

FORMING GODLY CHARACTER

Philippians 2:1-11

INTRODUCTION: Christians who know their God well understand where their true value comes from. When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we become new creations in Christ: 2 Corinthians 5:17. Not only do Christians know where their value comes from but they also understand where their values are to come from: Luke 16:10-15.

I. PEOPLE WITH GODLY CHARACTER KNOW WHO THEY ARE!

People of godly character know who they are. They are centered on their relationship with Jesus Christ and are courageous and honest with themselves and with others. Our values determine our motives. Our motives determine our actions. Our actions display our character in part. However, not all good actions represent good character: Acts 5:1-11. Ananias and Sapphira's actions seemed good but what was their motivation? They valued the praise of men as greater than the praise of God and they were not the only people of whom that is true: John 12:42-43. Their action: they obeyed their rulers, the Pharisees. Their motivation: they loved praises from man more than praises from God. There are many examples of good actions accompanying bad character, but good character always has one underlying characteristic: selfless actions without the driving need to be recognized by man.

II. OUR LORD JESUS' EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER!

Our Lord Jesus' course of life and actions were always from pure motives: John 8:28-29. By always pleasing His Father, Jesus knew He would often displease men. Our Lord's motives were pure because His values were always pure: John 6:38. Sadly, we often try to get our actions right without much regard for the underlying motives and values behind those actions and it never turns out well: Matthew 15:1-9. Only God can change our motives: Matthew 6:19-21. Our treasure is what we value most in our hearts: Psalm 127:1. We must learn to seek recognition from our God first: Philippians 2:5-6. It is fine to be recognized for our accomplishments but it is not fine to separate our accomplishments for God's enabling: Acts 17:24-28; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11. We must learn to commit to Godly service: Philippians 2:7; Romans 6:11-13; Ephesians 2:8-10; Matthew 25:34-40. We must display Godly humility: Philippians 2:8; 1 Peter 5:5-6. Godly character cannot be formed apart from God's grace, and grace cannot be received apart from humility. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. We must seek for selfless obedience: Philippians 2:8.

III. THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF CHARACTER IS GODLY SELFLESSNESS!

The highest level of character is godly selflessness: John 15:9-14; 2 Peter 1:5-7. In order to succeed in the Christian life effort is more important than your ability. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. We must wait for God's rewards in God's time: Philippians 2:8-9. In His time, if we will wait on the Lord He will lift us up also: 1 Peter 5:5-11. In the kingdom of God, the greatest are the servants: Matthew 23:11-12. The reward of selfless serving is that in God's time we will be exalted to the glory of our Lord: Philippians 2:9-11. Therefore, everything we do as Christians should be done for the glory of our God! 1 Corinthians 10:31 is the golden rule for our motivation in life as believers in Jesus Christ.