

SHARPENING OUR CHARACTER

Galatians 5:16, 25 ... "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh...If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Your character represents to others what you believe – morally, ethically, and spiritually. This is why we separate a person's words from their actions. If you say you believe one thing but do something else, your character is based upon how you act and what you do, not in your words. If you act mean to others, people will know that your character is that of a mean person. If you are committed to being kind, people will recognize you as having a kind character.

God cares about your character because that is how people evaluate your life and make decisions whether to consider you a role model, or someone to avoid. If you tell people about the love of Jesus, then turn around and curse someone, your character testifies that your words mean little. The question is: How can you adjust your character so that it pleases God?

The first step is to agree with God that your character needs to be improved. We all need a little adjustment now and then; some more than others. If you are sincere, God will listen to your confession and begin to reveal to you the flaws in your character. God does this through His Holy Spirit. So, step two is to listen to the Holy Spirit and allow him to guide you to improvement. Step three is to realize that the changes to your character that God desires, are not necessarily add-ons. God may not ask you to adopt additional positive behaviors, such as generosity, kindness or compassion. Instead, he may ask you to remove negative behaviors. When we remove our negative behaviors, we create voids in our character that God can fill. If you want a glass of clean water, you do not add clean water to a dirty glass. You clean the glass before you fill it with clean water.

Have you ever sharpened a knife or bolo? When you sharpen a blade, you are not merely reshaping the metal. You are actually removing steel from the blade to reveal a sharper edge. If you sharpen a knife often, eventually it will become useless because you remove metal from it each time you sharpen it. I have a kitchen knife I bought used from a poultry farm in the U.S. many years ago. The blade is short and very skinny. But it did not leave the factory like that. When the poultry farm buys their knives new, they are long and wide and heavy. After those knives are sharpened many times a day for several years, they are reduced to short skinny blades that are no longer useful on the farm. So, because the steel is very high quality, they sell them to people who want short skinny knives.

If you agree with God that your character needs to be sharpened, expect the Holy Spirit to begin revealing behaviors that negatively affect your character. Only after the bad stuff has been removed, can you fill your character with good stuff.

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