

Topic:
Maintaining Godly Character in an Ungodly World

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age. (Titus 2:11-12 (NKJV))

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Introduction

We live in a world today where men of upright character are almost extinct. Very little emphasis is placed on people who are of a good report or who are men of character. The influence to lose one's character is so great that even those who are the "church" who are the body of Christ are hard to identify if judging them by their character.

We are a nation who has completely lost focus on imparting good character traits in our children that will evolve in them being adults with moral and sound character. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 22:6 to "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it". While we, for the most part look at this scripture to only refer to bringing our children to Sunday School, getting them involved in an abundance of church activities with the prayer and hopes that this will do all that needs to be done just fine. We fail to realize that we must be the school of reference whereby the generation coming after us should learn what it means to embrace a godly character. The Bible calls for us to be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith and in purity.

Our Study

An Example to the Believers: 1 Timothy 4:12-16

In these verses, the Apostle Paul was encouraging young Timothy not to let anyone despise the fact of his age but at his young age, he compelled him to be an example to the believers. One could take this to mean that this was necessary because the believers weren't being the best example. Paul tells his young son in the gospel that he is to be an example in word (speech). In other words Timothy's words are to be seasoned with grace. Every word spoken by us as Christian must be given considerable thought before it exits our mouth. Wouldn't this be nice if this were the really how we did at all times? Paul then goes on to tell Timothy to be an example in conduct (manner of life). We must understand that our actions, "at all times", must that becoming of a Christian. We must be ever aware of who we are. There is never a closet moment that we should take advantage. Now, here's the reality check: there are those times when things occur that just takes us right out the box. Regardless of what we are facing, we mustn't let ourselves get to the heated point that we lose it. Our walk must be conducive to that becoming of a Christian. If we say we belong to Christ then we ought to resemble Christ. The book of Isaiah tells the story well of how Christ modeled the behavior we must embrace in the face of the most life threatening and perhaps devastating situations.

The Model Behavior: *Isaiah 53*

Verse 3 tells us that he was despised and rejected by men. Verse 7 continues by telling us that he was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he never came out of his godly character to respond from his human character. Had he done so, he would have been justified because he had done no wrong. Verse 7 also tells us that was taken from prison and from judgment. As for who shall declare his generation, who would speak up and support the cause for his dying. Who really understand that through his suffering, the world would be freed. Isaiah continues his discourse in stating how Christ made his grave with the wicked. In other words, he who did no wrong had to just the same go the way of the wicked and he made his grave with the rich (those who have no need of savior because they believe they have all they need). In all this, it yet pleased the Father to take the Son through this experience. Behind all this was the joy of you and I coming to cross of Christ and finding the Father there.

As Christians, we often don't have a clue just how our character can effect on those around us. Whether is character becoming of a Christian or character that should never be name among a Christian, someone will be affected by what we say, by what we do, by how we love.

An Example to the Believers: *1 Timothy 4:12-16 (cont'd)*

Paul continue his conversation with Timothy by address how Timothy is to be an example in love, faith, and purity. Again, this is where we see both the Father and the Son in pure demonstration of love, faith, and purity. John 3:16 tells us that the Father so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son and the Son in his faithfulness to carry out the Father's will and heart in saving dying man, gave his life. Both acts were not about them but about us. Their character demonstrated a pure untainted love for us and a commitment to extend themself on our behalf. This is the perfect model of godly character that you and I must embrace as we continue to journey along this Christian highway.

What is Character?

Let's pause a moment and look deeper into this word we have been making reference to.

- Character is the traits that define or describe a person.
- Character is what you are other than biological factors.
- Character is the conduct that makes up our reputation.
- Character is the code of conduct that rules most actions.
- Character is the discipline and defaults for what we do.

How is Character Measured?

- Our family and close friends do not count – they are biased.
- God's judgment is perfect – and in writing.
- Other good men count – they tell the truth.
- By our fruit, friends, results, position, or praise.

Is It Important?

- The concept, but the not word, is in the Bible.
- A good name is put above wealth (Proverbs 22:1).

- God saved you to be like His Son (Romans 8:29).
- Offense is against your calling (1 Corinthians 10:31-33).
- A good character glorifies God and defends the truth.

The Plan: To Align Our Character Under the Favor of God's Will

Realizing that we are surrounded by ungodly men while we live in this God desensitized world, we must set the goal and plan to be ever engaged in improving our character. There is always something we need to work on when it comes to our character. Even the smallest and seemly extremely minor things can be a major thing affecting our future peace with God. We can improve our character as we:

- Grow – in favor with God and man.
- Grow – in grace and the knowledge of Christ.
- Increase – more and more as Paul wrote in Phillips
- Perfect – that which is lacking in our life.

The good we have on our side is that we are left alone to figure out how this works. We are left alone to work up a plan to build our character. God has begun the work of transforming our character into the image of his dear Son.

Conclusion

Our key scripture: Titus 2:11-14

Our key text clearly points the arrow of power to affect change in our life directly at God's grace. It is by God's unmerited favor (grace) that he has bestowed upon us his salvation that has appeared unto all men to teach us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present day. Because of and only because of the power of God working in our life are we able to maintain a godly character in the midst of an ungodly world. In this scripture, Paul tells Titus that as we strive in our pursuit to live godly, we do it with the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ who gave himself for us solely for the purpose of redeeming us from every lawless deed. Christ has the assignment of developing in you and I the character that exemplifies God. His assignment is carried out to the fullest and you and I yield our all and all unto Him. We will live victoriously godly in this present evil laden world. We will be the remnant of God holding fast and zealous unto good works. Be encouraged my brother and my sister and know that having obtained help of God we are able to continue.

God's peace and blessing be upon you....

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