

## Character – Lesson 5

### 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 that adorns the Lord, His word, and Gospel message with honor in every respect.
  6. Hospitable – they seek for opportunity to love strangers.
  7. Able to teach – they seek to communicate in a such a way as 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, they know when to fall on their sword.
12. free from the love of money (1 Tim 3:3) / not fond of sordid gain (Titus 1:7)

1 Tim 3:3 – ἀπιλαργυροσ: free from the love of money

Titus 1:7 – αἰσχροκερδε | σ: fond of sordid gain

...a person who, without honesty or integrity, seeks wealth and financial prosperity at any cost. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Titus

Q: Who here is rich?

Q: Why is it important to be free from the love of money?

<sup>9</sup>But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Tim 6:9-10

<sup>28</sup>He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like the *green* leaf. Prov 11:28

<sup>16</sup>Better is a little with the fear of the LORD Than great treasure and turmoil with it. Prov 15:16

Maturing believers have their priorities straight.

<sup>24c</sup>**No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.** Matt 6:24

Maturing believers understand that they own nothing – they are stewards.

<sup>1</sup>The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. Psa 24:1

Maturing believers are content with what they have.

<sup>5</sup>Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,” <sup>6</sup>so that we confidently say, “THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?” Heb 13:5-6

<sup>6</sup>But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. <sup>7</sup>For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. <sup>8</sup>If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 1 Tim 6:6-8

<sup>11</sup>Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup>I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Phil 4:11-13

Maturing believers are generous and ready to share.

<sup>17</sup>Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. <sup>18</sup>Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, <sup>19</sup>storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. 1 Tim 6:17-19

Maturing believers impact their children by striving for integrity over wealth.

<sup>6</sup>Better is the poor who walks in his integrity Than he who is crooked though he be rich. Prov 28:6

<sup>7</sup>A righteous man who walks in his integrity—How blessed are his sons after him. Prov 20:7

13. manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (1 Tim 3:4) / having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion (Titus 1:6)

manage – προϊστε | μι: to put before, to set over, to rule

well – καλο | σ: beautifully, finely, excellently, well

**Well** is from *καλοσ*, a rich word that could also be translated “excellently.” Its meaning can be better understood by comparing it to *αγαθος*. *Αγαθος* means “inherently,” “morally,” or “practically good.”

*Καλοσ* takes that a step further and adds the idea of **aesthetically good, beautiful, and appealing to the eye.**

An elder must be one whose leadership in the home is not only intrinsically good, but also visibly good.

MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: 1 Timothy

Maturing believers strive to work out righteousness in their familial relationships:

### Husband

Husbands are to lead through sacrificial service and be the nourisher and protector of his wife.

<sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. ... <sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, <sup>26</sup>so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup>for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ... <sup>33</sup>Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, Eph 5:23, 25-29; 33a

Husbands are to live with their wives in an understanding way and not deal harshly with them.

<sup>19</sup>Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. Col 3:19

<sup>7</sup>You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. 1 Pet 3:7

## Wife

Wives are to be subject (submissive) to and respect their husbands in the same way they are to Christ.

<sup>18</sup>Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Col 3:18

<sup>22</sup>Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ... and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband. Eph 5:22, 33b

<sup>1</sup>In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup>as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. <sup>3</sup>Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; <sup>4</sup>but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup>For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; <sup>6</sup>just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. 1 Pet 3:1-6

## Parent

Parents are to view their children as a gift from the Lord to be molded and shaped to honor Him.

<sup>3</sup>Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. <sup>4</sup>Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. <sup>5</sup>How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed When they speak with their enemies in the gate. Psa 127:3-5

Parents are to make a priority of teaching their children about the Lord and His word.

<sup>4</sup>“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! <sup>5</sup>“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup>“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup>You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. <sup>8</sup>“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. <sup>9</sup>“You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deut 6:4-9

Parents are to bring consistently loving discipline to their children.

<sup>24</sup>He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently. Prov 13:24

<sup>15</sup>Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him. Prov 22:15

<sup>15</sup>The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. ...

<sup>17</sup>Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul. Prov 29:15, 17

<sup>4</sup>Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Eph 6:4

<sup>21</sup>Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart. Col 3:21

## Children

Children are to obedient to their parents.

<sup>1</sup>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. Eph 6:1-4

<sup>20</sup>Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Col 3:20

#### 14. not a new convert (1 Tim 3:6)

νεοπηυτος: “newly planted”; a new convert.

Maturity takes time and effort. It is a process that begins the day we are made new in Christ and will end the day we go home to glory.

Spiritual power is not the mark of a special class of Christian but is the mark of every Christian who submits to God’s Word and Spirit. Like physical growth and strength, spiritual growth and strength do not come overnight. As we discipline our minds and spirits to study God’s Word, understand it, and live by it, we are nourished and strengthened. Every bit of spiritual food and every bit of spiritual exercise add to our strength and endurance. MacArthur’s New Testament Commentary: Ephesians

<sup>4</sup>“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. <sup>5</sup>“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. John 15:4-5

<sup>20</sup>“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. Gal 2:20

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, <sup>2</sup>like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, <sup>3</sup>if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. 1 Pet. 2:1-3

<sup>15</sup>Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. 1 Tim 4:15

#### 15. good reputation with those outside *the church* (1 Tim 3:7)

reputation – μαρτυρια: reputation, testimony, witness.

The maturing believer’s life should be a testimony to the truth of the gospel.

What you are thunders so loud that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary. Ralph Waldo Emerson

<sup>14</sup>Do all things without grumbling or disputing; <sup>15</sup>so 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

<sup>5</sup>Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. Col 4:5-6

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

<sup>12</sup>Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation. 1 Pet 2:11-12

Next time we will study: not self-willed (Titus 1:7); not quick-tempered (Titus 1:7); and loving what is good (Titus 1:8).

Homework: Read 1 Tim 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Look up passages on the good things we are to love.