Inconsistency is in opposition to the perfect will of God. An example is found in the account when Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel (God's people). See Num. 22 to 24. There you will see that despite all efforts made by these two men to curse Israel they originally failed. Finally Balaam recommended that Israel be infiltrated with that which was inconsistent with the will of God (Num. 22 to 24; Num. 31, NB Vv. 1-20 and highlight v. 16; also 2 Peter 2:15).
 - (b) Living consistently means we are not double minded (James 1:8; etc.) not trying to serve two masters at the same time (Matt. 6:24). Consistency is genuinely walking in the light in accordance to the Word of God . . .
 - (1) We live what we preach
 - (2) We live what we teach
 - (3) We live what we sing
 - (4) We live what we profess
 - (5) Etc.
 - (c) **God has chosen us to be Christ's representatives on earth. (Eph. 4:1, 2)**
 - (1) In the light of this truth, Paul challenges us to live worthy of the calling we have received – the awesome privilege of being called Christ's very own!
 - (2) This includes being humble, gentle, understanding, and peaceful.
 - (3) People are watching your life. Can they see Jesus Christ in you? How well are you doing as His representative?
5. **Love Eph. 5:1, 2**
- (a) This subject of "love" keeps surfacing but it is essentially important and sadly lacking; the need is so great that we do need more emphasis and practically living it, to the glory of God!!
 - (b) Just as children imitate their parents, we should imitate Christ in every aspect of life, including the way He displayed love for all.
 - (1) His great love for us led Him to sacrifice Himself so that we might live.
 - (2) Our love for others should be the same kind of love which goes beyond affection to selfless and sacrificial love!
 - (c) So many still do not get it!! While we do need trained choirs, well structured programs, trained/anointed ministers, utilizing the latest technology, etc.; that which is most impressive and convincing to the world is our fervent love for one another; it is magnetic, compelling, etc. and remains the true mark of Christian brotherhood!! (John 13:5).
6. **Caution Exercised Eph. 5:15-16**
- (a) To "walk circumspectly," is to use good judgment. But here (Eph. 5:15), as well as elsewhere in the Bible, it means **"to walk in the ways of God."**
 - (b) By referring to these days as evil, Paul was communicating the sense of urgency because of evil's pervasiveness.

- (c) Because so many are using the days for evil, it is of dire necessity that we (the Church) buy (redeem) every possible moment out of the hands of Satan.
 - (d) We do need a sense of urgency because our days are difficult and spiritually challenging. We must keep our standards high, act wisely and do well when we can. **In other words we must live holy, acceptable lives and get busy in these last and evil days. We must work while it is still day (John 9:3-4).**
7. **Christlikeness 1 John 2:6**
- (a) Note the harmonious, intimate relationship possible with Jesus Christ
 - (1) Each person experiences a personal encounter and relationship with Him (1 John 2:3; also 1:1-3; etc.)
 - (2) We are able to keep His word and sincerely love Him, which proves we are in Him (v. 5)
 - (3) As fruits and other products are preserved in preservatives, so are believers kept by abiding in Jesus Christ (v.6)
 - (4) We can be assured of fellowship with God when we keep His commandments (v. 3), and in a special way the commandment of love (Matt. 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31), we will continue to experience fellowship with God because we keep His Word (v. 5), and “walk as Jesus walked.”

C. CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

“Happiness is not the end of life; character is.” Henry Ward Beecher

“God is more concerned with conforming me to the likeness of His Son than leaving me in my comfort zones. God is more interested in inward qualities than outward circumstances – things like refining my faith, humbling my heart, cleaning up my thought life and strengthening my character.” Joni Eareckson Tada

“Nothing is more pathetic than having a small character in a big assignment. Many of us don’t want to give attention to our character: we just want the big assignment from God.” Henry Blackaby

How many genuinely want to know what Christian Character is all about? Putting it more personal, “Do you want to know what Christian Character is? **Evidently, real bonafide Christian character is established by our loyal commitment to Jesus Christ. This is realized in our surrender to Christ and as we allow His discerning, probing work to grow and enrich us, and making it possible for the Holy Spirit to flow freely in our lives.** Several key factors are important, for example, our humility, obedience, continued surrender, spiritual discipline and our unswerving faith and as seen throughout this study, the development of our Christian character also involves our total love for God (Matt. 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31). We must constantly seek His presence (Ex. 33:12-15); mature spiritually (Eph. 4:15; Heb. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:17) and in so doing building your Christian character.

As noted earlier, in this lesson, inconsistency hurts the Church and we all need to take heed and live circumspectly (Eph. 5:15; Col. 2:6; 1 John 1:7). **When we claim to be Christians, are our actions consistent with our testimony? It's not so much what we say but the way that we live! It is not so much what we claim to be but what we are genuinely made of will determine who we really are!** We have seen items on display and even sold as gold but in reality was not genuine gold. Whether it is other Christians or non-Christians, the life that we live is of paramount importance. **Being pretenders of the faith, giving a show, but having no substance behind us is extremely destructive to the Body of Christ and the reputation of our Lord!**

The Poem: "I Am My Neighbor's Bible"

I am my neighbor's Bible
 He reads me when we meet.
 Today he reads me in my home,
 Tomorrow in the street.

He may be relative or friend,
 Or slight acquaintance be,
 He may not know my name,
 But yet he is reading me.
 Dear Christian friends and brothers,
 If we could only know
 How faithfully the world records
 Just what we say and do.
 Oh, we would make our record plain,
 And labor hard to see
 Our worldly neighbors won to Christ,
 While reading you and me.

**"Character in a saint means the disposition of Jesus Christ persistently manifested."
 Oswald Chambers**

"It is imperative that when we say we are followers of Christ, our character and behavior reflect Him and His call to the best of our abilities which include our temperament. If we are leaders, this is even more imperative! We demonstrate character and integrity when we do what we say and act out what we believe; if not, we are hypocrites, and woe to us for being one (Matt. 23)."

The consistency that we are advocating for requires that we live what we preach, etc.; it means living in accordance with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In regards to Christian character Albert Barnes states: "In our manner of speech, our plans of living, our dealings with others, our conduct and walk in the church and out of it – all should be one as becomes the gospel (Phil. 1:27)." Integrity is of utmost importance for all and

especially for the Christian leaders (1 Cor. 13:5; Phil. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:10-12; 2 Thess. 3:7; Titus 2:3).

A few examples why integrity is of such utmost importance:

1. Hypocrisy gives people a false impression of God.
2. Insincerity gives people a false impression of who we are called to be and it diminishes integrity and character.
3. God is holy, righteous and just and requires His people to be holy (Lev. 11:44-45; 1 Peter 1:15-16).
4. The willingness to model Christ's character is far more vital for us today than the willingness to preach it. God wants us to be authentic not pretentious.

The Qualities of Christian Character

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir, states:

“Character is often defined as a collection of personality traits within our behavior that shows who we are. This is shown in our integrity, moral fiber, disposition, and this shapes how we treat one another good or bad. This is mostly true, but it goes much deeper than that. **Character is who we are and it can be learned and built when we are in Christ. Moreover, real authentic character is not just a personality or a disposition; it is a description who we are as a Christian, what we are called to be in entirety.** It encapsulates (*encapsulate: summarize, sum up, etc.*) the Fruit of the Spirit from God's love and work in us. A good effectual foundation of character is ‘*synergistic*’ (*synergistic: interactive, cooperative, working together*) as each aspect of the fruit hangs and function with each other. It is built upon the Fruit of the Spirit which all other character traits are codependent and thus function and rest upon. **Our character summarizes the essence of our walk with Christ being exhibited back to Him and then to others. Our character can grow or shrivel as our growth and faith formation in Christ is applied or blocked. Thus character is the display case of Christ and shows others our entire lives as Christians**

We all have the ability to be good or bad, to take what Christ has given us and use it, or ignore or even perverse it. This is not just about our reputation and ambassador in Christ (2 Cor. 5:20); it is how we must be if Christ has hold on us! It is best assessed when we seek within us what is being exhibited from us, then go before God and His Word to be better (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22).”

What is Character?

Character is aligning our lives to produce behaviors that are Christ-like. Throughout this study, emphasis has been placed on “in Christ,” “abiding in Christ,” etc., which results in producing the fruit of the vine. This is clearly taught in Scriptures, for example see John 15:1-8; there we observe:

1. Jesus Christ is the Vine.
2. God the Father is the Gardener (Husbandman ... KJV), and He cares for the branches to make them fruitful.

3. The branches are all those who claim to be followers of Christ.
4. The fruitful branches are the true believers who by their union with Christ produce fruit.
5. Etc.

As it relates to our character, we look to Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith as our primary example (John 13:15; Rom. 15:5; Heb. 12:2). We seek not only to do what Jesus would do but most importantly, what He would have us to do!

Eph. 5:1 Amplified Bible

“Therefore Be imitators of God [copy Him and follow His example], as well-beloved children [imitate their father].”

As we align ourselves according to the will of God and remaining under the control of the Holy Spirit we will see the “Fruit of the Spirit” being produced and which is a natural result of a Spirit-filled believer! (Gal. 5:22-23).

As we have discussed in other lessons, we will not have a character exactly like God, which is “absolute perfection” and possible only by God. However, we can experience victory in Jesus Christ, by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit and our submission in obedience to His will, way and Word; we can be “conformed to the image of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 8:29). This was the intent of God in His plan of salvation. We also saw in previous lessons: “Salvation re-creates the moral of God in people and opens the door to God’s work of sanctification and growth in holiness.” A wholesome, Christ-like character is possible as we surrender and live in obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Do You Have a Good Character in You?

We have seen that a wholesome character, a life lived in a Christlike way is possible.

NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

1. We are to allow Christ’s discerning, penetrating and continual work to grow and enrich us, thus allowing the Holy Spirit’s work, unhindered.
2. We should always remember that we are a “called out people,” to have a lifestyle, character, outlook on life and a behavior that is worthy of our calling as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a peculiar people (1 Peter 2:9).
3. We must live so that we are a reflection of Jesus Christ, and such is praise worthy of His goodness. By our godly lives, we can be the windows through which people see Jesus Christ.
4. **Note carefully the following quote:**
 “Building and developing character is not just learned out of a book or hear from a sermon. It does not come upon us in the night, or sneak up in the day. It does not come automatically, accentually, or suddenly. It is a process that comes from being parented in it. Then it rests in us and in our motives. It is a slow process. You may not realize you have it until others point it out in you. Character is not

permanent once it is formed. It requires continual hold and practice, in His Word, through our prayers and practice of His Fruit in and through us.

The attitude is to learn and model Christ, so to be active in representing Him and the virtues He proclaims as His ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20). **The call is to remain in Christ and His precepts and virtue, and not become contaminated by what the world offers us.** What may seem good may be misleading and will cause us to rot physically by disdain and disease, erode our mind with dysfunction and false thinking and then eat away our soul spiritually.

As we are mirrors of Christ, He is seen by who we are. When we stand up for the faith and act in good character, people will come against us with gossip and slander because their plans become disrupted and their desires are found guilty. **But when we remain faithful, regardless of the circumstances, they will see virtue and honor in action and thus, have a glimpse in God's character and call even if they reject Him and seek to kill us.** There will be times when it seems our efforts are weighted because people do not listen or do not repent. But, they are not. Each action we share is looked upon by others. We are watched! So when we live to honor God, people will have the example they need to accept His grace or reject Him. **We may never see the fruits, but they are there. We have a God who will judge and return, so let us get busy and make sure all those who come across our path see Him in us!"** (Dr. Richard J. Krejcir)

I will close with quote from six well known servants of God.

1. "As the excellence of steel is strength, and the excellence of art its beauty, so the excellence of mankind is moral character". **A. W. Tozer**
2. "God's ultimate goal for your life on earth is not comfort but character development. He wants you to grow up spiritually and become like Christ." **Rick Warren**
3. "Character comes by repetition of right until right is done subconsciously." **Jack Hyles**
4. "Our true character comes out the way we pray." **Oswald Chambers**
5. "God uses His Word, people and circumstances to mold us. All three are indispensable for character development. God's Word provides the truth we need to grow. God's people provide the support we need to grow, and circumstances provide the environment we need to grow. **Rick Warren**
6. "When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost." **Billy Graham**

D. PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFINED James 1:27

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

1. Please study James chapter 1, you will be benefited.
2. As you go through the chapter you will observe several very important subjects. In the last two verses, James informed us how we are to distinguish between vain religion and that which is pure and approved of God.
3. **James 1:26 ... Vain Religion**
Unfortunately, we have time for only a few highlighted pointers.
 - (a) In vain religion there is much of show and affection **to appear religious (righteous) in the eyes of others.**

 - (b) In vain religion there is much condemnation, strong disapproval, etc., reviling (***reviling: scolding, humiliating, verbal abuse, etc.***), undermining others good name.
 - (c) In vain religion a man deceives his own heart ... he is vain ... his profession will come to nothing!! His religious services are futile, barren, etc.!!
 - (1) These vain persons go on a course of belittling others.
 - (2) They make themselves seem to be somebody.
 - (3) The vanity of their religion is consumed by deceiving their own soul!!
 - (d) **James addresses not the hypocrites but the “SELF-DECEIVED”!!**
Look again at James 1:26 and carefully observe:
“... but deceiveth his own heart ...” (KJV)
“... but deludes his own heart ...” (Amplified Bible)
 - (1) “Religion” here (James 1:26) refers to outward forms and ceremonies.
 - (2) Their religion consists of rituals but lack holiness.
 - (3) **NOTE THE NATURAL RESULTS OF THE SELF-DECEIVED:**
 - Esteems himself (Psa. 36:2)
 - In spiritual bondage (Isa. 44:20)
 - He is conceited (Gal. 6:3)
 - He is a careless hearer (James 1:22)
 - He has an unbridled tongue (James 1:26)
 - He is a spiritual pauper (Rev. 3:17)
4. **James 1:27 is not a comprehensive classification of “PURE RELIGION.”**
 - (a) The apostle is not saying this is what all pure religion consists of and there is nothing else to it.
 - (b) **However, he hereby clearly shows that “pure religion” will lead to a holy life! This purity will also be evident of those who claim allegiance to such a way of life.**
5. In James 1:27 we will briefly discuss two things:
 - (a) **Practical Benevolence**
 - (b) **Purity**

SUMMARY OF JAMES 1:27

At the time when the Epistle of James was written (before AD 50), orphans and widows had very little means of economic support. Unless a family member was willing to care for them, they were reduced to begging, selling themselves as slaves, or even exposed to starvation. By caring for these people, the church puts God's Word into practice Matt. 25:31-46; (see also Luke 10:25-37, NB v. 34; Phil. 4:3; James 2:14-26; etc.). When we give no thought of receiving (that is getting a reward, recognition, etc.) we show what it means to truly serve others (1 John 3:11-24; etc.).

To keep ourselves from letting the world corrupt us, we need to commit ourselves to Christ's ethical and moral system, not the world's value system which is based on money, power and pleasure. True faith means nothing if we are contaminated with the things of the world (Acts 2:40; Rom. 12:2; Gal. 6:14; Eph. 5:11; 2 Tim. 2:4; **1 John 2:15-29, NB Vv. 15-17**).

James 1: 27 Amplified Bible

"External religious worship [religion as it is expressed in outward acts] is pure and unblemished in the sight of the Father is this: to visit and help and care for the orphans and widows in their affliction and need, and to keep oneself unspotted and uncontaminated from the world."

1. Practical Benevolence**James 1:27a NKJV**

"Pure religion before God and the Father is this to visit orphans and widows in their trouble ..."

(a) You may ask in what way does benevolence fits in with holiness.

- (1) If you remember, earlier in this study, mention was made of the importance of believers having the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil 2:5; 1 Peter 4:1)
 - It means knowing His will and His redemptive purpose and be likeminded conformed.
 - It means appraising and seeing things the way He values them, loving what He loves and hating what He hated.
 - It means understanding the holiness of God and the awfulness of sin.
- (2) We also noted that there is no better way to describe the essence of holiness of life than "Christlikeness."
 - Christlikeness includes patterning our lives on the example of Jesus Christ our Savior.
 - **Jesus cared for all the needs of people both spiritually and physically and we need to follow in His footsteps.**
- (3) Benevolence was and is a very important aspect of Christianity and proper emphasis is very important.
 - The history of benevolence can be traced throughout the Bible ... here are two quick references:

- O.T. ... see Deut. 24; NB Vv. 19-22
 - N. T. ... see Acts 6:-1-7
 - While acts of charity are essentially important, we must never lose focus of man's need of the Savior Jesus Christ!!
 - Definitely, benevolence had a major role in Christ's earthly ministry ... note two examples:
 - He was moved with compassion for the people (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; etc.)
 - He gave the Church what we refer to as the "Care Commission" (Matt. 25. 31-46)
- (b) It is our responsibility to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions.
- (1) This certainly would apply to visiting all who have need within the community.
 - (2) All communities have needs ... the less fortunate stands out ... they need someone to genuinely care ...
 - Orphans
 - Widows
 - Shut-ins
 - New comers
 - Fatherless or motherless
 - Lonely/neglected or desperate
 - Grieved/grieving and hopeless
 - Etc.
- (c) Whatever may be the needs in the community that we serve, God expects us to reach out with loving care and compassion . . . **Jesus did!!**
- (1) He expects us to reach all within our community ...
 - (2) Letting the community know that there are those who genuinely care, this will cause many to call upon believers of the Church in times of need.
 - (3) Remember this quote:

"People do not care how much you know. They want to know how much you care." (Matt. 28"20; 1 Peter 4:9; Gal. 6:2; Rom. 15:1)

2. Purity

James 1:27 (NKJV) emphasis on part "b"

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this . . . **to keep oneself unspotted from the world.**"

- (a) It is the glory of pure religion to be pure and unspotted.
 - (1) It is not mixed with inventions of men or with the corruption of the world.
 - (2) Pure religion is not adorned with mere ceremonies nor rituals but with purity and charity
 - (3) Pure religion before God is not based upon man's approval or guided by the dictates of worldly wisdom . . . it is God based, God built and God directed!!
 - (4) Pure religion teaches us to do everything in the presence of God.

- (5) Pure religion teaches us to seek God's favor and earnestly how to please Him in all our actions.
- (b) Pure religion endeavor not to be polluted by the world.

James 1:12b

KJV: "... to keep himself unspotted from the world."

NKJV: "... to keep oneself unspotted from the world"

Amplified Bible: "... to keep oneself unspotted and uncontaminated from the world."

- (1) **Pure religion will keep us from the sayings, conduct, vices and corruption which prevail in the world; instead we will seek that which is holy.**
- (2) If you remember, we noted that there are several definitions used in defining holiness such as: purity, perfection, free from every stain, immaculate, etc. We also saw that while "absolute perfection" is not possible for us we can experience "Christian Perfection."
- (3) Holiness of life is not only possible but imperative: Lev. 11:44-45; 19:1; 1 Chron. 16:29; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Heb. 12:14.
- (c) **The adverse effect of pollution**

*Time is available only for brief comments. However throughout this study I have covered this subject in details. **At this time briefly note two examples.***

(1) **Samson (Judges 1:8 to chapter 16)**

- Physically strong but morally weak.
- Wrongly using his God given strength for selfish gratification.
- Samson lost sight of the will of God because he was controlled by the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life because of his craving for sensual gratification.
- He was so morally blinded that he was unable to see his destruction in the making.
- He was so callous, so insensitive to the need of the people he was called to lead that he never once fought on behalf of their needs, all his battles with the enemy was self-pleasing and self-centered.
- He broke three probation of the Nazarite vow (See Num. 6:1-21)
 - Abstain from wine and fermented liquor (Vv. 3-4)
 - Hair was to grow for the duration of the vow (v. 5)
 - Separation from contact with the dead (v. &)
- In fact the vow included an oath to be separated to the service of God (See Num. 6:2). Obviously, this Samson completely ignored.
- Samson was so far gone from God that he didn't know when the presence of God had left him!! (Judg. 16:21)
- Etc.

(2) **King Solomon**

We have limited time but I do need to briefly mention a few pointers.

- Read carefully 1 Kings 2 through 11.

- God’s condition for blessings to continue being poured out on Solomon was his continued obedience in the light of God’s Word
 - See 1 Kings 3, NB Vv. 3, 7-15, emphasis on v. 14
 - See also 1 Kings 6:11-13, NB v. 12
- Very much evident also in the situation with Salomon we have seen the averse, devastating result of pollution. Solomon’s down fall came through his mixture with the world which weakens, erodes, crumbles and destroys (See 1 Kings 11 NB Vv. 1-2, 4).
- Thompson’s Chain Reference Study Bible presented eight phases of King Solomon’s life. I will quote section 7 and the closing paragraph.

Quote:➤ **HIS MORAL DOWNFALL AND IDOLATRY** (*Section 7*)

At last he plunged into sensuality and was influenced by his many wives to introduce the worship of false god’s into Jerusalem, 1 Kings 11:1-8. He was sharply rebuked by the Lord for his apostasy, and the disruption of the kingdom in his son’s time was foretold (1 Kings 11:9-13).

➤ **His life furnishes a great warning.** (*Closing paragraph*)

He is known as the wisest man, yet his wisdom did not teach him self-control. He taught well but failed to practice his own precepts. He described the fool in the Book of Proverbs and thus draws vivid picture of his own falling.

(d) Unspotted!! Undefined!! (James 1:27)

(1) The world is likely to spot and blemish the soul.

- The flesh lust against the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-21)

Gal. 5:17 Amplified Bible

“For the desire of the flesh are opposed to the [Holy] Spirit, and the [desires of the] Spirit are opposed to the flesh (godless human nature); for these are antagonistic to each other [continually withstanding and in conflict with each other]. So that you are not free but are prevented from doing what you desire to do.”

- We should never forget that the Church is a called out community in a hostile world feared and motivated to obliterate; indeed Satan is as a **roaring** (present continuous tense) lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8) and so we must be sober, vigilant and resist the enemy of our souls (1 Peter 5:9).
 - The world and its systems are in opposition to the Christian standard of living (true righteousness and holiness).

- The world has a constant pull towards its immoral standards and we need to have on the whole armor of God and stand firm (Gal. 5:1; Eph. 6:11-18; 1 Peter 5:9; etc.).
- (2) This is not just a struggle against temptation; it is “spiritual warfare.”
 - It includes an inward battle (Rom. 7:23)
 - We fight with spiritual weapons (2 Cor. 10:4)
 - Satan’s host are our enemies (Eph. 6:12)
 - It demands entire consecration (2 Tim. 2:4)
 - Through Jesus Christ we are more than conquerors Rom. 8:37
- (3) May God by His grace keep both our hearts and lives clean from the love of the world and the temptations of worldly men.

(e) **For Review and Reinforcement ... (an important point).**

PURE RELIGION (Briefly noted)

- (1) **Pure religion does not become corrupted with false beliefs or false religion.**
 - It holds to the purity of the gospel and the Word of God in totality.
 - How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed to the Word of God. (Psa. 119:9)
 - The Word of God is a source of divine restraint, that’s what we treasure in our hearts (Psa. 119:11; Col. 3:16; etc.)
- (2) **Pure religion does not focus upon form, ritual and ceremony.**
 - It focuses upon the power of God to change lives eternally and it reaches out to change people’s lives by visiting them.
 - He is not satisfied with only a form of godliness (2 Tim. :5); he seeks to experience God intimately (1 John 1:1-3; John 17:3; Col. 1:10; etc.).
 - He knows his religion (righteousness) must exceed the standard of vain worshippers (Matt. 5:20).
- (3) **Pure religion does not become morally corrupt.**
 - It does not become entangled with the immoral affairs and pleasures of this world.
 - True religion stirs people to separate themselves from the things of the world that arouse their fleshly desires and cravings
 -
- 3. **The standard must be maintained:** Matt. 5:8; Rom. 12:12; 1 Cor. 7:31; 2 Cor. 6:17; 2 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 2:4; 1 Peter 2:22; Eph. 5:1
- 4. **Psa. 24:3-4 Amplified Bible**
 “Who shall go up into the mountain of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His Holy Place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted himself up to falsehood or to what is false, nor sworn deceitfully.[Matt. 5:8].”

E. THE CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE (Matt. 5:13-16)

*Christ, the master teacher, in these two parables referred to two things with which His audience was familiar; they knew the importance of both, “salt” and “light.” The importance of salt and light are still relevant in our everyday life. The application of salt and light in this study helps to demonstrate the importance of the “**Christian’s Influence**”; in a world that is desperately in need of the liberating message of Jesus Christ.*

The passage, Matt. 5:13-16, presents two main thoughts: (a) “Distinctiveness” (v. 13) and (b) Dispel Darkness (Vv. 14-16). Because of the volume of material I will be presenting a detailed presentation in chapter 4. Below I will present a brief coverage; some of these pointers may be repeated in the detailed presentation.

Matt. 5:13-16 Amplified Bible

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost (its strength, its quality) how can its saltiness be restored? It is not good for anything any longer but to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a peck measure, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your moral excellence and your praiseworthy, noble, and good deeds and recognize and honor and praise and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

1. Distinctiveness Matt. 5:13

- (a) Throughout this study I have made frequent usage of the need for “distinctiveness,” which is of paramount importance and mandatory for the Church of the Living God!!
- (1) The fact that the Church is a “called out community,” undoubtedly, shows that the necessity to be distinctive is still binding!!
 - (2) Mention was also made of the three changes that occur in a sanctified life, of which the first is “**separated from the world unto God.**”
 - Too many seem to understand “sanctified” as referring only to “separation but do not understand the essence of this separation. **There must be a separation FROM the world UNTO GOD!!**
 - The other two things involved in a sanctified experience are: (a) Purging from the pollution of sin and (b) Crucifying of the carnal nature.
 - (3) For all true believers “distinctiveness” should be and will be obvious in our daily living!
- (b) **The essence of Matt. 5:13 is “distinctiveness.”**
- (1) Salt is distinctly different from the thing upon which it is used or added to. By nature and purpose salt is different.
 - (2) This difference is also true in regards to the genuine believers; they are distinctly different by nature and purpose.

- **By nature believers are a creation, born of God** (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Peter 1:23)
 - Remember, regeneration recreates spiritual life in the human heart (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23-24).
 - The nature that was depraved and dead because of sin is now given spiritual life.
- **By purpose believers are to penetrate and change the very taste of the earth. THEY ARE SALT!!**

(c) **Salt of the earth**

- (1) The believer must be salt, which is valuable to give flavor and preserve from corruption.
- (2) Hence the believers, the Church, must be godly examples in the world and must resist the moral decay and corruption evident in society.
 - Churches that become lukewarm, quench the power of the Holy Spirit and cease to resist the prevailing spirit in the world will be “cast out” by God (see Rev. 3:15-16).
 - They consequently will be “trodden underfoot of men,” that is, those who are lukewarm will be destroyed by the ways and values of the ungodly society (Deut. 28: 13, 43, 48; Judg. 2:20-22).

(d) **When discussing “Distinctiveness” (Matt. 5:13), in the detailed presentation I will be using four pointers:**

- (1) **Character**
Matt. 5:13a: “You are salt ...” (KJV)
- (2) **Commission**
Matt. 5:13a: “You are salt of the earth ...”(KJV)
- (3) **Course of Action**
Matt. 5:13a: “. . . of the earth . . .” (Amplified Bible)
- (4) **Caution**
Matt. 5:13b: “. . . but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and be trodden underfoot of men.” (KJV)

2. **Dispel Darkness Matt. 5:14-16**

(a) **Darkness/Light**

- (1) Both darkness and light are distinctively different; the darkness that I am referring to is unrighteousness and light referring to righteousness.
 - Even in the physical sense these two things are distinctively different.
 - We do have some days that are somewhat dark but even then there is a distinction between darkness and light.
- (2) Jesus was specific when He said, men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19).

- (3) Darkness and light cannot be integrated to become one; no matter what efforts are made there will never be such thing as light/darkness as being one thing.
- They are separate and will always be just as oil and water are different.
 - Likewise, in regards to the regenerate and unregenerate, one is either a saint or sinner; there is no place for a saint/sinner as one
 - Satan is a liar!! There is no such thing as a sinning saint! This refers to one who is a believer but habitually sins (1 John 3:1-10).
 - Someone once told me that she is a “Liberal Christian,” because although she professes Christ she lives as she desires. Beloved, that is a trick of the devil and one that he has used to enslave so many but there is a way out though Jesus Christ. Make no mistake, there MUST be a distinction (Matt. 5:20; Titus 2:12; 2 Peter 3:11; etc.)
 - **Positively! Definitely! There is NO neutral ground! No de-militarized zone!! You are either a saint or a sinner!!**
- (4) Note carefully the following references (and yes, others can be added if you so desire)
- **Children of darkness; that’s who we were! But no more!!**
 - Prayerfully read Eph. 5
 - Note carefully Vv. 8-21
 - **Eph. 5:11-12 Amplified Bible**
 “Take no part in and have no fellowship with the fruitless deeds and enterprises of darkness, but instead [let your lives be so in contrast as to] expose and reprove and convict them. For it is a shame to speak of or mention the things that [such people] practice in secret.”
 - **The admonition to cast off darkness is clearly seen in the Scriptures**
 - Prayerfully read Rom. 13:11-14
 - **Rom. 13:12-14 NKJV**
 “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lust.”
 - **By His grace we are taken out of darkness into the marvelous light!**
1 Peter 2:9 Amplified Bible
 “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, [God’s] own purchased, special people, that you may set forth the wonderful deeds and display the virtues and perfections of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. [Exod. 19:5, 6]”
- (b) **Enormous Compliment**
- (1) God is light (1 John 1:5). Jesus Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5).
 - (2) Jesus said to His disciples: “You are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14).
 - In other words the believer is what God and Christ are ... “light.”

- No greater compliment could be given to the believer! He is light!!
 - But note: **to be identified with God is an enormous responsibility as well as a compliment.**
 - Many would prefer to focus only on the complementary aspect and not the **responsibility** with which the compliment comes.
 - A quote by Henry Blackaby, used earlier, states: “Nothing is more pathetic than having a small character in a big assignment. Many of us don’t want to give attention to our character: we just want the big assignment from God.”
 - A statement that I have frequently used states: “Where there is responsibility, there is accountability”
 - We must not only receive but be worthy stewards. Many references for example Matt. 25:14-30.
 - God refers to us as light then let us reflect Him and make use of the opportunities to glow to His honor and His glory (see also Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5; 1 Peter 2:12)
 - Beloved: “Let your (our) light so shine before men that they may see your (our) moral excellence and praise worthy, noble, and good deeds and recognize and honor and praise and glorify your (our) Father Who is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16 Amplified Bible ... *“our” inserts mine*)
- (3) Because Jesus Christ is the Light of the world (John 8:12), believers are workers together with Him and which is an honor bestowed upon them.
- (4) There is a deep meaning to the believer being light.
- **What light is and does the believer needs to emulate and live.**
 - All genuine Christians are lights (Eph. 5:8).
 - We must shine forth as light (Phil. 2:15).
 - Oh, to be like Him!! Let our lives be pictures of Jesus Christ, projecting the heavenly rays, showing who He is to a world in darkness.
 - Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun onto a darkened side of the earth, so the Church (Universal) is to reflect the rays of “Sun of Righteousness” (Mal. 4:2).
- (c) **When discussing “Dispel Darkness” (Matt. 5:14-16), in the detailed presentation I will be using four pointers:**
- (1) **Character**
Matt. 5:14a: “Ye (You) are light ...” KJV
 - (2) **Commission**
Matt. 5:14b: “Ye (you) are light of the world ...” KJV
 - (3) **Compelling Witness**
Matt. 5:14-15: “Ye (you) are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.” KJV

(4) Convincing Evidence

Matt. 5:15-16: "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candle stick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." KJV

F. AN ANALYSIS OF 1 JOHN 3

We have already discussed portions of 1 John 3 (See Lessons 9 to 11 ... chapter 2); but due to the rich contents of this chapter I am presenting the following to which you can continue to develop into a full study, if you so desire.

1. The fact that Christians are the sons (children) of God 1 John 3:1-3

- (a) Children of God, what a marvelous privilege for the Christian! The truth is that our self-worth is based on this fact that God loves us and calls us His children!
- (b) **The truth that God is our heavenly Father and we are His children is one of the greatest revelations in the N. T.**
- (c) Several related facts to this privilege as children of God (I will highlight a few):
 - (1) It is an honor and privilege of our salvation (John 1:12; Gal. 4:7)
 - (2) Being a child of God is the basis for our faith and trust in God (Matt. 6:25-34 and our hope of glory for the future. As the children of God, we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:16-17; Gal. 4:7).
 - (3) God wants us to be increasingly made aware through the Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of adoption" (Rom. 8:15), that we are His children... The Spirit produces the cry "Abba Father" in our hearts (Gal. 4:6).
 - (4) Being children of God is the basis for our discipline by the Father (Heb. 12:6-7, 11) and the reason we live to please God (Heb. 12:9-10).
- (d) **We are the children of God, and this will explain why the world does not appreciate our character, or understand the reason of our conduct.**
- (e) The consequences of sustaining that relation to God, or being regarded as His sons are:
 - (1) We shall be like Him when He appears (v. 2).
 - (2) We shall purify ourselves under the influence of this hope (v. 3).

2. The fact that he who is an adopted child of God does not commit sin 1 John 3:4-10

- (a) These verses were extensively covered in lessons 9 and 10.
- (b) All sin is transgression of the law of God (v. 4).
- (c) Christ was manifested to take away our sins (v. 5).
- (d) He that commits sin (habitually commits sin) is of the devil (v. 8)
- (e) As a matter of fact, he who is of God does not sin (does not sin habitually) (Vv. 7, 9, 10).

3. **True religion (righteousness) will be manifested by love to the Christian brotherhood 1 John 3:10-18)**
- (a) Verses 10-17 was briefly discussed in lesson 11.
 - (b) As a man who is not righteous cannot be a true Christian; neither can one who professes to be a Christian and does not love his brother be regarded as righteous.
 - (c) It is a solemn command of the Savior that His follows should love one another (v.11).
 - (d) The importance of this (love for one another) is seen by the opposite conduct of Cain (v. 12).
 - (e) Love to the brethren furnishes the certainty that we have passed from death unto life (v.14).
 - (f) A man who hates another is a murderer, and of course, cannot be a true child of God (v. 15).
 - (g) We should be stimulated to love the brethren by example of the Savior who laid down His life for us (v. 16).
 - (h) If we see a brother in want, and have the means of aiding him, and do not help, we cannot have the love of God dwelling in us (Vv. 17-18).
4. **We may have evidence that we love God by the consciousness of our feelings towards Him, as well as by our outward acts towards His friends 1 John 3:19-21**
- (a) **“By this ...” (v.19 Amplified Bible).** Love expressed in practical ways gives us confidence before God.
 - (1) If the love of God is truly in our hearts, we will naturally and by His presence in us manifest his love towards one another.
 - (2) We are not saved by works, but neither are we saved without good deeds.
 - God’s grace in our hearts produces good works (Eph. 2:10).**
 - (b) **“Heart confidence” Vv. 20-21**
There is so much more than we can discuss. I will briefly note a few things.
 - (1) A clean heart is wrought by God who knows all things.
 - **God knows everything about us!! YES EVERYTHING!!**
 - He knows when you are feeling low, downcast, when you are up or down, when you are weak or strong, etc.
 - There is absolutely nothing that is hidden from God!!
 - Psa. 32:3; 38:4; 94:9; Jer. 16:17; etc.
 - **God knows how to assure our hearts and how to give us confidence towards Him.**
 - Be it the weight of our sins or any other matter God desires that we all experience complete deliverance and have full assurance in Him!
 - Let us take it to the Lord and leave it there!!
 - How is this possible? He has already sent Jesus Christ to remove our guilt and all burdens (Isa. 53; Mall 11:28-30; etc.)

- (2) Definitely, our hearts can flow in full assurance and confidence knowing that all things are well with God.
It is well with my soul
It is well; it is well with my soul

5. **If we keep His commandments our prayers will be answered 1 John 3:22-23**

- (a) Confidence in God and faithfulness in prayer are always closely related.

“Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him...”

- (b) **“... because we keep his commandments, ...” v. 22**

(1) John declares that an effective prayer life is related to our devotion to God.

(2) **Obeying, loving and pleasing God** (John 8:29; 2 Cor. 5:9; Eph. 5:10; Heb. 13:21) **are indispensable conditions in order to receive what we ask for in prayer** (Ps. 50:14-15; Prov. 15:29; Isa. 59:1-2; Matt. 6:15; Mark 11:25; James 5:16).

- (3) The particular commandments on which the efficacy of prayer so much depends are:

- That we believe on the name of the Savior (v.23)
- That we love the Christian brotherhood (v. 23)

6. **We may know that we abide in God by the Spirit which He has given us, as well as by keeping His commandments 1 John 3:24**

- (a) The presence of the Spirit in the heart assures the obedient Christian that Christ **abides** in him.

(b) The gift of the Holy Spirit is the secret of true spirituality and effective service.

(c) In this letter John stresses the importance of the Spirit as a witness to our salvation (1 John 3:24; 4:13; 5:6)

(d) **The knowledge that God is abiding in the Saint comes from the Holy Spirit. He bears witness in connection with our human spirit, as energized by Him, that we are children born of God (Rom. 8:16).**

2 Tim. 2:15

KJV

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Amplified Bible

“Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.”

CHAPTER 2 LESSON 12 REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Complete the following:
 Only (a) _____ can put a (b) _____ (c) _____
 on something that (d) _____ it from (e) _____
 place to something special, different and (f) _____.

2. Match the captions on the left with their correct references on the right (*these were discussed in our lesson*).

Captions	Correct References	Jumbled References
Walk in Love		Eph. 5:1
Obeys the Lord		Rom. 12:2
Bears Good Fruit		Mark 16:17-18
Imitates		1 John 4:7-12
Exercise Power over the Enemy		Matt. 7:17-20
Does not Conform to the World's Standards		John 14:15

3. What does it means if our (Christian) Lives do not bear good fruit of obedience to Jesus' teaching?

4. Complete the following:
 The (a) _____ Christian has an (b) _____
 of (c) _____ to the (d) _____, goals,
 and activities of the (e) _____ which would (f) _____
 us into its shape.

5. What is confirmed by "These signs ..." (Mark 16:17), when done by genuine believers of Jesus Christ?

6. Complete by choosing the correct answer:
As Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, even so we who by exercising true saving faith in Him experiences the _____.

- (a) new attitude daily.
- (b) newness of charm.
- (c) newness of life.
- (d) new revelations daily.

7. Why Paul had no anxiety about death, despite the many adverse and life threatening situations he faced?

8. Complete the following:
To be led by the Holy Spirit (a) _____ the (b) _____
to hear, the (c) _____ to (d) _____ God's
Word, and (e) _____ to _____
between your (g) _____ and be guided by the Holy Spirit.

9. As Christ's chosen representatives on earth, what challenges Paul sets forth in Eph. 4:1-2 for us?

10. What does “walk circumspectly” means as used in Eph. 5:15?

11. By referring to the days as “evil” (Eph. 5:16), what message was Paul communicating?

12. In our relationship with Jesus Christ and our quest for Christlikeness, what are some noteworthy things in this experience?

13. (a) How is genuine Christian character **established**? (b) How is it **realized**?

14. Choose the correct answer to complete the following:

Being pretenders of the faith, giving a show, but having no substance behind us

_____ to the Body of Christ and the reputation of our Lord!

- (a) Is exactly ideal
- (b) Is extremely destructive
- (c) Is elaborately evasive
- (d) Is elegantly dutiful

15. **Define** Christian character; briefly explain you definition.

16. Briefly explain how one builds and develop character.

17. (a) What is the result of learning and modeling Christ? What is the call that we have in regards to be Christ's representatives?

18. What are some characteristics, evident in vain religion (James 1:26)?

23. The believer is referred to as “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13); in what ways this is significant?

24. There are several elate facts in regards to privileges experienced by the children of God; briefly list at least three and give references.

25. Complete the following:

Obeying, (a) _____ and (b) _____ God (John 8:29; 2 Cor. 5:19; etc.) are (c) _____ conditions in order to (d) _____ what we (e) _____ for in (f) _____ (Psa. 50:14-15; Matt. 6:15).

We will discuss the answers to as many questions as possible in our next class.