

GROWING IN CHRIST LIKENESS

EPHESIANS 4:14-16

THE WORD
OF GOD
IS LIKE
A SEED.
PLANT IT
IN YOUR
HEART.

1 Peter 1:23

Lessons 9 – 12

WEST JACKSONVILLE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST
CATHEDRAL OF FAITH CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST
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GROWING IN CHRIST LIKENESS

LESSON NINE

Justice vs. Corruption

Taking personal responsibility to uphold what is pure, right, and true

CHARACTER THOUGHT: Measure your everyday responses by what is true and right

CHARACTER SCRIPTURE: Micah 6:8 - He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do **justly**, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

CHARACTER POINTS:

EVERYDAY JUSTICE

- **Moral Compass**
Developing a strong moral compass will enable you to chart a steady course in the midst of turbulent circumstances.
- **A Personal Commitment**
Those with a strong sense of justice feel personally accountable to correct what is wrong.
- **A Consistent Stand**
One sign of injustice is applying different standards to different people.

BALANCE JUSTICE

- **Consider Wisely**
Every situation requires analysis from a perspective larger than self-interest.
- **Enforce Humbly**
The responsibility to administer justice does not confer moral superiority; it conveys a duty to seek the true welfare of those within your influence.
- **Administer with Orderliness**
Justice arises from moral principle, not personal whim, and it must be applied within the organizational structure.

FIVE KEYS TO BUILDING JUSTICE

- **Keep a Clear Conscience**
The first hall of justice is not a courtroom but the conscience.
- **Take Personal Responsibility**
Your underlying dedication to moral principle must not change.
- **Use the Right Methods**
By definition, you cannot demonstrate justice by using unjust means, even if you do achieve a “just” result.
- **Face It**
When possible, confront wrongdoers and give them opportunity to mend their ways.
- **Promote Reform-Not Revenge**
Appeal to a person’s conscience using questions that define the underlying issue and lead to a change of heart.

JUSTICE AT HOME

- **Recognize Real Differences**
Absolute fairness is impossible and ignores diversity among people.
- **Establish Justice**
Use appropriate methods instead of bullying others into conformity.

EVALUATE YOUR JUSTICE

- Would others say your life exemplifies justice?
- Do you take appropriate action or look the other way when you see injustice?
- Do your methods and goals demonstrate justice?
- Do you appreciate others confronting you? Do you seriously consider what they have to say?
- Are your decisions motivated by what is right or by what you want?

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LESSON TEN

Gentleness vs. Harshness

Gentleness is a quality of strength that is able to control itself as opposed to the brute strength that cannot govern itself when irritated.

CHARACTER THOUGHT: *Gentleness is showing consideration and personal concern for others.*

CHARACTER SCRIPTURE: *Galatians 5:22*

CHARACTER POINTS:

HANDLE WITH CARE

- **SHARE LIFE** - life is full of relationships and they are easier kept than recovered.
- **MANAGE FRUSTRATIONS** - one quick way to damage relationships is to let anger get the best of you.
- **REAP BENEFITS** - when you practice consideration, patience and kindness with others, they often respond with similar kindness.

BALANCE GENTLENESS

- **PROMOTE JUSTICE** - justice gives gentleness direction and prevents it from becoming permissiveness.
- **PROCEED WITH DETERMINATION** - determination keeps gentleness from becoming passive.
- **PERSUADE WITH RESPECT** - persuaviness guides vital truths around another's mental roadblocks.

FIVE KEYS TO BUILDING GENTLENESS

- **REACH OUT** - reach out to others, including those on the other side of racial, or socioeconomic barriers.
- **PRACTICE THE GOLDEN RULE** - treat others with the respect you want them to have toward you.
- **CHOOSE CAREFULLY** - carefully consider how your audience will interpret what you say and do.
- **EASE TEMPER** - place priority on your relationships so that everyday pressure does not erode them.
- **KEEP THE PEACE** - avoid taking one side or the other in conflicts. Seek to restore both parties by pointing out the truth.

GENTLENESS AT HOME

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Respect one another's need for occasional peace and quiet.
- Tread lightly when another is hurting.
- Choose to not make jokes about one another.
- Turn down or stop loud music, television programs, or movies when they disturb others.

EVALUATE YOUR GENTLENESS

1. Do you see others for who they are or for the class you assign them?
2. Have you sought to personally understand others?
3. Do you make an effort to help others?
4. Would you make sacrifices in order to build or maintain sound relationships?
5. Would others say you look for the truth or take sides?

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LESSON ELEVEN

FAITH VS. PRESUMPTION

FAITH: confidence that actions rooted in good character will yield the best outcome, even when I cannot see how.

CHARACTER THOUGHT: Rise above obstacles by living according to what you know is true.

CHARACTER SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 12:3

CHARACTER POINTS:

Finding Faith – How to cultivate peace of mind amidst difficult decisions

- ❖ **Faith Begins with Belief** – Contrary to some perceptions, faith must have logical basis in fact. It is not blind or ignorant.
- ❖ **Faith Builds Confidence** – Faith provides confidence and peace of mind because it bases decisions on sound principles.
- ❖ **Faith Leads to Action** – The evidence of your faith lies in your actions.

BALANCE FAITH

- ❖ **Demonstrate Humility** – If you find your original ideas flawed, change your course of action rather than stubbornly hold to wrong ideas.
- ❖ **Exercise Discernment** – Faith does not ignore problems, it discerns causes and looks for appropriate solutions.
- ❖ **Practice Endurance** – Do not lose heart when your initial plans fail. Evaluate your ideas, refine your methods, and do your best.

FIVE KEYS TO BUILDING FAITH

- **Embrace Truth** – Apply the truth in each situation. Your confidence in what is right will provide faith for daily decisions.
- **Recognize Potential** – Faith lays the foundation for hope by understanding how today's actions can lead to good results tomorrow.
- **Act on Truth** – Your faithfulness hinges on your willingness to invest yourself and your resources to do what is right.
- **Stand Strong** – To the best of your knowledge, always base decisions on what is true, even when others cast doubts.
- **Do Not Worry** – Avoid assuming responsibility that does not belong to you; pursue your duties, and allow others to pursue theirs.

EVALUATE YOUR FAITH

1. Do you actively increase your knowledge and learn from your experience?
2. Do you recognize good opportunities?
3. Have you stood alone for what you believed to be right?
4. Do you measure actions by truth or by expected outcome?
5. Would you act on what is right even when the outcome is in doubt?

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LESSON TWELVE

Initiative vs. Idleness

“Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before being told to do it”

CHARACTER THOUGHT: Prepare for the opportunities of tomorrow by responding to the needs of today.

CHARACTER SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 17:22-29

CHARACTER POINTS:

- **BE A STARTER** -without initiative few would begin and fewer would overcome
- **START SOMEWHERE** – unless a person has the character to try, nothing will ever come to completion.
- **TAKE IT PERSONALLY** – never accept failure as final
- **DO THE RIGHT THING** – initiative helps you respond correctly regardless of supervision

BALANCE INITIATIVE:

- **PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY** - right timing helps to accomplish right actions
- **FOCUS OBEDIENTLY** - quickly and cheerfully carry out the directions
- **DETERMINE TO FINISH** - purpose to accomplish the goal on time

FIVE KEYS TO BUILDING INITIATIVE

- **LOOK FOR NEEDS** - Be aware of your surroundings
- **SEIZE THE MOMENT** - Make the best of opportunities
- **MAKE THE TEAM SUCCESSFUL** - Contribute directly to the team’s success
- **THINK AHEAD** - Recognize challenges before they become major problems
- **SPEND TIME WISELY** - How you manage your time determines your success or failure

INITIATIVE AT HOME

- Look for needs around the house, and take care of them without being told
- Visualize achievements for others, and help them reach their goals
- If you hear of a problem, act the same day. Resolve conflicts quickly.
- Take initiative to restore broken relationships and clear up misunderstandings.
- Take part in others' interests, and show concern for their worries.
- Imitate conversation, but do not probe or be obnoxious.

"I WILL" DISCUSSION POINTS

1. I will think ahead. Name a time when thinking ahead would have benefited.
2. I will look for ways to help others. In what areas will you look to help others?
3. I will volunteer. Think of a specific area that you can volunteer.
4. I will make the whole team successful. What team are you apart of?
5. I will lead by example. Give an example of leading by example.

Anonymous Poem

*Mr. Meant-To has a comrade, and his name is Didn't-Do
Have you ever chanced to meet them? Did they ever call on you?
These two fellows work together, in the town of Never-Win
And I'm told the town is haunted, by the ghost of Might-Have-Been.*