

# Character – Lesson 1

## Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School

Q: How do you define character?

Reputation is what folks think you are. Personality is what you seem to be. Character is what you really are. Alfred Armand Montapert

Character is what you are in the dark. Dwight Lyman Moody

Reputation is what men and women think of us. Character is what God and the angels know of us. Thomas Paine

Character in a saint means the disposition of Jesus Christ persistently manifested. Oswald Chambers

Q: Who exhibits the most “progress” among us? Who are the most mature? Who are those of mature character?

Over the next several weeks we will look at several areas of character by looking at 1 Tim 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

<sup>2</sup>An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup>not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. <sup>4</sup>He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity <sup>5</sup>(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), <sup>6</sup>and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. <sup>7</sup>And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 1 Tim. 3:2-7

<sup>6</sup>*namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. <sup>7</sup>For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, <sup>8</sup>but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, <sup>9</sup>holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. Titus 1:6-9

	<b>1 Timothy 3:2-7</b>	<b>Titus 1:6-9</b>
1	above reproach (v2)	above reproach (v6)
2	husband of one wife (v2)	husband of one wife (v6)
3	temperate (v2)	
4	prudent (v2)	sensible (v8)
5	respectable (v2)	
6	hospitable (v2)	hospitable (v8)
7	able to teach (v2)	able to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict (v9)
8	not addicted to wine (v3)	not addicted to wine (v7)
9	not pugnacious (v3)	not pugnacious (v7)
10	gentle (v3)	
11	uncontentious (v3)	
12	free from the love of money (v3)	not fond of sordid gain (v7)
13	manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (v4)	having children who believe and are not accused of dissipation or rebellion (v6)
14	not a new convert (v6)	
15	must have a good reputation with those outside the church (v7)	
16		not self-willed (v7)
17		not quick-tempered (v7)
18		loving what is good (v8)
19		just (v8)
20		devout (v8)
21		self-controlled (v8)

## 1. Above Reproach

Paul is going to give the over-riding principle in his description of the character of mature believers.

### **1 Tim 3:2 – Above Reproach (NASB, NIV)**

Greek – ανεπιλε | πτος – 1 ) not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of; 2) that cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable

One against whom no evil charge can be sustained, one who is above established charge of evil

### **Titus 1:6,7 – Above Reproach / Blameless (NIV)**

Greek – ανεγκλε | τος – 1) that cannot be called into to account, unproveable, unaccused, blameless absence of even a charge or accusation against a person

That which cannot rightfully be caused to answer evil and criminal action

- a. To live in such a way that no charge of guilt can be proved against one
- b. Not free from accusation, but accusations that can be rightly proven - cf. 1 Tim 5:19-20

OT Examples:

Job 1:1 ...was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil

Job 1:8 God Speaking: “Have you considered my servant Job? For there is none like him on earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”

Job 2:3 ...blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause.

Gen 6:9 ...Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

A person who lives according to Ephesians 5:3, 8b-10 learning what is pleasing to the Lord.

<sup>3</sup>But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; <sup>4</sup>and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. <sup>5</sup>For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. <sup>6</sup>Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore do not be partakers with them; <sup>8</sup>for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), <sup>10</sup>trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Eph. 5:3-10

The qualities that follow then describe blameless.

Let's look at 1 Tim. 4:7b-15

<sup>7b</sup>On the other hand, **discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness**; <sup>8</sup>for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come. <sup>9</sup>It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. <sup>10</sup>For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. <sup>11</sup>Prescribe and teach these things. <sup>12</sup>Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but **rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe**. <sup>13</sup>Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching. <sup>14</sup>Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. <sup>15</sup>**Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.** 1 Tim. 4:7b-15

The mature believer is striving for purity.

Purity [ἡ αγνεία] purity, sinlessness of life. In NT it is only used here and in 1 Tim 5:2.

<sup>1</sup>Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but *rather* appeal to *him* as a father, *to* the younger men as brothers, <sup>2</sup>the older women as mothers, *and* the younger women as sisters, in all purity. 1 Tim. 5:1-2

## 2. Husband of one wife

Greek – Literally “a one-woman man” or “one-woman husband”

What it probably does not mean:

- 1) Polygamy – 1Cor 7:2 because this applies to all believers not just Elders or the mature.
- 2) A widower who has remarried (Rom 7:1-3, 1Cor 7:39, 1Tim 5:14)
- 3) That an elder must be married. (Acts 13:1; 1Cor 9:5)
- 4) Not to divorce explicitly or he simply would have said it. Although to an unbiblical divorce he probably is encompassing. (Mal 2:16; Matt 5:32; 1 Cor 7:15)

The Greek text literally reads “a one-woman man.” Paul is not referring to a leader's marital status, as the absence of the definite article in the original indicates. Rather, the issue is his moral, sexual behavior. ... A one-woman man is a man devoted in his heart and mind to the woman who is his wife. He loves, desires,

and thinks only of her. He maintains sexual purity in both his thought life and his conduct. MacArthur's NT Commentary: 1 Timothy

Being **the husband of one wife** refers to the singularity of a man's faithfulness to the woman who is his wife and implies inner as well as outward sexual purity. MacArthur's NT Commentary: Titus

A. What is God's will for us concerning purity?

<sup>3</sup>For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 1 Thess 4:3

The only kind of sexual activity that is acceptable to God is sex between a man and a woman who are married to each other. Everything else is sin.

B. How do you define marital unfaithfulness?

<sup>27</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; <sup>28</sup>but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matt 5:27-28

Not just the physical act of adultery, but mental and emotional adultery as well.

C. What does God think of people who have sex outside of marriage?

Heb 13:4 – fornicators and adulterers God will judge...

<sup>4</sup>Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage bed is to be* undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Heb 13:4

1 Cor 6:9-20 – neither fornicators... nor adulterers... shall inherit the kingdom of God.

<sup>9</sup>Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, <sup>10</sup>nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6:9-11

Gal 5:19-21 – deeds of the flesh... immorality, impurity, sensuality... shall not inherit...

<sup>19</sup>Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup>envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:19-21

Rom 13:12-14 – deeds of darkness... sexual promiscuity and sensuality...

<sup>11</sup>Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. <sup>12</sup>The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup>Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts. Rom 13:11-14

D. What is the cost of sexual sin?

Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 2 Pet 2:2

Sexual sin, like all sin for the believer, brings disgrace upon the name of God. Sexual sin has the added consequences of destroying marriages, families, ministries, churches, etc.

E. Does adultery just happen?

No. The physical act of adultery is the culmination of previous sins that have not been repented of and forsaken. Adultery must be avoided at all costs. Here are some practical ways to avoid sexual

sin.

1. Focus on Jesus

<sup>1</sup>Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. Col. 3:1-2

2. Keep Busy

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 1 Pet 5:8

3. Don't put yourself in a place to sin

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

4. Guard your mind

<sup>3</sup>For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup>for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup>*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 Cor. 10:3-5

5. Guard your eyes

I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin? Job 31:1

6. Guard your lips

Let 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

and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. Eph. 5:4

7. Guard your ears

<sup>3</sup>For the lips of an adulteress drip honey And smoother than oil is her speech; <sup>4</sup>But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. Prov. 5:3-4

8. Guard your hands and feet

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; Eph. 5:3

9. Run!

She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside. Gen. 39:12

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 2 Tim. 2:22

10. Practical Questions to ask yourself

Do I spend any time alone with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?

Do I look forward to time with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?

Do I try to justify time alone with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?

Do I confide in someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?

Do I have emotional bonds with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?

Do I joke and flirt with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?

Do I ever touch or am I ever touched by someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?