

DEVELOPING GOOD CHARACTER

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Character development is a lifelong venture. Character starts from the mind of man as a thought. The thought then becomes an action. The repeated action becomes a habit. The habit when continuously practiced becomes one's character. Character is like a nature. Character is one's personal traits – a man's personality. And this comes with time. Character is a result of repeated actions over a long period of time.

Character has to do with a man's make up, temperament, quality and spirit. Your character describes who you really are. You may claim to be a Christian, but your character reveals who you really are. This is the reason why Moses and Jesus taught that a man's fruit (character or lifestyle) proves who he really is. You identify a true prophet by his actions (character). You identify a true believer or a truly repented fellow by his acts.

Deut 13:1-5

13:1 If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, 2 and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," 3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. 5 That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

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Deut 18:19-22

19 If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. 20 But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death." 21 You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.

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Matt 7:15-20

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt

tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

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John the Baptist also taught that a man must produce fruit to prove his repentance. This also proves that character reveals the true person. A man cannot hide under the banner of Christianity and deceive God or man.

Matt 3:7-9

8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

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Luke 3:8

8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

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Apostle Paul also taught that there must be a turning away from acts that are sinful, and by so doing, prove one's repentance as being genuine.

Acts 26:20

20 First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

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Heb 6:1

6:1 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,

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None of us professed Christians can deceive God with our religious acts and ceremonies. Our character proves who we really are to God and to all in this world.

Gal 6:7

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

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Matt 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons

and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

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Apostle Paul also taught us that Jesus is coming for a Church without spot, wrinkle or blemish. This means:

1. He is coming for a church without sin (spot)
2. He is coming for a church without bad habits (wrinkles which form as a result of age, tear and wear).
3. He is coming for a church free from evil character (blemish which always remains and mars someone's face or skin after an injury has healed)

Eph 5:25-27

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

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- This passage also reveals that Jesus is serious about the character of his people that he is taking time to wash and cleans the church with the word to perfect his character.
- The word of God is for purging and cleansing of a man's character.
- The word exposes the man to himself as a mirror will, rebukes, corrects, instructs, trains the man in righteousness so he can become perfect as is Heavenly Father is.
- Therefore, anyone desiring to please God and making it to heaven should give himself to the word of God and apply the word to his personal life through discipline.

2 Tim 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

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Titus 2:15

15 These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

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2 Tim 4:2

2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction.

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STEPS TO MANIFESTING THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

1. Recognition of the life and character of God in you through faith in Jesus Christ.

It is important that every believer focuses all the time on whom he or she is in Jesus so one can be successful in life. When you take a good look at the life we have in Jesus Christ, you will discover that we have already received the life and character of God. So, we can truly manifest a brand new character totally different from what we knew before coming into Christ.

John 3:16

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

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John 1:11-13

11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

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John 3:31

31 "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.

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1 Cor 6:17

17 But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

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1 John 4:17

17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

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1 John 4:7-12

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

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1 John 5:4-5

4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

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2. Renewing your mind with this truth.

Renewing the mind is washing your mind completely with this truth that you have the nature and life of Christ in you, and therefore can manifest the character of God because you have it. It is meditating on this truth till it takes you over and eliminates the stronghold of evil habits and character in your mind and life. It is pondering on this truth until all desire for the evil you knew and love disappears from your life. It is thinking on this truth until it becomes the only opinion you have on the subject of character and who you are. Have no other opinion but God's opinion. Change your view. You are not who you used to be, but God's child. You have God's nature and are expected to manifest it daily at all times in all things.

Rom 12:2

2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

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Eph 4:22-24

22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

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God's opinion of you is the truth and the final word on any and every subject. You are who God says you are. You have what God says you have. You can do what God says you can do.

3. Believe that you are who God says you are and you will manifest the life and character of Jesus Christ daily in your life.

You must change the picture in your head as far as habits and character is concerned. See yourself as God sees you. Believe in his opinion of you. In the kingdom of Christ, it is faith that gives us all that we need. So, you just have to believe what God's word says all the time.

Rom 1:17

17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

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Rom 6:11

*11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
NIV*

Mark 11:22-24

*22 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. 23 "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.
NIV*

1 John 5:4-5

*4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.
NIV*

- 4. Make up your mind to do away with the old evil habits and character and manifest that of Jesus Christ.**

Rom 6:12-13

*12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.
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This calls for a decision about changing your character. Make up your mind that all the evil habits and character in your life must leave your life. It is a firm decision that will do it. If you don't decide, you will not have the drive and determination that is required to discipline yourself and gain victory. Decide today and stick to your decision all your life.

- 5. Through discipline and self control, kill every evil appetite, habit and character, and yield to the new life and manifest the character of God in you in Christ Jesus.**

Rom 6:13-14

*13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.
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- 6. Constantly see yourself, think of yourself and talk of yourself as having the character of God and able to manifest and is manifesting it.**

Be overwhelmed by this truth. Be consumed by it. The picture you have in your head is what you pursue. If you see it, it becomes your focus. And what becomes your focus, you are likely to accomplish.

Gen 13:14-15

14 And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: 15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

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Mark 11:23-24

23 "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

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What you think determines what you say, and what you say create your world – they come to pass.

Matt 12:34

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

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Prov 18:20-21

20 A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

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CONCLUSION

It is important therefore that you the believer get rid of every evil character in your life. Make it a point of duty to cleanse yourself of these things that are evil in the sight of God and that disqualifies the believer from getting to heaven. Do not play with this. Remember that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is to deliver us from these evils in our lives and qualify us for his kingdom in heaven. Therefore go to work on yourself now. It is the duty of every believer to get rid of the evil character in his or her life.

1 Cor 5:8

8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

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Eph 4:31-32

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice . 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

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Col 3:7-17

8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice , slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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1 Peter 2:1-3

2:1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

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Rom 6:11-14

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

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