



Developing the Character of God

Personality versus character

To learn how to develop the character of God, we need to know that we are all created in the image and likeness of God. It is Him we fashion our lives after.

Gen 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...NIV

God created us with a personality, which, in turn, developed into our character. Our personality is who we are - our DNA, which is good. There are no two people alike. As we experience life, the good and the bad - in this sinful world - we develop likes and dislikes, displaying certain traits that begin to mark our character. Those who have more negative experiences develop more negative character traits. Those who have had more positive experiences develop more positive character traits. Most of us have a mixture of both displayed in our lives. **It is God's desire, however, in this sinful world, to develop our character to be in line with the personality He once created us to be.** He wants us to develop our personalities into godly characters. So then, what is a godly character? We find the answer to that in looking at God's character and the fruit of the Spirit.

God's character

So many people see God as an impersonal God Who is a lawgiver, eternal judge of all things, filled with anger toward sinful man. We need to be mindful that God, just like man, has a personality and character, but without the negativities of this sinful world. God is a personal loving God, who is holy, full of mercy and grace who wants to have a loving, intimate relationship and fellowship with His creation. In essence, God wants us to get to know Him.

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Job 22:21 Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee.

Just as in the human sense, God's nature is displayed in His character. His very nature is love and He wants us to get to know His character.

Man's concept of God

In the New Testament God is referred to as heavenly "father." Not everyone, however, sees "father" as a loving caring person. **Man's concept of a loving father is dependent on his or her earthly father relationship.** If you grew up with an earthly father who nurtured you in a loving, caring, attentive relationship, your perception of father carries a warm sense of security. It becomes a part of your thinking process, which creates well being within you. If, however, you grew up in a fearful environment, with a father who was abusive and non-caring, your perception of a father would be one of abandonment, and even possibly hatred. Sad to say, man carries those same expectations into his perception of God.

Matt 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Let me ask this question: Using an analogy, what kind of God (or heavenly Father) would bring harm to His child by causing an accident, or purposing to hurt you, or causing sickness to come upon His child for whatever reason? If that were an earthly father, the courts would probably put him in prison. Yet, many people think God is this kind of father. This kind of thinking is a lie from Satan. God certainly wouldn't do that to His children.

Therefore, to accurately understand the true nature of God and our development into His character, we must continually rely on what the Word of God states, not the feelings that we have carried with us from childhood into adulthood.

God's method of operation

Everyone has a method of operation (m.o.) - a systematic way of doing things. We are all fairly consistent in our behavior. In order for people to know our m.o., all they have to do is study our behavior over a period of time. People will witness our successes or failures and how we respond to them. They will also see how we interact with others, and how others respond to us. Our m.o. becomes a part of who we are - it is a part of our personality and character. We are so predictable.

God also has a m.o. As such, it is important that we get to know His method of operation - His ways, His behavior, attributes, how He responds to man - His love, and all that He is. And God's Word tells us how He operates. By studying it, how He acts, how He interacts toward His people, He, like us, is also very predictable.



Three Kinds of Knowing

In getting to know a person in the natural, there are three different kinds of knowing. 1) Casual...Being aware of someone, 2) Familiar...Like a friend, or family member, and 3) Close Relationship...Not surface, but understanding clearly how one feels, being confident in the relationship - and that takes time.

Casual relationship:

Many people have a casual relationship with God - they are aware that there is a God, and even acknowledge that there is a supreme being. They may even recognize that Jesus is God's Son; however, they have never gone beyond that. They have not come to believe in Jesus, as the Son of God for themselves. That is not what God wants for His children. God wants to love and have fellowship with us. That is the very reason He created us.

Familiar relationship:

There are some people who have a more familiar relationship with the Lord. They are probably born-again, meaning they have accepted personally Jesus as the Son of God, but are very carnal (fleshly and worldly) in their thinking and behavioral actions. They may talk to the Lord occasionally, even read the Bible once in a while, except nothing happens in their lives. If you saw them, you probably would not even be aware they are a Christian. They stay the same year after year. The inner workings of change from the Holy Spirit has not taken place, nor will it take place at all. This kind of Christian will continue to live their lives in the character that they have developed throughout life, lacking the godly character of who God wanted them to be. That is not what God is referring to.

Close relationship:

What God is looking for is a close relationship with Him that changes lives. That is what being born-again is all about. Changed from what we were, into what God wants us to be.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

It takes time to get to know God. Just as in any earthly relationship, it takes time to get to know a person. The more you spend time getting to know the Lord, the more you will grow in the things of Him and the more you will affect and influence lives around you. It is critical to your Christian growth.

Get to know God through His Word and prayer

We need to study and meditate on God's Word, as well as fellowship with the Lord. Even though Satan tries to deceive us with lies by planting such thoughts of "I don't need to read my Bible or pray every day - it's not that important," that, again, is a lie. If we are going to get to know God and be conformed more to His image, in what He created us to be, it is important that we spend time in our Bible, meditating on what it tells us, as well as prayer everyday.

Josh 1:8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

To be conformed to His image, we must develop our human character to its greatest potential, just as God originally created us to be. To know what that is, we can rely on that Jesus' character is the ultimate possibility for our human character.

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

God gives examples of the ultimate human character through the fruit of the Spirit as listed in Gal 5:22-23. That becomes the fullness of our human spirit, and the ultimate of the person God originally created us to become.

1. Love	2. Joy	3. Peace
4. Patience	5. Kindness	6. Goodness
7. Faithfulness	8. Gentleness	9. Self-Control

The fruit of the Spirit is love, and displaying it in several different ways.

The fruit of the spirit of God and the fullness of our human spirit comes by meditating on the Word and fellowshiping with the Lord continuously.

As we meditate on what God is saying to us, we see that faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. In other words, reading and

Rom 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

reading and hearing and hearing the Word of God over and over again until it becomes a part of who we are.

Then we learn by the Word of God that we must be doers of the Word, otherwise we have only head knowledge - deceiving ourselves.

God then changes us by the act of our obedience to His Word. In other words, His Word starts working on the inside, and works its way outward and is manifested in our actions. As our relationship develops with the Lord, we will find that our likes and dislikes become more like His. We are changes little by little, day in and day out. As we do, we enjoy His presence more and more as we pursue knowing the depth of His character and learning His ways.

The Character of God is ONE

End Notes

ⁱ Picture: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/b4/Crepscular_rays_hdr.jpg/800px-Crepscular_rays_hdr.jpg