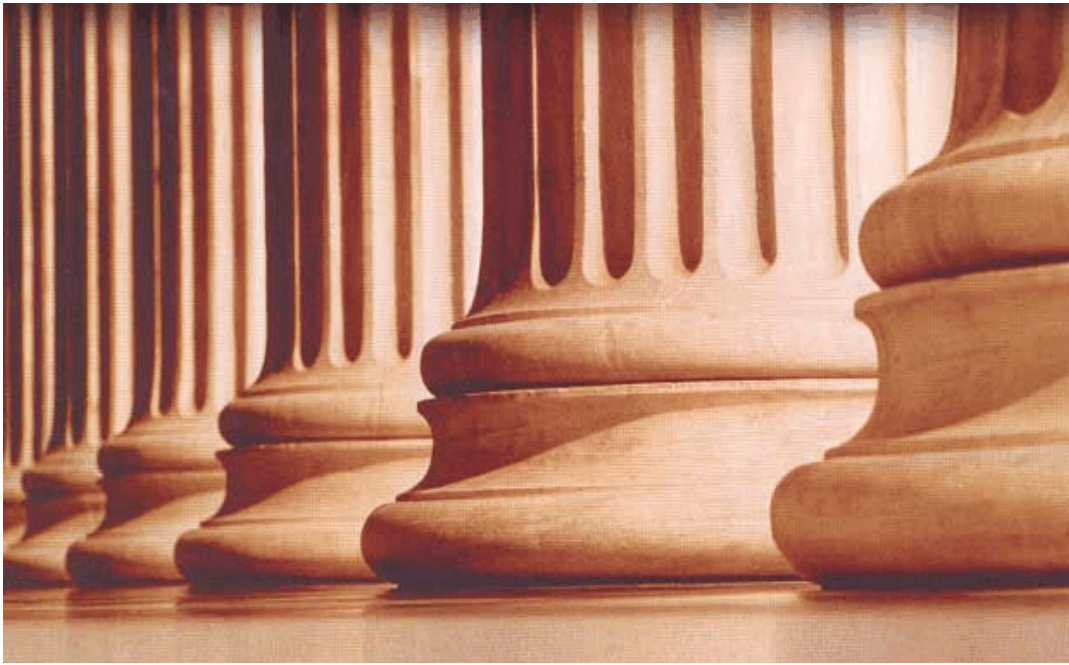


Character ...



The Most Important Thing About You

By Bill Fairchild, Jr.



Uses For This Lesson Material

This lesson material has been designed for multiple uses. You will find below several of those uses. It is our intent through this material to lead individuals to a deeper appreciation for our God who made us ... appreciation for His revealed Word that serves to guide and comfort us ... and to help prepare our souls for eternity! May the Lord bless you as you study from His Word!

Individual Study: You can go through this series of lessons on your own at a pace that you are comfortable with. It would be suggested that you study one lesson per week to give you time to really consider the content of each lesson.

Family Study: This material can serve as a wonderful guide for a family to sit down and learn together what God expects of His own.

Group Study: You can use this series of lessons in a group setting such as a young people's devotion where each one who attends the class agrees to keep up with the study from class to class.

Bible Class Curriculum: This series of lessons is suitable for a 13-week or a 26-week quarterly system study and it contains sufficient material to be implemented both Sunday morning and Wednesday night if desired.

One-On-One Study: This series of lessons is suitable for you and a friend to study together from week to week. And both of you will experience personal growth in your faith and service to the Lord.



Practical Suggestions On Getting The Most Out Of This Lesson Series

If you want to really grow as a Christian ... you must be willing to spend the time necessary to know God's Word better and be courageous enough to apply what you learn to your own life! Sometimes ... there are truths learned in the Scriptures that can be most challenging to our hearts and our lives. This series of lessons will help you ... if you follow these suggestions:

- ☞ **Begin every Bible study with prayer. Ask the Lord to help you to have an open mind and a receptive heart!**
- ☞ **Use a good study Bible. You might want to consider the New King James Version or the New American Standard Bible. Also the English Standard Version.**
- ☞ **Really work through each lesson.**
 - **Look up every Bible verse that is referenced.**
 - **Think about each one of the questions that is being asked.**
 - **Answer each question ... don't skip any of them.**
 - **Make notes in the margin of the lesson sheet ... including any questions or thoughts you might have.**
 - **Start trying to memorize the text passages at the beginning of each lesson and those at the end of the lesson.**
- ☞ **Be brave enough to apply each Bible lesson to your own life.**
 - **Accept God's teachings as truth and be willing to obey Him in every relationship you have.**
 - **Be willing to change any attitudes that you may have that are not in keeping with God's will.**
 - **Determine to share the truths you learn from these studies with your friends, family and anyone else who will listen.**

Making The Most Of This Material

Psalm 102:18

***“This will be written for a generation to come,
that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.”***

The objective of the WalkingInSunlight.com literature is to help young people to acquire a better understanding of ... and appreciation for ... God, His Word, and the church He purchased with the blood of His Son.

Our goal is to prepare young people for their daily challenges of choosing what will bring them real happiness by arming them with the ability to use God’s Word to answer every question.

Laying their own life questions and experiences alongside the proper scriptures will enable them to clearly see God’s directions.

God’s instructions are so clear that even children can understand how God wants them to behave and what He would have them choose when they look at the scriptures without prejudices.

- These studies are made age-specific by **Discussion**.
- **Read aloud every Scripture** – every student should look up every Scripture in their own Bible.
- Allow adequate time for students to think about and answer **every question**.
- **Listen** to what they say.
- **Point them to God’s instructions**, written and preserved for their benefit.

Hosea 4:1,6 *“Hear the word of the Lord, you children of Israel, for the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land.” “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me. Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”*

Each lesson may require several class periods.

It is such an awesome privilege to help young people grow closer to God!



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Note: Unless otherwise noted the version quoted will be the NKJV.

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY



When a challenging situation arises ... when you are confronted by the temptation to think, say, or to do something wrong ... who speaks for you?

It is a wonderful asset to have family, friends ... and even other Christians to offer you words of encouragement ... to even stand up beside you ... to have someone offer words of truth your conscience knows to be so!

But the fact is ... as reassuring as these truths may be to your heart and in your life ... there comes a time when you alone must speak! You see ... no one else can really testify on your behalf except your own character!

Life can be challenging ... temptation enticing ... hardship overwhelming! And when these situations begin to squeeze you ... to even offer the opportunity of compromise ... it is your own character ... what's really inside of your own heart ... that must step up!

Question: What is character?

Answer: It is your moral ... your ethical ... your spiritual undergirding that is based on the truth of God's Word (See Psalm 119:104, 105) ... that gives you purpose and value to life (See 2 Peter 1:3) ... and that provides you with the ability (See Psalm 119:11, that is to say, based on His Word) to resist **any** temptation to compromise!

We will have more to say about what character is and is not in coming lessons. Let's go back to the day our Savior, Jesus, is just about to die on the Cross of Calvary in our behalf (See Hebrews 12:2).

- When Jesus appears before the High Priest in Matthew 26:57-67 ... there was no one to speak in His behalf ... and even if they could have ... He was the One being falsely charged!
- He was the One who stood before Caiaphas ... He was the One who would speak!

- But more than just words ... you see ... something spoke out very clearly that day!
- Like a lamb in meekness ... Jesus was facing those who hated Him so intensely ... alone and at first ... even silent (See Matthew 26:62).
- But when He did speak ... He did so with His magnificent character!

The often silent ... but powerful strength of character ... speaks volumes to the observation of other's eyes (See Philippians 1:27-30; 2:12-16)! We have all seen strength of character ... whether it be in the example of a President ... the courage of an athlete competing against all odds ... a teacher who shows what integrity is all about ... maybe it was a parent dealing with some challenge or adversity ... or even a close friend in the face of a serious challenge to compromise!

Why are we surprised when fig trees
bear figs!

Margaret Titzel

Is it possible for each one of us to possess moral excellence? Is it plausible for us to be successful against a solicitation to sin? The answer to both of these questions is a resounding YES! But not by ourselves (See Jeremiah 10:23) ... and not without a sincere desire to possess moral excellence (See Romans 12:1,2)!

So ... how do we go about carving out of life ... building those pillars of strength ... those character traits that demonstrate strength of character ... purity of heart ... genuine love for God and for others? That is exactly what we will be looking at in this series of studies!

What lies behind us and what lies before
us are small matters compared to what
lies within us ...

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Possessing great character does not come by accident ... it is not something you can order online over the internet and have delivered to your doorstep by FedEx or UPS!

- ✓ Great character does not come easily!
- ✓ Great character does not come without sacrifice!
- ✓ Great character does not happen without consequences!
- ✓ Great character takes a great deal of time ... and one cannot start too early to begin developing it!

Having the opportunity to be under the guidance and influence of godly parents is a wonderful blessing! But there does come a time in life ... when each one of us must accept personal responsibility for our own character development! This was exactly what Paul was expressing in his prayer for the Philippian brethren in Philippians 1:9-11!

So ... in this series of studies we will be noticing what character is .. And what it is not! We will be noticing several pillars of strength that will enable each of us to possess strength of character! We will be considering character traits that will enable each of us to be strong *"temples of God"* (See 1 Corinthians 3:16,17; 6:15-20)! May you be encouraged to take a spiritual inventory of these traits (See 2 Corinthians 13:5) in your own life. May you be encouraged to consider the traits individually ... and consider the brief applications for each of these traits to your own life ... and lastly, may you be encouraged to develop each of these pillars of strength in your own life! The wise man Solomon said it this way in Proverbs 23:7, *"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."* (NKJV).

Character ... It's The Most Important Thing About You!



Character ...The Most Important Thing About You!

Text: "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

(Romans 5: 3-5)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: Did you make a decision about what you were going to wear today ... or was it decided for you?
How about what you are going to eat?
Did you make a choice already today about speaking to someone else ... or to just be quiet?
2. The fact is ... all of us make many choices every day of our lives! Many of these choices do not require any deep forethought!
 - a. Many choices are simple ... repetitive ... and without any consequential significance!
 - b. Question: Can you name a few choices that would fall into this category?
3. But what about when choices presented to us are morally complex ... and the stakes are high based on the choices made!
4. Read and consider the following quote from Anne Frank ... who recorded her inner feelings in her diary while hiding from the German army in WWII ...

(Daddy) said: "All children must look after their own upbringing." Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands.

5. So ... let's talk about Character ... YOUR character ... because it really is the most important thing about you!

I. Character Is ... Character Is Not ...

1. Questions: How important is it for you to be accepted by others?
Should we even be concerned about what others think about us?
How concerned are you about being popular?
How important is it for you to wear the latest styles in clothes?

2. In 2 Peter 1:5-11 ... the apostle Peter is writing about how to develop our character. Here is an absolutely wonderful catalog of mandatory traits that will enable us ... to live successfully in this world ... and to have Heaven as our eternal home!

3. Just as the farmer ... or the gardener ... grows their own crops or garden or beautiful lawn ... each of us has the personal responsibility to grow our own character! See Galatians 6:7-9 ...

a. Questions: So ... what kind of crop are you going to harvest?
How does the garden of your life look?
Is the landscape of your life growing with moral excellence abounding?

4. Character is not ...

- ✓ What a person professes to be ... it is what a person is!
- ✓ Reputation (although reputation has its place, 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10)!
- ✓ Not a well-known event that takes place in a person's life!
- ✓ Not being a well-gifted person (we all have talents, 1 Corinthians 12)
- ✓ Not keeping company with the right people (although it will sure help, 1 Corinthians 15:33)!
- ✓ Not just having good thoughts (although you need to be having them, Philippians 4:8,9)!
- ✓ Not shmoozing or flattering others (although it is great to hand out compliments, Proverbs 25:11)!

5. Character is ...

- ▶ A quality (trait) that reflects core beliefs/values (i.e. God is ... Christ lived/died/rose on the 3rd day/ascended to the right hand of God ... the Bible is God's revealed Word. See Genesis 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Timothy 3:16,17) ... which motivates our behavior (2 Peter 3:11-17) ... choices or attitudes (Psalm 19:7-14) ... and which helps us distinguish between right and wrong (Psalm 101:2; 119:2,3,35)!
6. You see ... character is ... MORAL STRENGTH!!!
- a. Persons who have character enough to do the right things for the right reasons ... these are folks with character!
 - b. Questions: Are you one of these people?
Do you want to be one of these people?
Do you care enough to be one of these people?
7. Persons with character ... know the difference between right and wrong (See 1 Thessalonians 5:21,22) ... and always try to do what is right ... even when no one is looking!

Knowing the good ... Loving the good ... Doing the
good!

Thomas Lickona

8. So ... would you be a person of character ... by God's standards!
9. Being a person of character ... well ... it's about being the real deal ... the genuine article!!

II. O.T. Examples Of Character ... Daniel & His Three Friends

1. Imagine being separated from your family ... from most of your friends ... from your neighbors ... from your country.
 - a. Imagine being taken to a foreign country ... a country full of evil ... a country full of folks who didn't even believe in your God!
2. Daniel and his three friends experienced all of these things and more ... and many of their experiences were recorded in the Bible book that actually bears his name.

3. The story of Daniel and his three friends (See Daniel 1) is one of the most exciting stories of the Old Testament.
 - a. Questions: Can you remember the story?
Do you believe this story really happened?
How would you have acted under the same circumstances?
 - b. Asked to eat the king's meat ... drink the king's wine ... accept the king's values ... these four young men had the **courage** ... **conviction** ... and **character** to stay true and faithful to the God of Scripture!
4. Please read and discuss the words of Daniel 1:8, where Daniel resolved *"that he would not defile himself ..."*
 - a. Make no mistake ... these young men acted wisely ... acted humbly ... and acted respectfully ... but they acted with strength of character!
Discuss each one of these phrases ...
5. And the end result was ... God blessed Daniel and his companions for their obedience to Him (See Daniel 1:17)!
 - a. And the reassuring truth for each of us is this ... He will bless each of us for our decisions to obey Him as well!
 - b. Question: You do believe this truth to be so ... don't you!
6. In a world that is filled with folks who choose not to serve the Lord ... it is absolutely inevitable that God's people (regardless of their age) will face situations in which their **convictions** ... their **courage** ... their **character** will be challenged (See Matthew 5:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:12)!
 - a. Fact: You will be no exception!
7. We must have the determination ... the resolve ... and the willingness to be God's people of character ... **NO MATTER WHAT!!!**

III. A Crisis Is Occurring ...

1. We are living in a very materialistic world ... a world where prestige, power, prosperity and popularity seem to be valued **more than** genuine integrity and moral excellence!
 - a. Questions: Which people in our society seem to be held up the most to be admired?
Which people are on the covers of many magazines ... guests on all of the various talk shows?
Which of these people are actually good role models?

- b. Questions: Isn't it so ... that many (not all ... thank goodness) are the worst kind of examples of faith in God?
 Isn't it so ... that many of the most popular folks are proud of their evil ways?
 How is it that some of the most well-known recording artists are hoodlums and gangsters who are openly glorifying violence and evil in the lyrics of their songs?
- c. Questions: How can these things be so?
 Why is our world so off of the mark when it comes to priorities ... and to distinguishing between right and wrong?
2. Honest character is getting harder and harder to find among politicians, professionals and every-day people ... just as God describes in Romans 1:28-32 ...
- a. Questions: Doesn't this passage of Scripture accurately describe the world in which we live?
 Do these kinds of things bother you?
 Do you see anything wrong with the sins listed in this passage?
 Is it all just a matter of personal interpretation?
3. The crisis is this: folks are literally entertaining themselves with evil!
 Note Solomon's words recorded in Proverbs 14:27 ...
4. There is a hole in the moral ozone of our world ... and it is growing!
- a. We cannot ... we must not ... get caught up in this lack of moral thinking and living!
- b. Read and discuss the thoughts expressed by the apostle John in 1 John 2:15-17 ...
5. Consider:
- ▶ We live in an "I deserve it" world!
 - ▶ Violence is openly promoted!
 - ▶ The number of unwed mothers is growing daily!
 - ▶ Dishonesty permeates our society from top to bottom!

Note: These things are not being mentioned as thoughts of doom and gloom ... but as words of warning!

6. The answer to all of this crisis ... recognition of who and what we are supposed to be!
 - a. According to the Bible ... our God has designed us to be people of exemplary character!
 - b. We are admonished ... encouraged ... repeatedly in God's Word to pursue what is good and avoid what is evil!
 - c. Please read and discuss Romans 12:9 ...
 - d. From Genesis to Revelation ... sin is condemned ... moral excellence and strength of character is honored!
 - e. And it is to God's Word that we must always turn for the right answers to the questions and the issues of life. See Psalm 119:105.
 - f. Very simply ... God has designed us to become people of good character! God's Word is the reliable guide we need upon which to make the best choices ... live the best life ... and be able to ultimately spend eternity with Him!

7. Remember ... We can know who we are (God's people, 1 Peter 2:9-11) ... and we can know where we are going (Heaven, Philippians 3:8-15)!

Conclusion:

1. When you take a look into Hebrews 11 ... it is a burial ground bearing marker after marker ... some with names ... some without names ... of folks who had the moral strength of character to serve God over self and the world!
 - a. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph ... to name a few!
 - b. This burial ground is absolutely full of markers ... honoring the lives and faith of folks who in their generation did the right thing!

2. When we leave the hallowed grounds of Hebrews 11 ... we are encouraged in Hebrews 12 to go and do the same!
 - a. You see ... this is our time! This is our opportunity to be counted among God's faithful!
 - b. Questions: Will you walk in their footsteps?
 Will you go wherever their example leads?
 Will you obey Christ's commands ... follow His will for life?
 - c. You can ... you know!

3. We simply must have the faith (See Hebrews 11:1-6) to keep doing what we know God wants us to do!

Good character ... it matters more than good grades!

Good character ... it matters more than a win-loss record in sports!

Good character ... it is the most important thing about you!



Character ... It's All About Trust!

Text: "... for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16: 7)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: Do you know any 'good' people?
What is it about them that makes them good?
Are you a good person?
Would you like to become an even better person?
2. Good people ... are people that can be trusted!
a. Questions: What does the word 'trust' mean?
In what areas of life would trust be most applicable?
Do you know someone who just cannot be trusted?
Can you be trusted?
3. Good people ... are people who are honest!
a. Questions: What does the word 'honest' mean?
Is honesty a problem for a lot of people?
Is honesty a problem you have to deal with?
4. Good people ... are people of integrity!
a. Questions: What does the word 'integrity' mean?
Does a person of integrity have courage?
Does a person of integrity do the right thing ... because it is the right thing to do?
5. In this lesson ... we want to take a closer look at one of the chief traits of people with character.
a. We want to see how the ***pillar of integrity*** can help support us throughout our lives!

I. Wanted: A Plea For Integrity!

1. The Latin term is "***Semper fidelis***" ... and it means "always faithful."

- a. Question: Do you recognize this motto?
 - b. This phrase is the motto of the U.S. Marine Corps. And those who wear the uniform of a Marine ... well ... they have dedicated their very lives to both honor and country!
2. As God's people ... as soldiers in His army ... the loyalty and dedication we have in our hearts is to exceed even that of a U.S. Marine!
 - a. Please read and discuss the following passages of Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Timothy 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3 ...
 3. You see ... good people ... people of character ... God's people (See Titus 2:11-14) have the highest level of loyalty to Jesus Christ (See Philippians 3:7-11) and to His Divine standard of truth! They have nothing less than 'semper fidelis'!
 4. Integrity defined: "firm adherence to a code of moral ... values ... incorruptibility, soundness; the quality or state of being complete or undivided." – Merriam Webster
 - a. Consider the use of the word "integrity" in the following passages of Scripture: 1 Kings 9:4; Job 2:39; 31:6; Psalm 7:8; 25:21; 26:1 ...
 5. Now ... let's take a closer look at a person in the Bible who is described as having integrity.
 - a. Turn to Psalm 78:72 and discuss the use of this word with reference to King David ...
 - b. King David ... taken by God from tending his father's sheep to the throne room of Israel ... **was a person of integrity!**
 - c. Question: Does integrity mean perfection?
Answer: No ... for only one person ever lived a perfect life ... Jesus Christ (See Hebrews 4:14-16)!
 - d. King David was not sinless ... and neither are we! (See Romans 3:23).
 - e. However ... people with integrity ... people with strength of character ... are honest about their weaknesses and their mistakes! (See 1 Corinthians 15:9,10; 1 John 1:8-10).
 - f. People of integrity are not pretenders ... they are not hypocrites (See Matthew 6:5)!

Note: Because some folks are hypocrites ... even in the church ... does this excuse one from attending services or worshiping and serving the Lord? No way!!!

6. People of integrity ... like King David ... will:
- ✓ ... when they make a promise ... keep their promise!
 - ✓ ... when they start a job ... finish the job!
7. People of integrity are the same ... in the daylight ... and in the darkness!
- a. Question: Do you know why they are the same?
Answer: They have nothing to hide or to be ashamed of (See John 3:16-21)!
8. People of integrity ... they have the courage to tell the truth ... even though it may cost them a great deal ... even their lives!
- a. Think about the example of Stephen in Acts 7 ...
 - b. Think about Daniel's three friends in Daniel 3 ...
 - c. Think about Daniel himself in Daniel 6 ...
9. Being a person of character ... a person possessing integrity ... causes you to follow the right path (See Matthew 7:13,14) ... no matter what!

"... Two roads diverged in a wood, and I ...
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference"
Robert Frost, 'The Road Not Taken'

10. Being a person of character ... a person possessing integrity ... motivates you to stand up for what is right (See Ephesians 6:10) ... to stand up against evil (See 1 Corinthians 16:13) ... even when others laugh at you or when they try to embarrass you! (See 1 Peter 4:11-16).
- a. Question: Can you think of a situation where someone might try to make fun of you or embarrass you for doing the right thing?
11. You see ... people of character ... persons possessing integrity ... hold on to their beliefs ... no matter what the consequences (See 2 Timothy 1:12) because they love the Lord with all of their heart, soul, and mind (See Matthew 22:37-39)!
- a. Question: Are YOU one of these people?

"How many times do you get to lie before you are a liar?"

II. Good People ... Are Not Plentiful!

1. There's a shortage in the world ... not of gas or oil or even food!
 - a. There is a shortage of good people ... people who are **trustworthy**, **loyal** and **dependable**!
2. Ask yourself these questions:
 - ... Am I really trustworthy?
 - ... Am I honest with my words and in my actions?
 - ... Do I stand up for what I believe is right?
 - ... Do I really try to do what is right in the eyes of God?
3. Please take a close look at the following passages of Scripture and discuss how they relate to our study: Ephesians 4:17;32; Zechariah 8:16; Psalm 15:2; Proverbs 12:17-19; 23:23 ...
4. We must remember ... good people are hard to find ... good people will exert a positive influence for good upon others by their honest and genuine lives (See Matthew 5:14-16)!
5. Please read the story: Someone Sees You ... at the end of this lesson!
6. So ... will you be counted among the good people?

III. The Do's And The Don't's Of Being Trustworthy ...

The Do's ... Of Integrity

Stand up for your beliefs!

Follow your conscience based on God's teachings!

Be honorable and upright!

Live by your principles ... no matter what others say!

Have the courage to do what is right and try new things ... even when it is hard, costly, or you might fail!

Build and guard your reputation and your name!

The Don'ts Of Integrity

Don't do anything you know is wrong!

Don't lose heart if you fail ... or even mess up!

The Do's Of Honesty

Tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

Be sincere!

Be forthright and candid!

The Don'ts Of Honesty

Don't lie!

Don't cheat!

Don't steal!

Don't be deceptive!

The Do's Of Being Reliable

Keep your promises!

Honor your word and commitments!

Be dependable!

Do what you are supposed to do; return what you borrow; be on time!

The Do's Of Being Loyal

Stand by, stick up for, and protect your family, friends, school, country ...
and of course the Lord's church!

Be a good friend to others!

Look out for those you care for!

Keep secrets of those who trust you!

The Don'ts Of Loyalty

Don't ever betray a trust!

Don't let your friends hurt themselves!

Don't do anything that is wrong ...

even for a friend or just so others will like you!

Don't ever ask a friend to do anything wrong!

Don't be guilty of spreading rumors or gossip that could hurt others!

Conclusion:

1. If you have ever watched a house or commercial building being built ... you will see that it is built one brick or block at a time!
 - a. Just like the Great Wall of China which stretches like a thread over the China landscape some 4000 plus miles ...
2. So it is with your life ... your life is built and supported by one brick ... or by one column put into place at a time (See 2 Peter 1:7-9)!
3. If you will make the words expressed in Psalm 71:5 ... the words to describe you ... if you will begin today to build your character upon the sure foundation of God, His Son, and the Word of God (See Matthew 7:21-28) ... your life will make a difference!
4. Remember:
 - Character is what you do when no one else is even looking!
 - People who do good things and live good lives daily ... earn trust!
 - Trust means others can count on you!

**Yes ... Character Is The Most Important Thing About You
... so build it with care!!**

Someone Sees You

Once upon a time a man decided to sneak into his neighbor's fields and steal some wheat. "If I take just a little from each field, no one will notice," he told himself, "but it will all add up to a nice pile of wheat for me." So he waited for the darkest night, when thick clouds lay over the moon, and he crept out of his house. He took his youngest daughter with him.

"Daughter," he whispered, "you must stand guard, and call out if anyone sees me."

The man stole into the first field to begin reaping, and before long the child called out, "Father, someone sees you!"

The man looked all around, he saw no one, so he gathered his stolen wheat and moved on to a second field. "Father, someone sees you!" the child cried again.

The man stopped and looked all around, but once again he saw no one. He gathered more wheat, and moved to a third field. A little while passed, and the daughter cried out, "Father, someone sees you!"

Once more the man stopped his work and looked in every direction, but he saw no one at all, so he bundled his wheat and crept into the last field. "Father, someone sees you!" the child called again.

The man stopped his reaping, looked all around, and once again saw no one. "Why in the world do you keep saying someone sees me?" he angrily asked his daughter. "I've looked everywhere, and I don't see anyone."

"Father," the child said, "I see you!"



Character ... It's All About How You Treat Others!

Text: "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)

INTRODUCTION:

1. The song is "R-E-S-P-E-C-T" and it has been and continues to be a very popular song recorded by Aretha Franklin.
2. Respect is just exactly how we want other folks to treat us ... isn't it!
 - a. Everyone of us really wants to be our own person ... make our own decisions and be treated with respect and dignity!
3. Questions: Would you define the following words:

Respect ... _____

Dignity ... _____

4. Questions: Have you ever been 'put down' by someone?
 How did it make you feel?
 Have you ever been mistreated by others?
 How did this make you feel?
5. Questions: Have you ever been guilty of 'putting someone else down'?
 How did that make you feel?
 Have you ever been guilty of mistreating someone?
 How did that make you feel?
6. The fact is ... putting others down ... mistreating others ... is just not being Christlike!
 - a. Read and discuss the thoughts expressed in Romans 8:29 ...
 - b. Questions: So, how did Jesus Christ treat others around Him?
 What did He do when He was 'put down' and mistreated according to the apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:21-25 ...

7. We want to talk about a second building block to having a strong character! We want to discuss the **second column of Respect** ... and of how important it really is in life!

I. The Golden Rule And You ...

1. Let's take a look at Matthew 7:12 more closely ...
- Jesus is describing in this passage the various qualities that His disciples would need to possess in order to be good disciples.
 - Questions: What are some of the other qualities ... other traits ... Jesus mentions in Matthew 5-7?

Do you see any other qualities that would be related to dealing with other people?

Name them: _____

- Jesus is making a very important statement about how we are to treat other people ... the question is ... are we listening to Him!
2. Please turn to Acts 10:38 and notice what the apostle Peter says to Cornelius about the life of Christ ...
- Questions: What was the "*doing good*" that Jesus did during His time here on planet Earth?
Wouldn't this be a wonderful comment to be made about each one of us?
3. One other thought regarding Jesus is found in Hebrews 12:2 ...
- As the author and finisher of our faith ... Jesus not only designed the course of the race we're to be running in ... He ran it ... and did so successfully!
 - He actually ran the course of life ... perfectly and completely!
 - No short-cuts ... no mis-steps ... no mistakes ... imagine that if you can!
 - The Greek term *aphorao* translated "*fixing the eyes on*" means to completely focus on something with no allowance for distraction.
 - It is like going to the eye doctor for an examination and peering through the adjustable lenses to see each line of letters.

- c. We are being encouraged to go to the inspired records of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ... read ... study ... and imitate what we see Christ doing as he deals with those around Him. (See 1 Corinthians 11:1).
- (1) We will see how He treated others ... both friends and enemies!
 - (2) We will see how mindful He was of other folks' lives!
 - (3) We will see how compassionate He was with other folks' problems and difficult circumstances!
- d. Question: Would you take the time before too long to just read through the Gospels and see what we're talking about?
4. You see ... as Jesus lived ... we are to live! You see ... as Jesus obeyed His Father ... we are to obey the Father's will! You see ... as He put others ahead of Himself ... we are to go and do likewise!
5. If we want to be more like Jesus Christ ... we must begin by thinking less of ourselves ... work at becoming more selfless like Jesus was. (See Philippians 2:1-11).
6. Suggestions:
- Help others to receive the necessary information they need to make good choices in life ... but do so kindly and respectfully! (See 2 Timothy 2:24-26).
 - Treat other people with the respect that a person "*made after God's own image*" deserves! (See Genesis 1:26,27).
 - Put yourself in the other person's shoes and just think about how you would want to be treated! (See Matthew 7:12).
 - Learn to express yourself in a considerate way ... even if you disagree with someone!
 - Don't allow yourself to get caught up in putting others down!
 - Do not return evil with evil ... rudeness with more rudeness ... violence with more violence ... or angry words with more angry words! (See Romans 12:14, 17-21).
7. You see ... people of strong character ... learn to treat others with respect!

8. So ... with these thoughts having challenged our thoughts ... our motives ... and our very hearts ... let's take a look at the lost art of courtesy ...

II. What's Happened To Good Manners?

1. Questions: Do you know what courtesy means?

Define the word 'courtesy' ... _____

Are you a courteous person?

Would your friends consider you to be a courteous person?

Do you have manners?

Do you use your manners?

2. Questions: How do you feel if you're trying to say something to someone ... but they are not listening to a word you're saying?
How do you feel if you've done something for someone else ... and they don't even say 'thank you'?

3. Please turn to Ephesians 4:32 and discuss the phrase "*And be kind to one another*" ...

a. The apostle Paul is describing the difference following Christ should make in a person's life!

b. Question: Has Jesus and His teaching made a difference in your life?
If not ... why not?

Do you not believe in Him or that His words are truth?

4. If we really want to have a strong character ... if we really want to please our Heavenly Father ... we will learn to acquire and practice this quality the Bible calls "*kindness*"!

a. Question: You do want to please our Heavenly Father ... don't you?

5. Suggestions:

Respect and honor your parents (See Ephesians 6:1,2; Proverbs 6:20; 23:22; Colossians 3:20) ... God sure devoted a lot of space in His Book to this principle!

Show the proper respect your grandparents are deserving of! (See Proverbs 16:31).

Never cheat ... don't be angry if you lose ... don't blame a loss on someone else ... always congratulate the winner!

- Learn to say "Please" and "Thank you" ... learn to say "Yes Sir" and "No Sir" ... "Yes Ma'am" and "No Ma'am"!
- Never interrupt ... say "excuse me" when you walk in front of someone or bump into someone!
- 6. Very simply .. *"be kindhearted"* ... be gracious ... be considerate of others! (See Philippians 2: 3,4).
- 7. Learn to become a generous person ... just like Jesus Christ was! (See 2 Corinthians 9:7).
 - Give yourself away!
 - Give an hour of your time to someone who is down and in need of encouragement!
 - Write an encouraging note to someone who could use it!
 - Share a hug with a family member who would be happy to be reminded you care!
- 8. Jesus taught in Matthew 25: 31-40 ... the value and the necessity of being mindful of others!
- 9. If you want to be a person of character ... if you want to make a difference ... and most importantly ... if you want to please our Heavenly Father ... do these things (See Galatians 6: 7-10)!

Conclusion:

1. Godly character is the result of putting into practice ... the effectual Word of God (See 1 Thessalonians 2: 13)!
 - a. Questions: So ... is God's Word producing it's intended effect upon your life?
Are you making God's Word a vital part of your life?
Do you study ... meditate ... and reflect on God's Word daily? (See 2 Timothy 2: 15; Psalm 1).
What are you waiting for?
2. There is ... you see ... a gentle side to authentic character!

3. Imagine a beautiful red heart that has been cut out of cardboard ... and then imagine that every time something thoughtful, nice, encouraging and even admonishing (but in love) is spoken ... the heart grows brighter and brighter red!
 - a. Now, imagine this same red heart is subjected to ugly comments ... experiences being 'put down' and is treated in other unkind ways ... except, now, every time these things happen ... a hole is punched into the heart!
 - b. You see ... every time we choose to be unkind to someone ... refuse to show respect ... disregard their feelings ... it is just like punching a hole in their heart! And it hurts!
 - c. And the damage ... well ... the damage cannot be easily repaired! In fact ... sometimes never!
 - d. It is ... very simply ... not showing respect when we act this way!

4. Oh yes ... one verse of R-E-S-P-E-C-T says, "R-e-s-p-e-c-t! You don't know what it means to me!"
 - a. Questions: What does it mean?
What does it mean to you personally?

 - b. Answers: It should mean ...
... respect yourself!
... respect others!
... respect those in authority!
... practice respect daily!

 - c. Most importantly ... respect the God of Scripture who loves you ... sent His Son to die for you ... and who waits for you to come home after living a life He is pleased with to spend eternity with Him!

**Good character ... it is the most important thing about you
... so start working on Respect today!**



Character ... It's All About Being Responsible

Text: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

(1 Corinthians 15:58)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: What does the word 'responsibility' mean? _____

Are you a responsible person?

Do you do what you are supposed to do or have been asked to do?

2. Questions: Do you think about how your words or actions might affect others **before** you say or do them?
Do you try to always do your best at whatever it is that you're doing?

3. We've been studying in this series of lessons about character ... about some of the building blocks ... about pillars of strength that will enable us to be the very best people we can be.

- a. Questions: Do you remember what some of these pillars of character are that we've been studying?
Can you think of other pillars/traits that would contribute to having a good character?

4. Character ... it is the way you really are!
a. It's the way you act ... even when no one is looking!

5. Good people do good things ... good people say good things ... good people act kindly toward others!
 - a. Why? Because that is what is in their heart!
 - b. Please turn to Matthew 6:1-7, 16-18 ...
 - c. Questions: What was Jesus talking about in these verses?
Was Jesus speaking of sincerity or insincerity ... or both?
 - d. Answer: Jesus was pointing out that when His disciples would be performing good deeds ... or when they were praying ... they were to do these things for the right reason!
 - e. You see ... the right reason has absolutely nothing to do with *"being seen by men!"* Please don't miss this point ... because it will come into play more than you can ever realize as you live your life!
6. God's people ... those who possess strength of character ... are responsible people ... regardless of their age!
7. So ... in this lesson ... let's take a closer look at the **pillar of character known as Being Responsible** ...

I. The Value Of Thinking Before You ...

1. Questions: Have you ever done something on impulse without thinking about it first?
Have you ever heard of 'buyer's remorse'? This is when someone makes a purchase ... then leaves the store or car lot and says to themselves, "what in the world have I just done!"
Have you ever spoken something ... perhaps in anger ... without thinking about it first ... and then thought to yourself, "what was I thinking?"
2. Read the following quotation ...

"Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap your character. Sow your character, reap your destiny."

3. You see ... everything begins with our hearts! Let's take a look at the thoughts being expressed by the wisest man who ever lived except for Jesus Christ. Solomon says in Proverbs 23:7; 4:23 ...

- a. Questions: What is Solomon saying in this passage?
Do you understand the value of wise advice?
How well do you accept advice?
How important is our spiritual heart?
Is our spiritual heart (mind) of greater value than the physical heart that is pumping inside of your chest?
- b. Listen carefully ... We are what we think about! The process of speaking ... of acting ... of doing ... begins with the seed thoughts that we allow to enter and grow in the garden of our mind!
4. Consider the words of Jesus as He spoke in Matthew 12:31-37 ...
 - a. There is no truer indication of a bad tree than the bad fruit of speech (verses 33,35)!
 - b. The truth of all this is this: every person is judged by his words ... and by his deeds ... because they reveal the state of his/her heart!
 - c. Questions: So ... what kind of heart do you have?
How healthy is your spiritual heart?
If every word you spoke for a single day was printed out for others to see ... how would it read?
If every thing you did for a single day was videoed and shown to others ... what would the contents of the video show?
5. Being a responsible person ... being a person of character ... requires us to think before we speak or act!
6. So ... how do we become more responsible with our hearts and lives?

II. The Value Of Self-Control ...

1. Questions: Do you know how long the typical athlete who competes in the Olympics trains?
Do you know what kind of price these athletes must pay personally to compete in the games?

Answers: The typical Olympic athlete trains full time for as much as five to ten years before the Olympics!
The typical Olympic athlete has learned first hand about the enduring of pain ... the denying of self ... and the value of hard work!

2. The apostle Paul said a great deal about the need for ... about the value of ... self control! If we want to be people of strong character ... we need to listen to what he says in his inspired words ...
 - a. Please read the following passages of Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 5:7; Philipians 2:16; Hebrews 12:1,2 ...

3. We want to focus on 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 ...
 - a. Paul compares life on earth to a race ... and in this race ... every Christian is an entrant!
 - b. Questions: How does one become qualified to run the race of life as a Christian?
 What are the steps involved in become a Christian?
 Do you know what the plan of Salvation for man is?
 Could you share it with others?
 - c. We all need to understand that we cannot afford to simply be a spectator!
 - d. Life is not some sort of a fun-run to get a cute hat or t-shirt!
 - e. This race is the most important race you will ever run ... because the prize is eternal life ... Heaven! (See Philipians 3:14).
 - f. Questions: Do you really believe there is a place called Heaven?
 What about a place called Hell?
 Do you want to go to Heaven?
 Are you willing to train and prepare yourself for being there?
 - g. Self-control ... Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:25 ... is absolutely necessary to achieve victory!
 - h. In a real race ... the athlete cannot hope to win if they are out of shape ... and that is exactly what the apostle Paul is saying here!
 - i. In 1 Corinthians 9:26,27 ... we must realize the place of self-control ... over our minds ... over our entire bodies!
 - j. Legitimate bodily appetites ... if they are not controlled ... easily become sin!
 - (1) Question: Can you think of an example or two?

4. Self-control is really the key to having good character!
 - a. This virtue (See 2 Peter 1:5-7) ... is not something you work on part-time ... or leave behind while on vacation!
 - b. Self-control is a lifelong discipline ... and there is no better time to start developing this character trait ... than right now!

5. Back to our passage in 1 Corinthians 9:27 ... Paul is saying that if he failed ... that if we fail ... to acquire and maintain this character trait ... we will fall ... and we will fail spectacularly!

6. King Solomon was by no means a master of self-control in his own life ... but he did know the value and significance of it!
 - a. Consider his inspired words recorded in Proverbs 25: 28 ... and discuss their meaning ...
 - b. Solomon understood ... although he didn't always practice it ... what it takes to possess self-control. Notice his words recorded in Proverbs 4:23 ...
 - c. Questions: Do you know what a reservoir is?
If you live in a town of any size, a city or a metropolitan area ... do you know where your water comes from?
 - d. In the same way we derive our water from a reservoir of water to sustain us physically ... our heart is the reservoir of life!
 - e. What comes out of our hearts can either help us grow strong ... or defile us and help us to grow weak! (See Mark 7:20-23).

7. If you want to be a responsible person ... a person of character ... then, you must develop this trait in your life! This is just not optional!

III. Some Suggestions To Help Us Become More Responsible

- Think before you act!
 - Think before you speak!
 - Think only about good things! (See Philipians 4:8,9).
 - Do only good things! (See Galatians 6:10).
 - Fix your mistakes to the best of your ability!
 - Be a good example to others!
 - Think of ways to help others!
 - Do your best at whatever you are doing! (See Romans 12:11; Ecclesiastes 9:10).
1. Consider the following:
 - a. In an orchestra ... in order for the orchestra to play the musical score it has decided to perform ... every member must do his or her part to the very best of their ability!

- b. What if ... the farmer decided to go on vacation instead of harvesting the grain ... or taking his animals to market? What if ... the store owner decided one day not to open up at all and just sleep in?
2. You see ... in each of these simple illustrations ... we can recognize the place of responsibility ... can't we!
3. So ... whether it is in your family ... at school ... in your community ... or in the church ... **ACT RESPONSIBLY!**
 - a. Please note the emphasis the apostle Paul makes in Ephesians 4:16 on the role of *"every member!"*
4. So ... do you still want to be a person of character? Then begin working on improving the quality of self-control in your life!

Conclusion:

1. The pursuit of excellence in your life requires perseverance and determination as expressed in 1 Corinthians 15:58 ...
2. Consider the following information about our Country's 16th President ... Abraham Lincoln:

Perseverance

He FAILED in business in 1831.
He was DEFEATED for State Legislature in 1832.
He tried another business in 1833. He FAILED.
His fiancée died in 1835.
He had a nervous BREAKDOWN in 1836.
In 1843 he ran for Congress and was DEFEATED.
He tried again in 1848 and was DEFEATED again.
He tried running for the Senate in 1855. He LOST.
The next year he ran for Vice President and LOST.
In 1859 he ran for the Senate again and was DEFEATED.
In 1860, the man who signed his name A. Lincoln
was elected the 16th President of the United States.

*The difference between history's boldest accomplishments,
and its most staggering failures is often, simply,
the diligent will to persevere.
... A. Lincoln*

3. The Three-Second Rule is a good rule to follow in your life when it comes to choices.
 - a. Question: What is the Three-Second Rule?
 - b. Answer: When an impulse to say or do something presents itself to you ... wait at least three seconds before you take any action!
 - c. During the three seconds ... consider the consequences ... will I be embarrassed later on ... will this choice cost me my soul?
 - d. Not all impulses are bad ... that is for sure! But practicing the Three-Second Rule can sure help keep you out of a lot of trouble!
4. The purpose of being responsible ... of exercising self-control ... of recognizing accountability for our actions ... helps to equip us for God's service!
 - a. It helps to equip us for whatever life throws at us!
 - b. It helps to equip us to serve others!
5. Responsibility ... a pillar of character that is absolutely necessary to be a person of Character!

And Good Character ... It is the most important thing about you! So run well!!!!



Character ... It's All About Having Courage!

Text: "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: Do you ever 'cave-in' to peer pressure?
 You do know what peer pressure is, don't you?
 Would you define it: _____

 Are there times in your life when you would really like to be more spiritually strong?
 Maybe, we should ask, are there times in your life when you would rather not be bothered by the spiritual concerns of life?
2. Admissions: Sometimes I don't act like I should!
 Sometimes I don't think like I should!
 Sometimes I don't talk like I should!
 There have been times in my life ... especially when I was younger ... when I didn't stand up for what is right as I should have!
3. Question: Are the above mentioned admissions ... statements you could also make?
4. Well ... there's good news ... we can be forgiven of our past sins ... forgiven of the past mistakes we've made in life!
 - a. Just take a real close look at the words of the apostle John recorded in 1 John 1:8-2:1 ...
 - b. Questions: How willing is God to forgive us?
 How willing are we to be forgiven?

- c. Please read and discuss the following passages of Scripture: Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 32:1-5 ...
- 5. You see ... we can move on with our lives ... but not without making some changes ... and not without determining to be stronger in our character!
 - a. Question: By the way ... what is character again?
- 6. The last building block of character ... the last pillar of character we want to consider in this series of studies will be with **Courage**.
- 7. Let's take a closer look at the strength of **Courage** ...

I. The Meaning Of Courage ...

- 1. Questions: What does the word 'courage' mean?
Have you ever seen courage first hand?
In what way(s) did you see courage demonstrated?
Why do you suppose courage is so important to a person's character?
- 2. Courage defined: "mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty" - Merriam-Webster Dictionary
 - a. Synonyms would include (1)mettle ... the ingrained capacity for meeting strain or difficulty with fortitude and resilience; (2) resolution ... stressing the firm determination to achieve one's ends.
- 3. So ... what are we talking about when it comes to being brave ... it is being strong ... it is being courageous ... in the face of anything or anyone that might challenge us!
- 4. Please take a close look at what the writer of Hebrews has to say about people with courage in Hebrews 11:33,34 ...
 - a. Questions: Did faith in God get these folks in trouble with others?
Will following God get us into trouble with others?
- 5. Possessing real faith in God (See Hebrews 11:1-6) ... acquiring a dislike (hatred ...Psalm 119:104) for sin ... will take us off of the playground of life and onto the battlefield where good and evil ... where the forces of right and wrong ... are doing battle! (See 2 Corinthians 2:11; 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-13).

- a. We find in these and in many other passages ... the language of war!
We are reading 'war-talk!'
- b. Questions: Whose side are You are? (See Matthew 12:30).
Are you even aware there's a war going on?

Warning: If you don't realize these truths to be so ... you may have already been captured by the enemy!

- 6. A well-grounded faith ... in God ... in Jesus Christ ... in the Holy Spirit ... based on the testimonies of God's inspired Word ... will bring about the courage you will need to deal with life itself!
 - a. Read the words of Paul recorded in 2 Timothy 1:12 ... and discuss his confidence ... his courage.
 - b. Then ... talk about how this can be so for you as well! That is ... if you really want to be in this spiritually-minded position!
 - c. Question: You really do ... don't you?
- 7. Cowardice is a by-product of weak faith! Note the tone of the words being used by Jesus in John 12:42 to describe some folks of His day!
 - a. You know what ... these are not complimentary words!
 - b. May these words never be said of us!
- 8. So ... the **Pillar of Courage** in your Character is absolutely necessary!
- 9. With these thoughts before us ... let's see how they really work in the lives of those who put them to work ...

II. Examples Of Courage In Action ...

- 1. When Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshack, and Abed-Nego, were commanded to worship the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up ... or be thrown into the fiery furnace ... they chose to die rather than back out of their commitment to the Lord!
 - a. Read the moving ... conviction-bearing words of these three young men recorded in Daniel 3:17,18 ...
 - b. You see ... their vows to the God of Heaven were not negotiable!
 - c. Questions: Do you really believe this story took place?
Why was this story preserved for us in the Bible? (See Romans 15:4).
Do YOU have this kind of courage?
Would you like to have this kind of courage?

2. Joseph ... was a young man who found himself in a strange country ... living in a strange culture ... living with people who spoke a different language (Genesis 39).
 - a. Now ... Joseph didn't have to tell his new master, Potiphar, that he had faith in God, or that God was using his life (See Genesis 39:3)!
 - b. We all know the events that were about to take place ...
 - (1) Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him (Genesis 39:7)!
 - (2) She tried day after day (Genesis 39:10)!
 - (3) He refused ... day after day! That's right ... he refused!
 - c. You see ... the most important word you need to learn to say when you are being tempted to sin ... when you are being confronted with an opportunity to compromise your convictions ... is NO!!!
 - d. Questions: Can you say ... NO!
Now ... that wasn't so hard ... was it?
 - e. But it won't always be so easy to say ... but say it you must! (See James 1:13,14).
 - f. Please read ... and think about ... and then discuss ... the following passages of Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Romans 12:9; 2 Timothy 2:22 ...
 - g. Joseph had the courage ... the strength of character ... to refuse sin!
 - h. What a great example of courage under fire!

**Right now ... make up Your own mind
... determine to be a Joseph!**

**Right now ... make up your own mind
... determine to join the ranks of the
courageous for the Lord!**

- i. Please read ... reflect upon ... and carry with you throughout your entire life ... the words of Solomon recorded in Proverbs 4:23-27 ...
3. The list could go on of courageous people in the Bible ...
 - a. Peter and John in Acts 5:28,29 ...
 - b. Stephen in Acts 6,7 ...
4. Very simply ... yet most profoundly ... service to our Heavenly Father will lead us down roads of service requiring courage that only He can give!
 - a. Please read the confident and reassuring words of the apostle Paul in Philipians 4:13 ...

- b. Questions: What do these words mean?
What do these words tell you?
Do you really believe these words to be true?
5. The key to courage ... the key to strength of character ... lies in one's connection to God!
a. Read the words spoken by Jesus in John 15:4,5 ... read them slowly ... read them carefully!
6. Whatever the situation ... whatever the challenge ... we simply must believe that God is with us ... and that He will not allow us to be challenged with more than we can handle!
a. Read and discuss the thoughts being expressed by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:13 ...
b. Now ... turn to his words recorded in Romans 8:37-39 ...
c. And, finally, read these words to Timothy recorded in 2 Timothy 1:7.
7. These are words of conviction ... of courage ... of hope ... and of trust!
They are words of victory to the child of God!!

III. Practically Speaking ...

1. Please take a look at the following survey that was conducted in 2006 from among young people across the country ... and think about it for a moment ...
- 82% of those surveyed admit they lied to their parent within the past 12 months ... about something significant! 52 % said they lied two or more times!
 - 62% admit they lied to a teacher within the past 12 months about something significant ... and 35% said they lied two or more times!
 - 60% cheated during a test at school within the past 12 months ... 35% did so two or more times!
 - 23% stole something from a parent or other relative within the past 12 months ... 11% did so two or more times!
 - 19% stole something from a friend within the past 12 months ... 7% did so two or more times!
 - 28% stole something from a store within the past 12 months .. 14% did so two or more times!

2. Questions: So ... how do you feel about these statistics?
What would your answers look like?
3. Courage ... requires us to face down those things that we fear ... and fear is without doubt ... a powerful consideration! (See 2 Timothy 1:7 again)
4. When faced with conflict and paying a price we might not want to pay ... it is easier to compromise your values and go with the flow ... or not stand up for someone or something.

***“Buy the truth, and do not sell it. Also wisdom
and instruction and understanding.”
(Proverbs 23:23)***

5. Obtain the truth ... love the truth ... hold to the truth ... NO MATTER WHAT! (See Philippians 3:12-16)

Conclusion:

1. Keys to Courage:

- It takes courage to ask for help!
- Using your good character even when your friends make wrong choices takes real courage!
- Learn to admit when you are wrong ... for that takes real courage!
- Courage is when you stand up for what you know is right!
- It takes courage to accept those things you cannot change ... and still continue to do the best you can with what you have now!
- It takes courage to encourage others!
- Courage must be practiced and experienced ... not just talked about!
- It takes courage to be kind to those who are unkind to you!
- A loud voice is not a courageous voice!

2. It is easy to be “average” ... and that’s where many choose to travel! It takes courage to travel the “narrow road” of service to God ... the road less traveled!
3. May we never forget that with the Lord on our side ... we can be greater than our adversary! (See Psalm 4:3)
4. Resolve in your heart of hearts ... to be counted for Jesus Christ!
5. A person of character ... is a good person ... someone to look up to and admire!
6. A person of character ... knows the difference between right and wrong ... and always tries to do the right thing!
7. A person of character ... sets a good example for others to see and follow!
8. A person of character ... will make this world a better place to live in ... because they are the *“salt and light of the world”*!
9. A person of character ... is the real deal ... is someone to be trusted ... is someone who treats others correctly ... is responsible ... and is a person of courage!

A Person of Character ... Can Be You!