

Character – Lesson 6

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.

Expanding on “above reproach”, a mature believer strives to be:

2. Pure – in thought, motive, and action they are free from sexual immorality.
 3. Temperate – they have a clear-headed proper focus on the eternal.
 4. Prudent – they are wise with a proper view of God and themselves.
 5. Respectable – they have a well ordered and arranged life.
 6. Hospitable – they seek for opportunity to love strangers.
 7. Able to teach – they seek to communicate in a way to move others to bring Scripture to bear on their lives.
 8. Not addicted to wine – alcohol is not their companion and they exercise wisdom when deciding to partake of alcohol in moderation.
 9. Not Pugnacious – when provoked they do not respond with harsh words or fists.
 10. Gentle – they “are not provoked”, do “not take into account a wrong suffered”, “bear all things”, “bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things”.
 11. Uncontentious (peaceable) – they work for peace not strife, but they know when to fall on their sword.
 12. Free from the love of money – they have the proper steward attitude concerning money.
 13. Manage household well – they strive to have proper relationships within their family.
 14. Not a new convert – they know that maturity takes time and effort and expend both to honor the Lord.
 15. Good reputation – their lives are a testimony to the truth of the gospel.
16. Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)

αυτηαδε | σ: self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant

...an unusually strong adjective that denotes an arrogant self-interest that asserts its own will with utter disregard for how others might be affected. Proud self-interest is, in one way or another, the root of all sin, because it not only disregards the interests and welfare of other people but, even more important, disregards God's will and replaces His purpose and glory with man's. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Titus

A self-willed man wants his own way regardless of others. He is stubborn, arrogant, and inconsiderate of others' opinions, feelings, and desires. A self-willed man is headstrong, independent, self-assertive, and ungracious toward those of different opinion. A self-willed person is not a team player... Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership by Alexander Strauch, page 272.

Q: How does the world describe a great leader?

The world usually looks to the aggressive, self-assertive person for leadership. But those characteristics disqualify a man for leadership in the church, where a **self-willed** man has no place. Every believer, and certainly every church leader, must continually fight the battle against fleshly self-will, self-fulfillment, and self-glory. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Titus

God does not mix words concerning pride, arrogance, and self-will.

¹³The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate. Prov 8:13

⁵Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished. Prov 16:5

⁴Haughty eyes and a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin. Prov 21:4

³For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, And the greedy man curses *and* spurns the LORD. ⁴The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek *Him*. All his thoughts are, "There is no God." Psa 10:3-4

Selfish ambition is demonic in origin.

¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. James 3:13-16

Being self-willed is a distinguishing mark of false prophets.

⁹*then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, ¹⁰and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, ¹¹whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. 2 Pet 2:9-11

In what ways could we be self-willed?

– In disregard to the Lord.

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¹³Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." ¹⁴Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. ¹⁵Instead, *you ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." ¹⁶But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. James 4:13-16

... Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. 1 Cor. 8:1b

– In disregard to the others.

²make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. ³Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Phil 2:2-4

The maturing believer follows Jesus' example of humility and servanthood.

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, ...²⁵But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶"It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt 20:20; 25-28

¹¹"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 14:11

A maturing believer is not characterized by being self-willed, arrogant, or selfish. They are striving to be humble and yielded to God and to have a sacrificial love, service, and preferential attitude toward others.

17. Not quick-tempered (Titus 1:7)

οργιλος: prone to anger, irascible (easily angered; quick-tempered). It does not refer to occasional outbursts, but to a propensity toward anger – someone with a short-fuse and who is easily provoked – someone who consistently and persistently loses his anger.

²⁶BE ANGRY, AND *YET* DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity. Eph 4:26-27

Anger that is sin, on the other hand, is anger that is self-defensive and self-serving, that is resentful of what is done against oneself. It is the anger that leads to murder and to God's judgment (Matt. 5:21-22).

Anger that is selfish, undisciplined, and vindictive is sinful and has no place even temporarily in the Christian life. But anger that is unselfish and is based on love for God and concern for others not only is permissible but commanded. Genuine love cannot help being angered at that which injures the object of that love. ...

... verses 26b-27 refer entirely to this unrighteous anger, in which case Paul uses the imperative in the sense of saying that, because anger may come in a moment and overtake a believer, and because it has such a strong tendency to grow and fester, it should be dealt with immediately—confessed, forsaken, and given to God for cleansing before we end the day. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Ephesians

The Proverbs speak much about anger and quick-tempered.

¹⁶A fool's anger is known at once, But a prudent man conceals dishonor. Prov 12:16

¹⁷A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of evil devices is hated. Prov 14:17

²⁹He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly. Prov 14:29

¹⁸A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute. Prov 15:18

²⁴Do not associate with a man *given* to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, ²⁵Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself. Prov 22:24-25

¹¹A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back. Prov 29:11

²²An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression. Prov 29:22

⁹Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, For anger resides in the bosom of fools. Eccl 7:9

Maturing believers strive to be slow to anger.

³²He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. Prov 16:32

¹¹A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression. Prov 19:11

²⁷He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Prov 17:27

¹⁹*This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20

A maturing believer strives to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

18. Loving what is good (Titus 1:8)

φιλαγαπηος: loving what is good; Not used elsewhere in the NT.

Loving what is good is a fondness for a commitment to what is helpful, beneficial and worthwhile. This type of man is committed to the things that promote the pursuit of righteousness. VBC Position Paper on Church Leadership

The saved are good trees that produce good fruit

¹⁷“So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸“A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰“So then, you will know them by their fruits. Matt 7:17-20

Good deeds show our relationship with God

¹⁶They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. Titus 1:16

¹¹Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. 3 John 1:11

God’s moral will is good

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

We are to cling to good

⁹Let love *be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Rom 12:9

We are to overcome evil with good

²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom 12:21

We are to walk in good works

¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Eph 2:10

We are to labor and share the fruit of our labor with those in need.

²⁸He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need. Eph 4:28

We are to have edifying speech

²⁹Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Eph 4:29

We are to dwell on good

⁸Finally, 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

A maturing believer strives to love the things that God loves.