

Character – Lesson 3

Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School

Those of mature character exhibit the qualities listed in 1 Tim 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Character is developed by disciplining ourselves for the purpose of godliness; by making much effort (taking pains and being absorbed (1 Tim. 4:7-15) in the maturing process. That process involves the Holy Spirit as He uses the word of God to bring about the will of God in the child of God's life – as we learn what is pleasing to the Lord (Eph 5:3-10).

The overarching character quality in mature(ing) believers is that they are above reproach (blameless) – they are free from even the appearance of evil and no charge of evil could be brought against them let alone sustained. The next quality we looked at was that the mature believer pursues purity – in thought, motive, and action they are free from sexual immorality. A mature believer is temperate – they have a clear-headed proper focus on the eternal. A mature believer is also prudent – they are wise with a proper view of God and themselves. A mature believer is also respectable – they have a well ordered and arranged life that adorns the Lord, His word, and Gospel message with honor in every respect.

Today we continue the list with hospitable, able to teach, and not addicted to wine.

6. Hospitable (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)

φιλοξενος: A compound word from “to love,” and “strangers.” The word thus literally means “to love strangers.” A **stranger**, by definition, is someone we do not know personally.

Thayer's Greek Definitions:

- 1) hospitable, generous to guests

A **stranger**, by definition, is someone we do not know personally. Hospitality is not about entertaining friends, but about using our resources to minister to strangers who come across our path.

¹¹“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” ¹²And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and *that* will be your repayment. ¹³“But when you give a reception, invite *the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,* ¹⁴and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” Luke 14:11-14

Q: What are some ways you practice hospitality?

Q: Are there times you do not feel like practicing hospitality?

Q: What are some reasons we may not practice hospitality?

Rom 12:13 speaks of practicing hospitality – The verb indicates not only that hospitality is to be furnished when sought, but that Christians are to seek opportunities of exercising it.

⁹Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹²rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. Rom. 12:9-13 (NASB)

The literal meaning of that phrase in the Greek is, “pursuing the love of strangers.” In other words, we not only are to meet the needs of those people, believers and unbelievers, who come across our paths but are to look for opportunities to help. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Romans 9-16

1 Peter 4:9 speaks of our attitude in hospitality – without complaint (grumbling).

⁸Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 1 Pet 4:8-9

¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, Phil 2:14-15

That is, we should look upon our hospitality as a happy privilege, not a drudging duty. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Romans 9-16

Hebrews 13 speaks to the unknown far reaching impact of hospitality.

²Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. Heb. 13:2

Genesis 18:1-8 provides an OT example of hospitality.

Abraham... hurried to them (18:2), **hurried back to the tent** (v. 6), **ran to the herd** (v. 7), and his servant **hurried** (v. 7); Abraham **bowed low** before them (v. 2); he had **water** brought to **wash** their **feet** (v. 4); he served them freshly baked **bread** (v. 6), a **choice... calf** (v. 7), **curds and milk** (v. 8), and he **stood** while they were eating (v. 8; cf. vv. 1-2).

Wisdom in hospitality:

¹⁰For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: **if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.** ¹¹For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. ¹²Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. ¹³**But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.** 2 Thess. 3:10-13

The door of the Christian home, as well as the heart of the Christian family, ought to be open to all who come in need. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: 1 Timothy

7. Able to teach (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:9)

διδασκτικος: Meaning apt and skilful in teaching.

This word is only used here in 1 Tim 3:2 and in 2 Tim 2:24 where the context is within qualities of communication not formal teaching or expounding on the Word.

²³But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. ²⁴The Lord's bond-servant **must not be quarrelsome**, but be **kind to all**, able to teach, **patient when wronged**, ²⁵**with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition**, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. 2 Tim 2:23-26

¹⁶Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Col 3:16

¹⁹*This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; James 1:19

¹A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

²The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly. Prov. 15:1-2

The maturing believer has the communication qualities above and can move others to bring Scripture to bear on their lives. First, however, it must be brought to bear on their own life.

¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15

⁸He came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. ⁹For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God *was* upon him. ¹⁰For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel. Ezra 7:8-10

8. Not addicted to wine (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7)

Παροινοσ: a compound word, from *παρα* ("at") and *οινοσ* (**wine**), and literally means "to be continually alongside, or in the presence of, wine." Intoxicating or impairing substances are not to be the mature believer's companion.

Q: Where might one be "alongside" wine?

Q: Is it sin to drink alcohol? How much?

Drinking alcohol falls into one of those gray areas of life – it is not specifically prohibited so we may exercise freedom. Here are some principles for exercising freedom:

A. Will the conduct glorify God?

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Cor 10:31

B. Can I thank God in the conduct?

¹⁶Rejoice always; ¹⁷pray without ceasing; ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thess 5:16-18

C. Will the conduct cause a hindrance to the Gospel?

If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. 1 Cor 9:12

D. Will this conduct lead me into sin?

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts. Rom 13:14

E. Can I do it with a clear conscience?

²²The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. ²³But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating is* not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin. Rom. 14:22-23

¹⁸This command I entrust to you, Timothy, *my* son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, ¹⁹keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. 1 Tim 1:18-19

F. Is the conduct profitable?

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. 1 Cor 6:12

²³All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.

²⁴Let no one seek his own *good*, but that of his neighbor. 1 Cor 10:23-24

G. Will the conduct master me?

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. 1 Cor 6:12

H. Will the conduct cause my brother or sister to stumble?

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

Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble. 1 Cor 8:13

I. Will the conduct build up or tear down?

¹Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves. ²Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. Rom 15:1-2

So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. Rom 14:19

J. Is the conduct worth imitating?

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. 1 Cor 11:1

K. Does the conduct fit the Phil 4:8 pattern?

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. Phil 4:8