

## Obtaining Christ's Character

### Quick Review:

1. There are five general categories of the grace of God described in God's Word:
  - A. Christ Jesus – Includes access to God as Father, Holy Spirit, Christ as King, Kingdom of God.
  - B. Christ's Community/Family/Body – Includes loving covenant relationships. One mind, one heart, unified lifestyles. As Father, Son, and Spirit, God builds His kingdom relationally in the context of natural and spiritual families. All local church families (led by qualified elders) are to be a part of a trans-local family of churches which could be called "tribes" (led by qualified five-fold ministries – apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors, evangelists).
  - C. Christ's Character – Includes absorbing all the transferrable attributes of God into our human hearts, spirits, souls, and minds both individually and corporately.
  - D. Christ's Calling – Includes being intentionally on gospel mission as a lifestyle. Bringing our occupations (how we make a living) into unity with our vocation (God's specific ministry purpose for every son of God.)
  - E. Christ's Competency – Includes appropriating the power of the Holy Spirit within and upon us. Flowing in the fruit, wisdom, revelation, gifts, and power of the Holy Spirit. Receiving and utilizing the gifts of the Holy Spirit to edify the church and advance Christ's kingdom.
2. Understanding and applying these five general categories of grace helps us walk out our "sonship" in the context of spiritual family unto the end that together we become like Christ and advance His kingdom on earth.
3. There are four dynamics necessary to produce transformation into Christ's likeness:
  - A. Relational
  - B. Instructional
  - C. Experiential
  - D. Spiritual

### What is character?

1. The mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.
2. What is Character?
  - A. The action you take to carry out the values, ethics and morals that you believe in.
  - B. Consistency between what you say you will do and what you actually do.
  - C. Putting the ethics into action.
  - D. Defines, builds, or breaks your reputation.
  - E. Moral strength. It takes moral courage to do what is right when it may cost more than you are willing to pay.
  - F. Who you are and what you do when no one is looking.

### What is Christ's Character?

1. Christ's character is the deep core values, heart motives, internal attitudes, mindset, worldview, moral and ethical convictions, his complete internal operating "system" that governed his outward life and ministry.

2. Bible passages referring to character: 2 Cor. 6:3, Tit.2:6-8, Prov. 10:9; Matt.7:21-23; 1 Tim. 4:12-16, 6:11; Gal. 5:22-26.
3. Jesus Christ was a values driven leader. The Beatitudes, for example, are like the internal and external “constitution of the Kingdom of God”, and a window into Christ’s heart and character. (Matt. 5:1-7:28) God starts and ends with the condition of the heart. God looks upon the heart. (1 Sam. 16:7) Because out of the heart come the issues of life. (Prov. 4:23; Matt. 15:18)

### **How do I obtain Christ’s Character?**

1. God’s highest intention for us is to transform us into Christ’s likeness. (Ro. 8:29-30) The starting point for obtaining Christ’s character is allowing Christ to live in our hearts by faith as Lord of our lives. The indwelling Christ changes us from the inside out. (Eph. 3:16-21; Col. 1:17)
2. There is no way to obtain the character of Christ without knowing, communing with, loving and obeying Christ Himself. We become like the Person we commune with. Character is formed as we abide in Christ. As we gaze on Christ, fully yielding our lives to Him, we become like Him. (2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 12:2)
3. In close relationships with others, our strengths get affirmed and our weaknesses come into the light, allowing God’s Spirit to change us. Fellowshiping in the light with God and others is key to obtaining Christ’s character. (1 Jn. 1:5-10)
4. Character is shaped by many trials, suffering, difficulties and tests. How we respond to temptation, testing, and trials will be a huge factor in character formation. (Heb. 5:8; Ja. 1:2-8)
  - A. “Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.” Helen Keller, 1880-1968
  - B. It is in the crucible of life that God is dealing with us, purifying us and shaping us into His Son’s image. I don’t normally enjoy the crucible but this is how character is built *IF* we respond well to the trials of life found in relationships, and circumstances. In “Overcoming Your Shadow Mission”, John Ortberg states, “If you don’t develop the character to support your gifts, they will actually become destructive to you.”
  - C. “God’s ultimate goal for your life on earth is not comfort, but character development. He wants you to grow up spiritually and become like Christ. Becoming like Christ does not mean losing your personality or becoming a mindless clone. God created your uniqueness, so he certainly doesn’t want to destroy it. Christ-likeness is all about transforming your character, not your personality.” Rick Warren
5. Relating to God and doing things for God in “secret” helps to expose and eliminate wrong motives. (Matt. 6:1-18)
6. Allow your brothers and sisters in Christ the opportunity to lovingly, gently, and with honor describe your behavior and point out your blind spots and weakness. (Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1)
7. Get into transparent relationships, like a DNA Group and/or Missional Kingdom Family, where permission is given to encourage one another and make appeals. (1 Tim. 5:1)
8. In a safe atmosphere in the mercy of God (the cross), give your covenantal family permission to “rebuke” you. A “rebuke” is simply bringing into the light outward areas that are displeasing to God. (Gal. 6:1; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 4:2; Titus 2:15) We can never judge someone’s inward motives, however. Judging the heart is God’s job, not ours. (Matt. 7:1; 1 Cor. 4:2-5)
9. Humility and the Fear of God are important character traits that attract the grace of God. (Ja. 4:6; Prov. 9:10)

## What are some of the most important character traits Christ wants us to obtain?

### 1. **Alertness** vs. unawareness

Being aware of the physical and spiritual events taking place around me so that I can have the right responses to them.

*"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."* (Mark 14:28)

### 2. **Attentiveness** vs. unconcern

Showing the worth of a person by giving undivided attention to his words and emotions.

*"For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."* (Hebrews 2:1)

### 3. **Availability** vs. self-centeredness

Adjusting my personal responsibilities around the needs of those whom I am serving.

*"For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare."* (Philemon 2:20)

### 4. **Boldness** vs. fearfulness

Confidence that what I have to say or do is true and right and just in the sight of God.

*"And now, Lord take note of their threats, and grant that Thy bondservant may speak Thy word with all confidence."* (Acts 4:29)

### 5. **Cautiousness** vs. rashness

Knowing how important right timing is in accomplishing right actions.

*"Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, and he who makes haste with his feet errs."* (Proverbs 19:2)

### 6. **Compassion** vs. indifference

Investing whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others.

*"But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"* (1 John 3:17)

### 7. **Contentment** vs. covetousness

Realizing God has provided everything I need for my present happiness.

*"And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content."* (1 Timothy 6:8)

### 8. **Creativity** vs. underachievement

Applying God's wisdom and practical insights to a need or task.

*"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."* (Romans 12:2)

### 9. **Decisiveness** vs. double-mindedness

The ability to finalize difficult decisions based on the will and ways of God.

*"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."* (James 1:5)

### 10. **Deference** vs. rudeness

Limiting my freedom to speak and act in order not to offend the taste of others.

*"It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles."* (Romans 14:21)

### 11. **Dependability** vs. inconsistency

Fulfilling what I consented to do even if it means unexpected sacrifice.

*"In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the lord; He swears to his own hurt, and does not change."* (Psalm 15:4)

### 12. **Determination** vs. faintheartedness

Purposing to accomplish God's goals in God's timing regardless of the opposition.

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."* (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

### 13. **Diligence** vs. slothfulness

Visualizing each task as a special assignment from the Lord and using all my energies to accomplish it.

*"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men."* (Colossians 3:23)

### 14. **Discernment** vs. judgment

The God-given ability to understand why things happen to others and to me.

*"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'" (1 Samuel 16:7)*

### 15. **Discretion** vs. simplemindedness

The ability to avoid words, actions, and attitudes which could result in undesirable consequences.

*"The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, but the naive go on, and are punished for it."* (Proverbs 22:3)

### 16. **Endurance** vs. giving up

The inward strength to withstand the stress to accomplish God's best.

*"And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."* (Galatians 6:9)

**17. Enthusiasm** vs. apathy

Expressing with my spirit the joy of my soul.

*"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 5:15-16)*

**18. Faith** vs. presumption

Visualizing what God intends to do in a given situation and acting in harmony with it.

*"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)*

**19. Flexibility** vs. resistance

Not setting my affections on ideas or plans, which could be changed by God or others.

*"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." (Colossians 3:2)*

**20. Forgiveness** vs. rejection

Clearing the record of those who have wronged me and me allowing God to love them through me.

*"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)*

**21. Generosity** vs. stinginess

Realizing that all I have belongs to God and using it for His purposes.

*"Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully." (2 Corinthians 9:6)*

**22. Gentleness** vs. harshness

Showing personal care and concern in meeting the needs of others.

*"But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children." (1 Thessalonians 2:7)*

**23. Gratefulness** vs. un-thankfulness

Making known to God and others in what ways they have benefited my life.

*"For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7)*

**24. Hospitality** vs. loneliness

Cheerfully sharing food, shelter, and spiritual refreshment with those whom God brings into my life.

*"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2)*

**25. Humility** vs. pride

Seeing the contrast between God's holiness and my sinfulness.

*"But he gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives to the humble." (James 4:6)*

**26. Initiative** vs. unresponsiveness

Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it.

*"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21)*

**27. Joyfulness** vs. self-pity

The result of knowing that God is perfecting His life in others through me.

*"A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken." (Proverbs 15:13)*

**28. Justice** vs. fairness

Personal responsibility to God's unchanging laws.

*"He had told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)*

**29. Love** vs. selfishness

Giving to others' basic needs without having personal rewards as my motive.

*"And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:3)*

**30. Loyalty** vs. unfaithfulness

Using difficult times to demonstrate my commitment to God and to those whom he has called me to serve.

*"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)*

**31. Meekness** vs. anger

Yielding my personal rights and expectations to God.

*"My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from him." (Psalm 62:5)*

**32. Obedience** vs. willfulness

Fulfilling instructions so that God and the one I am serving will fully be satisfied.

*"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5)*

**33. Orderliness** vs. disorganization

Arranging my life and surrounding so that God has maximum freedom to achieve His goals through me.

*"But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner." (1 Corinthians 14:40)*

**34. Patience** vs. restlessness

Accepting a difficult situation from God without giving Him a deadline to remove it.

*"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proved character; and proven character, hope." (Romans 5:34)*

**35. Persuasiveness** vs. contentiousness

Using words, which cause the listener's spirit to conform that he is hearing truth.

*"And the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged." (2 Timothy 2:24)*

**36. Punctuality** vs. tardiness

Showing respect for other people and the limited time that God has given to them.

*"There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1)*

**37. Resourcefulness** vs. wastefulness

Wise use of that which others would normally overlook or discard.

*"He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much." (Luke 16:10)*

**38. Responsibility** vs. unreliability

Knowing and doing what God and others are expecting from me.

*"So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)*

**39. Reverence** vs. disrespect

Awareness of how God is working through the people and events in my life to produce the character of Christ in me.

*"Do not let your heart envy sinners, but live in the fear of the Lord always." (Proverbs 23:17)*

**40. Security** vs. anxiety

Structuring my life around what is eternal and cannot be destroyed or taken away.

*"Do not work for the food which perished, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal." (John 6:27)*

**41. Self-control** vs. self-indulgence

Instant obedience to the initial prompting of God's Spirit.

*"Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." (Galatians 5:24-25)*

**42. Sensitivity** vs. callousness

Knowing by the prompting of God's Spirit what words and actions will benefit the lives of others.

*"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." (Romans 12:15)*

**43. Sincerity** vs. hypocrisy

Eagerness to do what is right with transparent motives.

*"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart." (1 Peter 1:22)*

**44. Thriftiness** vs. extravagance

Not letting myself or others spend that which is not necessary.

*"It therefore you have been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?" (Luke 16:11)*

**45. Thoroughness** vs. incompleteness

Realizing that each of our tasks will be reviewed and rewarded by God.

*"The mind of the prudent acquire knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge." (Proverbs 18:15)*

**46. Tolerance** vs. prejudice

Viewing every person as a valuable individual whom God created and loves.

*"Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose." (Philemon 2:2)*

**47. Truthfulness** vs. deception

Earning future trust by accurately reporting facts.

*"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another." (Ephesians 4:25)*

**48. Wisdom** vs. natural inclinations

Seeing and responding to life situations from God's frame of reference.

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10)*

**49. Virtue & Sexual Purity** vs. impurity

The influence God is having on others through my life regardless of my past failures.

*"Seeing that His power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His glory and excellence." (2 Peter 1:3; 1 Co. 6:18; 1 Thess. 4:3-5; Matt. 5:28; Col. 3:5)*

Institute in Basic Life Principles, Inc. (IBLP), Rebuilder's Guide, p. 170-175