

The Pattern: Part 14 - Effective Ministry and the Importance of Character

The teachings outlined in this series, including this part, are deeply rooted in the Word of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, and refined through years of personal experience, training, and the invaluable contributions of others.

It is only through God's grace and the help of these individuals and their ministries that this material has been developed to bless others. As stated in **2 Corinthians 3:5-6** (AMP), our sufficiency comes from God, who qualifies us as ministers of His new covenant through the Spirit.

In this section of "The Pattern," we delve into the **final components** of the teaching series, focusing on **two essential aspects**:

Effective Ministry and Character Development. These elements are integral to living as a disciple of Jesus Christ and fulfilling His purpose for our lives.

Reviewing The Pattern

Before progressing to the final parts of the pattern, let us review the journey thus far:

A-J:

- A.** Practicing Disciple of Jesus Christ
- B.** Water Baptism/The Lord's Supper
- C.** Baptism in the Holy Spirit
- D.** Speaking in Tongues
- E.** Taught (Accurately and Effectively)
- F.** Go
- G.** Preach
- H.** Do the Works of Jesus

Now, we move forward to the concluding parts of the pattern:

- I.** Meeting the Needs of People through the **Three "M's"**
 - 1. **M**otivational Gifts (Directed towards people)
 - 2. **M**inistry Gifts (Directed towards people)
 - 3. **M**anifestations of the Holy Spirit (Directed towards people)
- J.** Developing the Excellent, Moral Character Qualities of Jesus

These final components emphasize serving others effectively while embodying the character of Christ. Together, they form a complete framework for living as a disciple and ministering to others.

The Importance of Character

Before exploring effective ministry, it is critical to understand the foundational role of character in fulfilling God's purpose.

No matter how gifted, talented, or successful a person may be, if they lack the character of Jesus Christ, their life and work can face challenges that may lead to breakdowns or failure.

Key Points on Character:

- Faith, intelligence, talent, beauty, or success cannot substitute for godly character.
- A person's ministry or achievements are only sustainable when built on the foundation of Christ-like character.
- The character of Jesus is the glue that holds "The Pattern" together from beginning to end.

As **Revelation 21:6** reminds us, Jesus is "the **Alpha and the Omega**, the Beginning and the End."

The journey of discipleship starts with becoming a practicing follower of Christ and culminates in developing His character.

To deepen our understanding of character development, here are some key scriptures to reflect upon:

- **Ephesians 5:1:** "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."
- **Matthew 7:16:** "You will know them by their fruits."
- **1 Corinthians 13:1-8:** Love is described as patient, kind, enduring, and never-ending—qualities that reflect Christ's character.

Character development is not an optional aspect of discipleship; it is essential for sustaining spiritual growth, relationships, and ministry.

Effective Ministry

Effective ministry is about meeting people's needs through God's guidance and power.

Romans 12:13 reminds us to share with those in need and practice hospitality, while **2 Corinthians 11:9** emphasize supporting one another in times of lack.

The **dictionary defines** "ministry" as "a person or thing through which something is accomplished." This raises two critical questions:

1. What does God desire to accomplish through us as individuals, families, churches, or organizations?
2. How can we effectively meet people's needs?

The answers to these questions lie in understanding **three key components of effective ministry**:

Motivational Gifts, **Ministry Gifts**, and **Manifestations** of the Holy Spirit.

All three are directed toward serving people and must operate through the character of Jesus Christ.

Motivational Gifts

Motivational gifts are foundational to understanding how we are uniquely designed to serve others. These gifts are described in **Romans 12:4-8** as inherent motivations given to all people at creation. They influence how we approach life, make decisions, and interact with others.

Romans 12:4-8 (RSV):

"For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy (**insight**), in proportion to our faith; if **service**, in our serving; he who teaches, in his **teaching**; he who **exhorts**, in his exhortation; he who **contributes** (giver), in liberality; he who **gives aid** (facilitator), with zeal; he who does acts of **mercy**, with cheerfulness."

These gifts are not limited to Christians and can be observed in people from all walks of life. They reveal our natural inclinations and motivations for action. Understanding these gifts allows individuals to gain insight into their strengths and how they can best contribute to meeting others' needs.

Overview of Motivational Gifts:

- 1. Insight (Prophecy):** Declares truth and desires right motives and attitudes; meets spiritual needs.
- 2. Service:** Demonstrates love by fulfilling practical tasks; meets practical needs.
- 3. Teaching:** Seeks truth and shares knowledge; meets intellectual needs.
- 4. Exhortation:** Encourages personal growth and achievement; meets personal needs.
- 5. Contribution (Giving):** Supports God's work materially, financially, or spiritually; meets supportive needs.
- 6. Facilitation (Leadership):** Coordinates activities toward common goals; meets organizational needs.
- 7. Mercy:** Offers personal support and compassion; meets emotional needs.

While each believer may have a dominant motivational gift, all are called to exercise these gifts as needed. However, knowing one's primary gift allows for greater personal fulfillment and effectiveness in ministry.

The Role of Love in Ministry

At the core of effective ministry is love—the defining characteristic of Jesus Christ's life and teachings. As **1 John 4:8** states simply yet profoundly: “God is love.” Without love as our motivation, even the most remarkable acts lose their value (**1 Corinthians 13:1-8**).

Love should be our aim (**1 Corinthians 14:1**), guiding all our actions as we seek to meet people's needs.

Key principles about love in ministry:

- Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or boastful.
- Love does not insist on its own way but seeks what is best for others.
- Love rejoices in truth and bears all things with hope and endurance.

As **Ephesians 5:2** urges us: “Walk in love.” This foundational principle ensures that our ministry reflects the heart of Christ.

Character Development

Finally, we arrive at the last part of "The Pattern": developing the excellent moral character qualities of Jesus Christ.

This step is not merely an add-on but is central to sustaining every other part of "The Pattern."

Character development requires intentional effort and reliance on God's grace. As **Ephesians 3:17** reminds us, we must be “rooted and grounded in love” as we grow into maturity.

Why Character Matters:

- Character ensures stability in all areas of life—faith, relationships, ministry, business, talents, and success.
- Without Christ-like character, even great achievements can falter.
- The character of Jesus Christ serves as spiritual glue that holds all aspects of "The Pattern" together.

To aid believers in developing their character, discipleship programs such as "The Character Development program" provide tools to stay aligned with God's agenda for growth.

As we progress through "The Pattern," it becomes clear that character is woven into every step—from being a practicing disciple to embodying Christ's nature fully.

Conclusion

"The Pattern" begins with Jesus Christ as its foundation and culminates with His character as its crowning achievement—He is indeed "the Alpha and Omega" (**Revelation 21:6**).

As we conclude this teaching series with a focus on effective ministry and character development, let us remember that these final components are not merely add-ons but essential pillars that uphold every other part of "The Pattern."

Effective ministry involves meeting people's needs through motivational gifts, ministry gifts, and manifestations of the Holy Spirit—all infused with Christ-like love.

Meanwhile, character development ensures that our lives reflect Jesus' nature in every area.

As you continue your journey as a disciple of Christ, may you seek His guidance for receiving your Rhema word (**John 4:39-42**) and live by every word that proceeds from His mouth (**Matthew 4:4**).

Let us pursue the fullness of "The Pattern," striving always to grow in effective ministry and develop the character qualities that honor our Savior.

May God bless you as you walk this path toward becoming more like Christ—our ultimate example—and may His love guide you in all you do.

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