



Character

Who are you when no one is looking? Learn the importance of strong character and get helpful steps for fixing the flaws.

The most important quality of a person's life is character. Someone has defined character as what you are when no one is looking. Character (Gk. *dokime*) is the quality of a person who has been tested and has passed the test.

If you have character flaws, they will eventually make your leadership fruitless, ineffective, and depending on your role in a ministry, they have the potential of destroying a ministry. Do not confuse character flaws with weaknesses. We all have weaknesses, but we should not ignore serious character flaws.

Some of the qualities that make up good character include honesty, integrity, self-discipline, teachability, perseverance, and a strong work ethic. The words of a person with good character match his deeds. His reputation is solid. His manner is straightforward.

Here are some warning signs of serious character flaws:

- A person fails to take responsibility for his/her actions or circumstances
- Unfulfilled promises or deadlines
- Compromise of absolute truth or core values to please others
- Makes decisions based upon what is easy or acceptable, instead of what is right and God honoring.

One can count on a person with sound character when the pressure is on. Therefore, character is something that cannot be identified by a quiz or examination; it is proven through the trials and pressures of life. Paul said:

"...knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom.5:3-5).

Character Builders

Your character is rooted in your values, your convictions, and your behavior. Values alone do not automatically develop into character traits. How we behave is the measure of what we really believe. Henry Scougal once said, "The worth and excellency of a soul is measured by the object of its love." This principle will help you develop mature, strong character.

Be a truth teller! Being a truth teller means, first, identifying the subtle ways in which lies become a part of our character. These ways include: *Hiding, sneaking, blaming, manipulating, avoiding, being silent as a way of avoiding the truth, changing the subject, rationalizing and giving your word but not doing it.*

One way to get past falseness is to ask ourselves these questions:

- How do my private life and imaginations differ from my public life?
- What do I do in private that I would never want known in public?

The actions to take are:

1. Create a context with the people you surround yourself with that values and invites truth.
2. Be willing to be honest about your struggles. It's easy to confess something to the Lord, but almost impossible to confess it in the presence of another. In other words, being a truth teller means not asking someone to do what you are not doing yourself.
3. Recognize that lies, in one way or another can be traced back to unbelief that we harbor in our hearts about God.
4. Keep the fear of the Lord in view (*Prov.10:27, 14:26-27, 15:33, 16:6, 19:23; Ps.34:9*). Remember what God says about Himself and about us. Living before God in a public way at all times is a great blessing and it protects you.
5. Study *Psalms 139* with someone you trust and speak honestly with each other. It will be the beginning of formulating strong, healthy character in your life.
6. Be willing to pour your life into others. Selfishness and isolation keeps the soul in bondage, but sacrifice and giving yourself away for Jesus' sake frees you to grow in grace and godly character.

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