

The Character which God requires of every believing Man

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God's truth has a holistic effect upon the believer (Rom 12:1-2; 1 Thess 2:13. Not only does a faithful believer study the truth, he also loves the truth, obeys, meditates upon it, teaches it, guards it, clings to it, defends it, entrusts it to others, and also models the truth in his Christian character. The faithful man denies himself for the truth and is willing to suffer for the truth—even die for the truth if need be (2 Tim 1:8).

The man of God is not merely an 'academic phenomenon'; he also loves God and not the world (1 Jn 2:15-17). This is demonstrated in the godly man's life: he flees from lust; he follows Christ; he fights for the truth; and he fights against sin. The godly man's relationship to the Lord is inseparable from his obedience to the Word of God (1 Tim 6:11-12; 2 Tim 3:17; 4:5).

Biblical convictions, when held in the mind and affections, always translate into Christian character. When you invite men to study the Word of God, you are inviting them to look at their own lives in the light of God's truth. Is it any wonder then that the teacher-shepherd must be a model in Christian character of what he is teaching? (See Jas 3:1; 1 Peter 5:3).

Author Gene Getz observes that it is common for Evangelicals to place far more emphasis on a person's biblical education than upon their character. Biblical knowledge is vital and it is commanded of believers, but it is also to be joined to exemplary Christian character.

In 2 Peter 1:5-11, the Apostle Peter states in no uncertain terms that the character qualities that he lists in vv. 5-8 are absolutely essential for stability and fruitfulness (vv. 8-11). "Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vv. 5-8).

Therefore it should come as no surprise that the genuine success of any church plant goes back to a particular foundation: the focused commitment to equip qualified leaders in Christian character. Godly leaders who are equipped, form the basis for the unity which spills down to the health and vitality of the whole church body (Gene Getz). The character requirements for spiritual leadership found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are developed through discipleship. These 19 character qualities form a system to measure and discern whom to trust in leadership, and whom to entrust with the transmission of God's Word. **There are 19 Spiritual Qualifications or Biblical Character Goals for every Christian Man:**

Above reproach (a man of good reputation) (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6)

It takes time to build a good reputation. A man's public track record as a faithful man does not come over night. Growth in the Christian faith takes time (2 Tim 3:14-16). What a man is in public ought to match what he is in private (*The Measure of a Man*, Gene Getz, pp. 26-32).

The husband of one wife (morally and sexually pure) (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘you shall not commit adultery’, 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” (Mt 5:27-28). There is a great difference between temptation and lust. The man of God must not allow temptation to lead to sexual lust. In sexual lust a man allows himself to be enticed by picturing himself sexually with a person other than his wife, and in opening himself to the possibility of intimacy with that person if the opportunity should ever present itself. Today the rampant use of pornography is the most common expression of the ‘mental adultery’ that Jesus warned against (Ibid, pp. 36-46).

Temperate (balanced in words and actions) (1 Tim 3:2; 1 Thess 5:1-8)

‘Temperate’ has the broad meaning of sober-minded, balanced, and alert, and not being prone to give way to passions (whether despondency, anxiety, or inordinate excitement). A temperate man is a level-headed; he does not give way to extremes. He is a man who is not easily drawn into emotional tangents. He is a man of inner peace and security in his Lord because he is a man of consistent faith and prayer.

A temperate man fixes his eyes on the Lord. “. . . fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2). Temperate men are men of hope, therefore, they are steadfast (1 Pet 1:13) (Ibid, pp. 50-60).

Prudent (both wise and humble) (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 2:2-6)

This spiritual quality is characterized by sober-mindedness and sensibility. The prudent man is wise and exercises sound judgment. He is not rash or reckless. His deep fear of God is expressed in his meekness—which like our Lord, is certainly not weakness.

“The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer” (1 Pet 4:7). A prudent man is known by his eternal value system, therefore he is serious in his demeanor; he is not facetious, or characterized by a constant joking nature. He is also humble and discerning—he does not think more highly of himself than he ought to think (Rom 12:3). He cherishes wisdom (Prov 3:13-26) (Ibid, pp. 62-71).

Respectable (a good role model) (1 Tim 3:2)

A respectable man is very aware of his public testimony for Christ. He lives in such a way that his life ‘adorns’ the truths of God’s Word. “. . . not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will *adorn* the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect” (Titus 2:10).

He is always aware that his life may be the only ‘Bible’ that his neighbors ever read. He seeks to walk worthy of the One who has called him. “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent

to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:1-3). The respectable man is industrious and self-controlled and always aware that what he is in word and deed constitutes his public testimony for Christ (1 Thess 4:10-12) (Ibid, pp. 73-81).

Hospitable (unselfish and generous) (1Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)

“. . . contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality” (Rom 12:13). The basis of hospitality is love for God and for one another. When we recognize God’s ownership of us—that we have been ‘bought with a price’—that we are His possessions, then presenting ourselves back to God daily is the most rational and reasonable thing for us to do (Rom 6:11-13).

Hospitality is one of the ways we give ourselves and our resources back to God daily. “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint” (1 Pet 4:8-9). Biblical love is not just a feeling; it is action—it is a willing spirit in meeting the needs of those around us (Ibid, pp. 85-95).

Able to Teach (competent to communicate the Word with sensitivity) (1 Tim 3:2)

“The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will” (2 Tim 2:24-26).

Communicating the Word of God with sensitivity involves knowing that many of our listeners are blinded by their sin and enslaved by it. A sovereign act of God is required for them to repent and be delivered. Understanding the necessity of God’s sovereign grace will affect the manner in which we teach—in a non-defensive manner. The man who is able to teach is self-controlled; he is not ruled by the needs of his ego. He does not dominate others (1 Pet 5:1-3).

The man who is able to teach has a high view of Scripture, therefore he handles the Word accurately (2 Tim 2:15). His exhortation and correction of those who contradict are based completely upon the sound doctrine in God’s authoritative Word (Titus 1:9) (Ibid, pp. 95-104).

Not addicted to Wine (not dependent upon substances) (1 Tim 3:3)

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18). “It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles” (Rom 14:21). According to this passage, the man of God must be very careful about the use of his liberties. There are some things that a mature Christian will avoid so as not to make another believer stumble.

In addition, Gene Getz cautions that it is possible to become enslaved to things that are not wrong in themselves, and that the Bible clearly teaches that Christians should avoid anything that harms their bodies, interferes with their thinking, or brings them into bondage (see also Proverbs 23:29-30) (Ibid, pp. 106-116).

Not self-willed (not self-centered, manipulative, or controlling) (Titus 1:7)

A self-willed person will normally find it difficult to be teachable. A person who tends to be self-pleasing and overbearing usually has a problem with pride and arrogance. A self-willed person tends not to be a good listener. “But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God” (Jas 1:19-20).

The godly man who steers clear of self-will demonstrates the ‘wisdom from above’: “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom” (Jas 3:13). The opposite of being self-willed is a self-sacrificial commitment to do the will of God: “Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock” (1 Pet 5:2-3) (Ibid, pp. 117-127).

Not quick tempered (able to avoid anger that becomes sinful) (Eph 4:26; Tit 1:7)

A quick-tempered person frequently does and says things that hurt others. Anger can quickly become sinful and consequently, very destructive. Scripture gives us proper channels for resolving offenses. Caring enough to confront in love may be necessary because allowing misunderstandings to persist can result in slander or bitterness. “You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord. You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord” (Lev 19:16-18).

God warns us against taking our own revenge (Rom 12:17-21). In addition, ‘a root of bitterness’ has a defiling effect upon the believing community (Heb 12:15). We are to select our closest friends carefully, for the Word cautions us against becoming a close companion of those who are quick to anger (Prov 22:24-25). By contrast, those who are slow to anger demonstrate wisdom and discernment (Prov 14:29; 17:27; 19:11) (Ibid, pp. 129-139).

Not pugnacious (not abusive, violent or hostile) (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7)

Pugnacity means ‘ready with a blow’, a ‘striker’. In the anger ‘continuum’ a pugnacious person may not only tend to express his rage verbally, but also physically. The anger continuum goes all the way from bullying to physical violence, to murder (note the case of Cain) (Gen 4:7).

In the Apostle Paul’s testimony of his conversion, he states with shame that he once was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent aggressor (1 Tim 1:12-16). Abusive people are often in denial about their behavior. Scripture exposes our sin, revealing the thoughts, motives and intentions of the heart (Heb 4:12-13).

There are times when a church member who habitually engages in emotional or physical abuse must be confronted by caring members of the body of Christ (Mt 18:15-17; Gal 6:1-3). By

means of confession and repentance, and by replacement behaviors, a true believer can change by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ibid, pp. 142-153).

Gentle (sensitive, loving, and kind) (1 Tim 3:3)

The spiritual qualities of gentleness and kindness were constantly modeled by our Lord. “Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent” (2 Cor 10:1). The *Amplified Bible* captures the meaning of the words from 1 Timothy 3:3, “Not combative, but gentle and considerate, not quarrelsome but forbearing and peaceable.”

Gentle is not the same thing as ‘niceness’. In His dealings with people, Jesus was equitable, meek, kind, and fair. By contrast, niceness has more to do with never offending. Jesus was not afraid to offend, for vexation was often the response of His hearers as He spoke the truth without compromise (Lu 4:28-29)

Keeping track of offenses and responding with hate is the human condition before regeneration (Titus 3:1-3). The transforming work of the Spirit of God through the gospel is designed to change believers into those who are considerate, tolerant, patient, gentle, and longsuffering instead of contentious and full of malice (Titus 3:1-3) (Ibid, pp. 155-165).

Peaceable (non-argumentative and non-divisive) (1 Tim 3:3)

Peaceable is the polar opposite of irritable and unpredictable. A peaceable man knows how to handle disagreement. He has matured to the point of not taking everything personally. Early in the ministries of James and John, their volatile natures earned them the title, “sons of thunder” (Mk 3:17). But, as the disciples grew in the Lord, they learned to love one another as Christ had loved them (Jn 13:34-35). Maturing believers gladly show sacrificial love to the brethren (1 Jn 3:16). Humility and overflowing gratitude are qualities essential to being a peaceable man.

Paul urges believers to have the same attitude that Christ manifested in His ministry (Phil 2:5-8)—for Christ did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many (Mk 10:42-45). A peaceable man looks past a personal offense in order that he might carefully guard the unity of the body (Eph 4:1-3). “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9). Peacemakers teach and model the skills necessary to practice caring confrontation and liberal forgiveness (Col 3:12-13) (Ibid, pp. 167-178).

Free from the love of money (non-materialistic) (1 Tim 3:3)

Our Lord declared in no uncertain terms that the service of God and mammon are mutually exclusive (Mt 6:24). The love of money is not a solitary form of idolatry, it is the root of all sorts of evil (1 Tim 6:10). A generous spirit is closely joined to faith in God as our true source of supply and security. The opposite of the loving money is trust in God’s promise that He will provide what we need daily (Mt 6:25-33).

“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’ (Heb 13:5). One of the most important keys to cultivating a generous spirit is faith that God is able to

cause all grace to abound toward generous givers (2 Cor 9:8-12). How we manage and steward our earthly resources (either for God's eternal kingdom or for our own pleasure) reveals where are 'functional' treasure resides (Mt 6:19-21).

Manages his own household well (an exemplary husband and father) (1 Tim 3:4; Titus 1:6)

A man's faithful management of his household begins with submission to the Lord. Out of his subjection and loyalty to Christ comes the ability and desire to love his wife sacrificially (Eph 5:25-28). Scripture warns that a man's behavior in this primary relationship on earth (how a husband treats his wife) is tied to the effectiveness of his prayer life. "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).

Believing fathers are also urged to nurture their children in the fear of the Lord, and avoid exasperating their children so that they don't lose heart (become despondent or 'quitters'). "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). The standards that a father sets for his children in the home must not be perfectionistic, impossible (out of reach), or based upon the father's moods—for these behaviors toward a man's children can exasperate them (Col 3:21). A wise and loving father brings his children into his own devotional life so that his sons and daughters can see up close his love for God (Deut 6:5-9) (Ibid, pp. 194-206).

Loving what is good (pursues godly activities) (Titus 1:8)

When God's transforming power takes up residence in the believing sinner's life, a new principle is introduced. The Word refers to this new operative action as "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:2). By this new principle, the Holy Spirit animates our new natures to love what is good (Titus 1:8). As this new power for good is exerted in our lives, we will experience the desire to strive after Christ's stature and fullness (Eph 4:13). This desire to reflect Christ's virtues is normative for every believer; it is not just reserved for pastors and missionaries.

When we love God first, we are 'loving what is good' instead of loving self and loving pleasure (2 Tim 3:1-4). Loving God means that we are living to do His will. The man who loves what is good understands that joy is found in doing the will of God. "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full" (Jn 15:9-11). There is great peace and joy in being 'abandoned' to do God's will.

Doing the will of God is the evidence of loving God wholeheartedly, and it is the basis for fruitfulness in our lives. The growing believer regards obedience to God's will as the essence of 'walking worthy of the Lord' (Col 1:9-10). The man who loves what is good in God's sight is characterized by relationships which promote the fruit of the Spirit (Jas 3:13-17). "To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning

evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (1 Pet 3:8-9) (Ibid, pp. 207-217).

Just (wise, discerning, non-prejudiced, and fair) (Titus 1:8)

A just man is equitable and impartial—it is someone who is righteous, fair, and upright in all of his relationships. We have frequent opportunities in life to treat our fellow human beings with justice and uprightness, or with bias and prejudice (Jas 2:1-9). Paul applies this principle even to those who rule over slaves: “Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven” (Col 4:1).

The Corinthian believers, in their affinity for human wisdom were drawn to a party spirit and ‘pecking order’ within the church community. The Apostle Paul identifies that tendency as an evidence of their carnality and immaturity (1 Cor 3:1-4). By contrast, growing believers will exercise justice (Hos 12:6), and will not practice a manmade hierarchy, or favoritism which is contrary to the equality that is consistent with the gospel (1 Cor 1:10).

Devout (holy, devoted to God) (Titus 1:8)

Living a holy life accords with Christ’s terms of discipleship. Therefore, central to a holy walk is self-denial and taking up one’s cross daily (Lu 9:23). Paul states that the believer lives in the world, but is not of the world (1 Cor 5:9-10). The devout believer renews his mind daily on the Word of God (Rom 12:1-2).

Living a holy life in this world requires great diligence, “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet 1:13-16).

The devout believer walks by means of the Spirit so that he does not fulfill the deeds of the flesh (Gal 5:16-24). Walking by means of the Spirit involves a conscious, deliberate presenting of our bodies to the Lord as ‘instruments of righteousness’ (Rom 6:11-13). Holy living is walking separated unto God as those who are alive from the dead. This means that the devout believer practices ‘replacement behaviors’—he continually puts off the behaviors of the old man and puts on the behaviors of the new man (Col 3:8-16) (Ibid, pp. 232-243).

Self-controlled (disciplined) (Titus 1:8)

Nothing worthwhile is achieved without discipline. How much more true is that in regard to our pilgrimage toward glory. “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not

beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified” (1 Cor 9:24-27).

Godliness requires discipline. “But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; 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” (1 Tim 4:7-8).

Body and soul function together in the choices we make to live a self-controlled life of sanctification. “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass” (1 Thess 5:23-24).

In terms of these 19 spiritual qualifications, may we as Christian leaders be faithful to set the bar as high Scripture does for ourselves and the brethren. For, Christian character is the goal of grace—to conform us to our blessed Head in holiness (Rom 8:28-30).