

Lasting Results Session 2 Part 1 Character needed

Lasting Results: Session 2, Part 1

Introduction: In God's Word, the character qualities of Jesus and others are revealed through life situations. This shows us that God's Word and character development go hand-in-hand.

Example 1: 1 Timothy 6:9-11

Scripture: 9 *But those who crave to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish (useless, godless) and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction and miserable perishing.*

10 *For the love of money is a root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have been led astray and have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many acute [mental] pangs.*

11 *But as for you, O man of God, flee from all these things; **aim at and pursue** righteousness (right standing with God and true goodness), godliness (which is the loving fear of God and being Christlike), faith, love, steadfastness (patience), and gentleness of heart. (AMP)*

Character Qualities Identified:

- **Righteousness:** Living in right standing with God.
- **Godliness:** Reverence for God and Christlike behavior.
- **Faith:** Trusting in God's promises.
- **Love:** Acting with selflessness and care.
- **Steadfastness:** Demonstrating patience and endurance.
- **Gentleness:** Exhibiting a soft and kind spirit.

As we grow mindful of character, we begin to recognize it more readily in Scripture.

Example 2: 2 Peter 1:3-8

Scripture: 3 *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,*

4 *by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature. (RSV)*

5 *For this very reason, adding your diligence [to the divine promises], employ every effort in exercising your faith to **develop** virtue (excellence, resolution, Christian energy), and in [exercising] virtue [**develop**] knowledge (intelligence),*

6 and in [exercising] knowledge [**develop**] self-control, and in [exercising] self-control [**develop**] steadfastness (patience, endurance), and in [exercising] steadfastness [**develop**] godliness (piety),

7 and in [exercising] godliness [**develop**] brotherly affection, and in [exercising] brotherly affection [**develop**] Christian love.

8 For as these qualities are yours and increasingly abound in you, they will keep [you] from being idle or unfruitful unto the [full personal] knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One). (AMP)

Key Point: The word "**develop**" highlights the need for active growth in character. These qualities—faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love—are essential for fruitful Christian living.

Balancing Knowledge and Character

While studying the Bible for historical facts, events, and theology is essential, character development must remain a priority. Without character growth, knowledge alone can lead to pride.

Scripture on Knowledge and Pride:

- **1 Corinthians 8:1:** *Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.* (NKJV)
- **Proverbs 8:13:** *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.* (NKJV)

Remedy for Pride:

- **James 4:6:** *God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* (RSV)
 - **James 4:10:** *Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you.* (RSV)
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Avoiding the Bit and Bridle

Scripture:

- **Psalms 32:9:** *Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not keep with you.* (RSV)

When understanding is lacking, people are controlled by external measures (bit and bridle) rather than internal conviction. Developing character helps believers overcome this.

12 Character Qualities to Cultivate

1. **Alertness vs. Unawareness:** Being mindful of what is happening to respond rightly. Use God's Word to guide responses instead of reacting emotionally.
2. **Obedience vs. Willfulness:** Embracing freedom under God's authority. Disobedience leads to being controlled by the bit and bridle.
3. **Initiative vs. Unresponsiveness:** Acting proactively rather than waiting to be told. Avoid constant reminders by cultivating this quality.
4. **Responsibility vs. Unreliability:** Meeting expectations from God and others. Reliability strengthens trust in relationships.
5. **Decisiveness vs. Double-mindedness:** Making firm decisions based on God's will. Start with a decision to grow in character.
6. **Determination vs. Faintheartedness:** Persevering in God's goals despite opposition. Effort and diligence are necessary.
7. **Wishful Thinking vs. Diligence:** Recognizing the effort required for growth. Discipline leads to a "harvest of right living." (Hebrews 12:11)
8. **Diligence vs. Slothfulness:** Treating every task as an assignment from the Lord. Responding to Jesus' call for character development demonstrates commitment.
9. **Cautiousness vs. Rashness:** Understanding the importance of timing. Be gentle when correcting or reminding others.
10. **Sensitivity vs. Callousness:** Being mindful of others' emotions. Engage with people compassionately rather than treating them as mere objects.
11. **Faith vs. Presumption:** Acting in harmony with God's intentions. **Partner with** the Holy Spirit to discern and act wisely.
12. **Punctuality vs. Tardiness:** In a spiritual context, can be understood as a reflection of our alignment with God's will and our commitment to live a Christ-like life. It goes beyond simply being on time and points to a deeper readiness and responsiveness to the Holy Spirit's guidance in our lives.

Assistance from the Holy Spirit

- **John 16:13:** *But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth).*
- **John 14:26:** *The Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and cause you to recall everything I have told you. (AMP)*

Conclusion: To achieve lasting results, believers must prioritize character development alongside knowledge. This process, though challenging, leads to fruitful and impactful lives, aligning with God's Word and the example of Jesus Christ.

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