

Basic Traits of Good Character

Fall, 2020 (Wednesday evenings – 13 lessons)

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How to Build Character

“Character” - “the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual” *OxfordDict*

“Good character” - what are the characteristics? We will be looking at some of these traits in the lessons in this course.

God’s ultimate standard **Eph 4:13**. What is it?

What will build good character? Consider ...

1Jn 5:4 The “world” assaults our character, and, if allowed, will misshape it. What is the means to “victory” over “the world”?

1Jn 5:3 What will this cause one to do that will influence character? (**Mt 22:36-37**)

1Jn 5:11 What incomparable reward will this provide and what impact will this have on building character?

1Jn 5:13 Where will this cause one to go for guidance and assurance in building character? (**Eph 2:20**)

Pro 22:15; 2Tim 3:15 2Ch 34:3 When is an opportune time for building character?

1Co 15:33; Pro 1:10-15; 12:26; 13:20; 14:7; 24:1; 1Co 5:6; 1Pt 4:4 What do these scriptures point to that can undermine good character?

1Pt 2:1-2 What is essential to growing in character as long as one lives? (**Col 1:9-10; 2Pt 3:17-18**)

Eph 6:10-17 (see **5:3f**). We are at war with the evil one, who will use ever “scheme” at his disposal to destroy our character and usefulness to God. What is a continuing practice that can be critical in this battle? **Eph 6:18**

Jam 1:22-26 It is not uncommon for us not to “see ourselves,” and thus fail to know and work on our character flaws. What practice can help us with this problem?

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

What are *practical* ways you can implement these ideas? E.g. ...

1. What can you *do* to instill a genuine, historically based faith in your children?
2. While parents may be watchful about bad companions, what can you do to provide *good* companions for your children?
3. Sometimes children may not like to eat the food that is good for them, but concerned parents are attentive to see their children eat what will *nourish* their bodies. What attention and plans can you implement to be sure their *soul* is nourished?
4. Would it be good to pray, not only *for* your children, but *with* your children when *you* pray to inculcate your value for prayer and give some idea of how to pray?
5. How can you nurture the practice of *self* examination in your children?

Love / Love of fellow man

Contrast: no interest in well being of fellow man; ignore people and their needs; not jeopardize or sacrifice for others; demeaning speech and conduct toward fellow man based on race, gender, economic status, ability, strength

Mt 22:35-40 What is the second greatest commandment?

Exemplified - Samaritan, **Lk 10:25-37**. What did Jesus exhort the lawyer to do, **v37**? *Contrast* selfishness, racism.

A “love,” not of feeling, emotion, but of *attitude* and *conduct* toward others

What did Jesus say (**Mt 22:40**) that indicates this character trait is a *basis* all other good character traits impacting our fellow man?

In demonstration of this, see ...

Lev 19:11-18, 33-37 What are some of the *specific* ways this love would demonstrate itself?

Rom 13:8-10 How is this love “*fulfilled*”?

Lk 6:27-38 *Specifically*, what did Jesus’ say this love would cause men to do or not do?

Jn 3:16; Lk 19:10; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 24:47 What is the greatest example of this character trait? Compare this with the opening paragraph of this lesson.

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Duties are based on relationships. What can *do* with your children to emphasize *this* love is not based on family, common faith, friends, romance ... but on being a fellow human being, a “neighbor”?
2. Racism is a problem in our society. What can parents do and/or allow in *speech* and *practice* that would either reinforce or counteract racism in your children’s minds?
3. Have a family discussion about *specific* ways we demonstrate either the presence or absence of this love.
4. How can you stress to your children the *importance* of this character trait?
5. Critical to “Love your neighbor *as yourself*” a *healthy* (scriptural) love of self. There is an unhealthy love of self (**2Tim 3:2**). Discuss with your children the attitudes and actions of a *healthy* and, by contrast, an *unhealthy* love of self.

Forgiving

Contrast: everlasting bitterness, ill-will; hold grudge; “I’ll never forgive him/her, regardless of what they do”; harsh and spiteful words; exclude from any association, whether friends, family, church

Gen 37:4,5,8,18,23-28 What was Joseph’s brothers attitude toward him, and what are some of the things they did to him?

Gen 37:2 How old was he?

45:1-11 On this occasion, Joseph is now a ruler and his brothers are before him entreating for food, and then for mercy (**chs 43-44**). How did Joseph treat them?

Gen 41:46-47,53-54; 45:7 How old was Joseph now?

50:15-21 Now Joseph’s father is dead and his brothers are concerned about whether his attitude will change. How did he treat them?

Gen 47:9,28 How old is Joseph now?

Lk 23:34 Jesus is the ultimate example of a forgiving spirit. What did he pray while on the cross?

What does it mean to be a “Christian”?

Mt 18:21-35 How often did Jesus tell Peter he should forgive someone?

What are the consequences if one “cannot” (will not) forgive?

Jer 5:3...7-9; 7:16; Mt 23:37-39; Rev 3:16...19-20 Does God *always* expect us to forgive? Explain.

Pro 20:22; 24:29; Rom 12:17-21; Rev 6:9-11 When we have been wronged we want to be avenged, and rightfully so. What is the course that is righteous and also provides some peace to the soul?

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Select a case in point in which your child has been mistreated — what *is* their attitude and what *should* it be?
2. Select a case in which *you* have been mistreated — what was/is your attitude and reaction which your children witnessed or still see? Is it appropriate to discuss it with them?
3. Your child asks, “If forgiveness is a character trait we should have, why do you still discipline me when I say I am sorry?” Be prepared to give a good answer!
Note: contrary to our dictionaries’ definitions, “forgiveness” does *not* necessarily imply giving up all punishment. **2Sam 12:13-14**. Also, not all difficulties allowed or imposed are punishment, but rather discipline to train. **Dt 8:2-6; Heb 12:4-11**
4. Does *who* mistreated them impact your child’s attitude about forgiveness, e.g. family?...friend?...enemy?

Patience

Two kinds of patience—both are necessary to a balanced character (**Col 1:11** “steadfastness and patience” NASB; “patience and longsuffering” NKJV; “endurance and patience” ESV):

- with trying *people* (“patience,” “longsuffering”) — *Contrast* quick anger; desire for revenge

Rom 2:4 What is this kind of patience associated with?

1Co 13:4 What motivates one to be patient (“suffers long” NKJV) with others?

2Co 6:6 Paul was an example of this patience (“longsuffering” NKJV) in carrying out his ministry (vv3-4).

- What are some of the ways his patience was “tried” by these very people to whom he is writing? (It would be good to read all the following verse, but for your answer, select two or three that illustrates Paul’s patience.) E.g., **1Co 1:11-12; 3:18; 4:3,5,7; 5:1-2 (see 2Co 2:1-2ff); 6:15,16,19** “do you not know...?”); **8:1; 11:17-22; 14:20; 2Co 1:17; 9:3-4; 10:10; 11:7-13; 12:20-21**.
- Apply to other relationships ... parent/child ... husband/wife ... employer/employee ... teacher/students ...

Jam 5:10 Note some ways the prophets were treated that demanded patience on their part. E.g., **Ex 14:11; Jer 12:1-6; 15:10,15-21; 20:7-18**

Does “patience” mean one never comes to his own defense? **2Co 1:12...15-18...23**

The correct character trait of patience has an end point. **Rom 2:4...5-6; 2Pt 3:9-10**.

Note: Without this balance, it can produce a *bad* trait, tolerance of wickedness, **Rev 2:20**.

Having patience in one’s character does not rule out the need at times for swift and firm rebuke. **Gal 2:11-14; Tit 1:9-13**

- under trying *circumstances* (“steadfastness,” “endurance”) — *Contrast* despair, discouragement, give up

1Th 1:3 What is this kind of patience associated with? (KJV, NKJV, ASV, “patience”; NASB, ESV, “steadfastness”)

1Co 13:7 What motivates to this kind of patience (“endures” all things) when suffering due to mistreatment by others? See v4.

2Co 6:4 What are the three words following “patience” (“endurance” NASB) that serve to describe the circumstances in which it is needed?

Jam 5:11 Job is set forth as an example of this kind of patience (“patience” KJV, ASV; “steadfastness” NKJV; “endurance” NASB; “steadfastness” ESV). What are some of the circumstances he had to endure? (1) **Job 1:13-19** (2) **Job 2:7-8, 19:13-20** (3) **Job 2:9-10** (4) **Job 4:7-8, 6:14-15, 16:1-5, 19:1-3**

Compare the “difficulties” and “trials” that “try our patience” ... what does how we react reveal about our character?

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Select incidents in your children’s lives that illustrate the need of *both* kind of patience.
2. Your child asks, “If patience is a character trait we should have, why do you punish me?” How would you answer?
3. You may scold your child. Does this demonstrate a failure in your character—lacking patience? Discuss with your children.

Kindness / Gentleness

Contrast: bitterness, harshness, anger, malice

“Kindness” is a fruit of the Spirit, **Gal 5:22**.

What are the *contrasting* words of animosity in **v20**? (words #3, #4, #5, #6, phrase).

In **Eph 4:32**, Christians are urged to “be kind to one another”

What are the words following associated with this?

What are the attitudes and actions of **v31** in *contrast* to this?

Rom 2:4 What is associated with “kindness” (“goodness” NKJV) here?

Note: Does not exclude justifiable wrath, **Rom 2:3...5**.

In **Rom 3:12**, the word translated “good” is the same word translated “kindness” in the above passages.

3:13-17 What are the attitudes and conduct when there is a lack of kindness (“no one does good” **v12**).

Verse 18 points to an underlying attitude that allows such deceptive, abusive, and harmful treatment of our fellow man. What is it?

Lk 6:31-36 The kindness those who follow Christ strive to make part of their character is not a reciprocal trait - “you be kind to me and I will be kind to you.” What are the phrases in this part of Christ’ discourse that clearly point this out?

This character trait flows out of “love,” not of emotion, but of esteem and caring for fellow man, regulating our attitude and conduct toward him. It is associated with mercy **v36**.

“Gentleness” is closely related in meaning to “kindness” and is a character trait Christians are encouraged to manifest, **Php 4:5** “gentle” spirit NASB (“forbearing spirit” NAS77; “moderation” KJV; “gentleness” NKJV), and the following passages give us insight into its meaning.

Tit 3:2 How will this trait cause to treat our fellow man? (Compare NASB, NKJV, and NET version if you have it)

Jam 3:17 A teacher (**3:1**) should be “gentle.” Note the words before and after this word to get a better sense of how it will cause a teacher to react. (Compare the NASB, KJV, NKJV, ESV) Contrast **4:1**.

1Pt 2:18 What kind of master is put in contrast to a “gentle” master? (Compare NASB, NKJV)

Rom 11:22 God demonstrates *both* kindness *and* severity, and this points to the balance in proper character. Sometimes severity is needed: **Gal 2:12; Gal 3:1; Gal 4:11; Gal 5:12; 2Tim 4:2; Tit 1:13**.

Our problem: sometimes severe for the *wrong reasons*.

Some examples of kindness:

- Pharaoh to Joseph’s family, **Gen 47:5-6**
- Joseph to Mary, **Mt 1:19**
- Julius to Paul, **Ac 27:3**
- Onesiphorus to Paul, **2Tim 1:16-18**

Greatest example of kindness! **Eph 2:7; Tit 3:4**

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. “Mom, Dad, sometimes you guys are pretty tough! Is that being kind?” Discuss.
2. Select some incidents of kindness, or the lack thereof, between siblings in your family.
3. When do we find it hard to be kind and gentle? Apply to interfamily events, and those impacting the family from without.

Humility

Contrast: prideful; boast; exalt self while ignoring or demeaning others; self #1; not commending others for abilities, accomplishments; think of self as eminently “good”

“Humble” - “having or showing a consciousness of one's defects or shortcomings; not overly proud; not self-assertive; modest” *yourdictionary.com*

Biblical definition: “not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment” **Rom 12:3**. Neither OVERestimation, nor UNDERestimation of self.

Humility as a good character trait does not exalt oneself more than they should; but neither does it imply demeaning oneself, and failing to recognize one's abilities and how they should be used to serve. See **Rom 12:4-7**.

What did Jesus say is a *requisite* to being in the kingdom of heaven? **Mt 18:3-4**

Lack of humility can lead to ... (Suggestion: Make a brief note about the text itself. The first is given as an example.)

- self-deception about one's spirituality - **Jam 1:26-27**
One may “think himself to be religious” but “deceive his own heart” if he does not have the *humility* to objectively measure himself (**vv21-25**), “bridle his tongue” (see **1:13,19; 2:14,18; 3:1,13; 4:11; 5:9,12**), and be active in the duties of due religion (**1:27**).
 - mistreatment of those of a different social class - **Jam 2:1-10**
 - misuse of one's knowledge and abilities - **Jam 3:13-18; 4:1-10**
 - overconfidence about the future - **Jam 4:13-17**
 - inconsideration and oppression of others - **Jam 5:1-6**
 - rebellion against God's rule **Ex 5:2; 10:3**
 - ignore Divine authority in one's life - **1Sam 15:17-23; Mt 23:1-12**
 - strife in the family - **Gen 37:4-11; 1Pt 3:1-2,7**
 - strife in the church - **3Jn 9-10**
 - blindness to one's need of grace - **Lk 18:9-14**
- (you can add to this list...)

Examples:

- Daniel, **Dan1:20...2:27-28** (gave God the glory)...**2:48-49** (thought, not only of himself and his promotion, but of his friends)
- Josiah, **2Ch 34:27** (righteous king, but humbled himself at the prophet's words of judgment against the nation due to their history of idolatry)
- John the Baptist, **Jn 3:29-30** (forerunner to the Messiah; “there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist” **Mt 11:11**)

Encouragement to humility using the *ultimate example*, **Php 2:3-11**

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Does the need to instill humility in your children imply discouraging self-confidence? While encouraging self-confidence, how can you at the same time instill humility? Are these opposites, or can they compliment one another?
2. One child excels in academics (reading, writing, math); another does not. One child excels at sports; another does not. How does the character trait of humility impact *both* children?
3. Does your role as parent with authority to command your children undermine the trait of humility? How will understanding humility impact both parent and child?

Honesty / Truthfulness

Contrast: deceitful; loose with the facts; lie; steal; not only misrepresent others, but blind to self; take advantage of people, circumstances

Lev 19:9-18 discuss a number of practical applications of “love your neighbor as yourself” (v18). What are the practical applications exhibiting and dependent on *honesty* and *truthfulness* in

- vv11-12?
- vv15-18?

Since this love is “as yourself,” note the implications relative to how we view, think of, judge *ourselves*. Critical for healthy mindset that we be *honest, truthful* even with self.

Lev 19:35-36 What “wrong” (“injustice” NKJV) is mentioned along with measurements of weight and capacity?

Compare **Dt 25:13-16** - apply to having “differing weights/measures” for self verses others; friends verses strangers or enemies. Requisite: *honesty, truthfulness*.

Pro 11:1 and **12:22** mention *two* things that are “an abomination to the Lord.” What are they?

Lk 3:8...10...12-14 What were the tax collectors (“publicans” KJV) and soldiers told to do as “fruit,” of their repentance?

The attitude that would produce this action was a requisite to be apart of the kingdom John was preaching, the kingdom of the Messiah. No less is it a requirement today!

Mk 10:19 - “do not steal, do not bear false witness” - one kind of stealing is one’s possessions; another is stealing one’s reputation

Eph 4:25 - Christians are to speak truth about one another (compare **Zec 8:16-17**)

Mt 5:33-37 Jesus said, “let your statement be ‘Yes, yes,’ or ‘No, no.’” What does this mean?

Jam 5:12 An “oath” is “I a solemn promise, often invoking a divine witness ... a sworn declaration that one will tell the truth” *Oxford Dict.* James tells his readers they should “not swear...with any... oath.” Yet, God “swore,” made an “oath,” **Heb 6:13,17**. Paul called God as witness as to the truthfulness of his statements in **1Co 1:23, Gal 1:20**. What is James encouraging in his readers so they “do not fall under judgment”?

What attitudes will undermine honesty, truthfulness?

- **Jn 5:39-44**
- **2Th 2:10-12**

We may be the last to “see” ourselves if we are not honest and truthful with and about ourselves! **Lk 16:14-16; Jn 8:33-39; 9:40-41; Rom 2:17-24; Jam 1:26-27**. Note **Ps 32:3-5**.

Lack of honesty and truthfulness in our character can seal our doom! **Lk 8:15; Jn 3:19-20; 8:43-45; 18:37; 2Th 2:10-12; 1Tim 1:18-20**

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. When are your children most likely not to be honest and truthful? What is the role of the parent relative to awareness and training at these times?
2. For thought: What kind of example you children observe in you? ... about obeying the law ... mistakes at the grocery store ... taxes ... work related matters (“sick”?) ... etc.
3. Learning to be honest and truthful will impact your children in the rest of their lives ... relation to parents, family ... marriage ... work, jobs ... service in the kingdom of Christ. Use some examples to illustrate this to your children.

Moral Integrity

“integrity” “1. Steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code” *American Heritage Dict.* “Integrity is moral soundness, especially as it is revealed in dealings that test steadfastness of purpose, responsibility, or trust.” <List of 426 Sets of Synonyms - How they Differ>

Contrast: Do what is right if easy, convenient, causes no difficulty, acceptable by peers, culturally OK

Job was a man of “integrity.”

Job 1:1 - “that man was **blameless** (H8535)” i.e., “upright, fearing God and turning away from evil” See also **1:8** (“**upright**” NASB; “perfect” KJV, ASV - H8535); **2:3** (“blameless” NASB; “KJV, ASV, “perfect” H8535); **2:3** “**integrity**” (H8538). [Note: H8535, H8537, H8538 are related Hebrew words.]

Job 2:9 What did Job’s wife ask him?

This is the question we must answer in the face of adversity which tests our character (see definition at of “integrity” beginning of lesson).

Job 27:5-6 - here Job here maintains his moral integrity. While Job does not deny he has sinned (**13:26**), Elihu reproves him for his foolish charges against God (**33:12-13; 34:5-9, 35-37; 35:16**), and God indicts him for his prideful and ignorant “faultfinding” of God (**38:1-2; 40:1-2**) which Job finally acknowledges (**40:3**). “Moral integrity” does not mean being “sinless” (“perfect” in that sense).

Job 31:6 - chapter 31 is a chronicle of Job’s integrity. It provides an excellent discourse on the *practical specifics* of “moral integrity.” Note each paragraph as formatted in the NASB, NKJV, ESV.

Moral integrity will drive us to “do right” in whatever circumstance we find ourselves.

Note this phrase in **1Pt 2:14,20; 3:6,17; 4:19**. Clearly, in this context, to Christians living in an ungodly world, Peter is exhorting to a character that does what is “right.” In the context, he discusses several things that challenge that moral integrity ...

- Being “odd” in an ungodly world, **2:9-10**
- The fleshly temptations that surround us in an openly wicked society, **2:11-12**
- Those in government who may not hold the same just standards, **2:13-17**
- Oppressive, unjust treatment by superiors, **2:18-25**
- Difficulties that can arise in marriages, **3:1-7**
- Being treated wrongfully, insulted, and slandered by the world, **3:8-17**
- Being a small minority in a world of sin, **3:20-21**
- Temptations and smear tactics of associates, **4:1-5**
- Other things a true “Christian” will suffer, **4:12-19**

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Is being moral most of the time mean one has moral integrity?
2. Discuss with your children situations that they may well face that will challenge their moral integrity (school, work, pleasure, etc.).
3. Are there situations even in family settings that tempt one to fudge on moral integrity?

Courage / Bravery / Perseverance / Grit

Courage - Strength of spirit, confidence and resolution, that enables one to face danger, difficulties, pain, challenges - to overcome the fear and fulfill duty

Contrast: Fear; unwilling to stand; give up faith; sacrifice others to save self; get tired of the battle and quit; “discourage” = lose heart (“courage” > Latin, “heart”)

How was a *lack* of courage is exemplified in the following ...

- **1Ki 18:21?** See also **Pro 24:11-12; 2Tim 4:16; Jn 12:42; 18:17-22**
- **Jn 18:25-27?** See also **Jn 9:18-23** (contrast the blind man, **vv24-34**)
- **Gal 2:11-14?**

Examples

- Joshua **Joshua 1:5-9**
 - in the face of war with the people of the land, **1:5,14**
 - in the face of opposition from his own people, **1:18**What would give him such courage? **v5...9?** See also **Dt 31:6-8**.
Note what happened when he lost that faith, **Josh 7:5-9**.
Compare **Num 14:9; 1Ch 28:20; Heb 13:5-6; 2Tim 4:17-18**
- Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego **Dan 3:13-18**

Courage is a requisite for faithfulness to Christ. Who (what class of people) were particularly being encouraged to courageous, brave, in the following ... (For thought: What if they failed...?)

- **Mt 10:5...28...32-33**
- **Mt 10:34-39; Rom 10:9-10**
- **1Tim 5:19-20; 2Tim 4:1-5**
- **Ac 20:20,27...35; Tit 1:9-13**

Courage and bravery is tested in the face of danger, battle - **1Co 16:13**

“**Be on the alert!**” (“Watch” NKJV)–Watch for the hidden foe!

“**Stand firm** in the faith” (“Stand fast” NKJV) – As enemy advances in fearsome lines of attack - stand firm. Don’t give ground!

“**Act like men!**” (“Be brave” NKJV) – When the battle has begun, amid the tumult and the fighting, be courageous and perform like valiant warriors!

“**Be strong**” – In the ebb and flow of battle, when it may at times seem as though the outcome is doubtful, be strong” as well-equipped soldiers and do not give up!

Sometimes the battles are many and over the space of many years - one must have the perseverance and grit (“gravel in your gut”), fortitude; to keep true to duty - **2Co 6:4-10; 4:8-11** (note what lifted him up and strengthened him, **vv13-18**)

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Do your children understand what “the Lord will be with you” means? Ask them to explain it to you. Be prepared to explain it and how it relates to having courage to do what we ought to do.
2. If your children do not develop courage based a genuine and deep faith now, how will it impact them when facing trials at school, work, in a marriage, in a church? Do they see it in you? How will you work to instill it in them?
3. Do your children understand the difference in courage and stubbornness? How would you illustrate it to them?

Self-Control / Self-discipline / Impulse control (Nov. 11)

“self-control” - “the ability to control oneself, in particular one's emotions and desires or the expression of them in one's behavior, especially in difficult situations” *Oxford Dict.*

“self-discipline” - “the ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses; the ability to pursue what one thinks is right despite temptations to abandon it.” *Oxford Dict.*

“impulse” - “a sudden strong and unreflective urge or desire to act” *Oxford Dict.*

Paul preached self-control, even to those who not Christians, **Ac 24:24**. One needs to have self-control to be a Christian, **Gal 5:23**. People who are “without self-control” may profess a “form of godliness, but have “denied its power” (**2Tim 3:3...5**). Excuses for failure — “born that way”; “genes”...etc. — run counter to these Scriptures.

Lack of self-control leads to (illustrations below; you can. add to them) ...

- sexual impurity - **1Co 7:5**. See David below.
- laziness and all the evils associated with that - **Pro 6:6-11; 12:27; 20:4; 13:4**
- marital issues - anger, fighting, off the cuff accusations and hard words, failure to cultivate self for mate and develop relationship ...
- disruptive home atmosphere - chaos between the children, duties unfulfilled, arguments and battles ...

Examples:

- Joseph - though hated by his brothers and sold into slavery, he maintained his faith in God enabling him to control his passions and pride when allured by his master's wife, **Gen 39:1-23** (note the reason he gave, **v9**)
- David - when he had opportunity to kill Saul, who was chasing him to kill him, **1Sam 24:1-12**.
David's *failure* - Bathsheba, **2Sam 11:1-5**. See what it cost him, **2Sam 12:1-14**!
- Jesus - the ultimate example when facing the suffering, shame, and death of the cross - **Lk 12:50; Jn 12:23-24,27,31-33; Mt 26:42**, “cannot pass away unless I drink it” (**Jn 18:11**); **Jn 18:4-11** (**Mt 26:53-54**), arrest while 1000s of angels at his disposal; silent - **Mt 26:63** (before the Sanhedrin), **27:12** (before Pilate), **Lk 23:9** (before Herod), **Jn 19:9** (before Pilate again); **Lk 23:34,43**, mercy, even against enemies, and for the penitent, while suffering the excruciating pain, shame, and suffering of the cross.

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Does what your children hear and see in your home cultivate *self-discipline*, or *self-excuse* for failure in duty? Do they hear and see, “I can't” ... control my temper ... control my tongue ... control my desires ... help being overwhelmed by depression ... do it, i.e. whatever duty demands, e.g. job, care of the house, personal care, bible study, discipline of children, wise financial decisions, etc. ...?
2. Do you make excuses for your children ... justify poor conduct (disrespect of authority, rudeness, being disruptive in class, violent reactions, being irresponsible toward duties, etc.) thinking and maybe even expressing in their hearing, “they can't help it”...?
3. Don't be surprised if our children grow up without “growing up” responsibly, morally, spiritually, and socially if they have seen this lack of self discipline in the home, and have not had parents to discipline them with love and consistency!

Respectful / Courteous / Considerate

“*respect*” - proper regard for human rights, for position, age, graciousness, culture (if not unholy) of others

“*polite*” - showing respectful and considerate speech and behavior

“*courteous*” - polite, respectful in conduct and speech

Respect based on relationships

- **Age**

Job 32:6-7, respect for the wisdom of age—an attitude rooted in antiquity.

Lam 5:12, “elders were not respected” - one of the reasons for lament over Jerusalem.

Lev 19:32 - what was one way respect for age was demonstrated in Israel?

Isa 3:5, lack of respect for age a sign of moral depravity in a society.

1Tim 5:1-2, even preachers who justifiably reprove their elders are to show respect — How?

- **Parental**

Ex 20:12, “Honor your father and your mother”

See **Ex 21:15,17**; **Pro 23:22-25**; **30:17** - *specifically*, how was this respect shown (or *not* shown)

Heb 12:9-10, respect for fathers is treated as a basic, understood premise by the Hebrew readers, from which another point is made.

- **Authority**

Mal 1:6, respect for a “master” recognized by Hebrews and a premise upon which God’s reproof and exhortation is based. Compare **1Tim 6:1-2**; **Tit 2:9-10**; **1Pe 2:18**. Is this respect based on being treated well? If not, what is it based on?

1Pt 2:13-17, respect for civil authority

- **Family**

1Pt 3:2,7, Wives for husbands; husbands for wives

1Tim 5:3,4, grandparents

- **Neighbor**

Mt 7:12, “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

Tit 3:2, ESV; “show perfect courtesy to all people” ESV; “perfectly courteous to everyone” ISV; “all courtesy” LEB

Ac 28:7, “the leading man of the island, named Publius, welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days”; **Ac 28:10**, “honored us with many marks of respect”

- **Brothers and sisters in Christ**

1Co 13:5, “love...does not behave rudely.” See **1Co 14:20** in context. **Gal 6:10** (versus **5:20**).

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Should children be expected to show practical actions of respect for older people, e.g. not interrupting, saying “yes/no ma’am” or “yes/no sir,” responding when spoken to, etc.? How may this affect them in the life ahead of them, e.g. relationship to employers, interaction with members of a church who are older, being around and caring for parents or grandparents when they may get a bit ornery and difficult with age?
2. Do your children see mutual respect, courtesy, and considerateness between mom and dad?
3. How can your children learn to show respect, gratitude, courtesy, not only to family, but to anyone?

Contentment

An attitude of peace, ease, satisfaction in one's circumstances, that provides equilibrium whether rich or middle class or poor (**1Tim 6:6-8**). It is the opposite of ever desiring more and spending time and effort to acquire what one does not have (**1Tim 6:9-10**).

A proper sense of what is valuable will go a long way to helping us be content. Note the contrasts.
2Co 6:10

Rather than money and things (**1Tim 6:7-10**), what did Paul encourage Timothy to “pursue” (“follow after” KJV, ASV)? **1Tim 6:11**

What are “riches” that have no measure or comparison? **Eph 1:3...3:8...3:13-19**.

Contentment can be “learned” and can enable one to face every circumstance - **Php 4:11-13**

Lack of contentment leads to wanting acquire more, and more. **Ecc 5:10-12**. It can rob one of health and happiness (**Ecc 5:12,15-17**), family (**Ecc 6:1-9**), and spiritual priorities (**Lk 12:13-21**).

Counsel as to how live life “under the sun”: **Ecc 3:22; 5:18-20; 6:9; 9:7-12; 11:9-10**. Summarize in your own words.

The story of the Shullamite maiden focuses on contentment in love rather than riches and fame.
SS 7:10-13; 8:7

Unfortunately, some are content with spiritual immaturity, ignorance, and laziness. Beware! **Mt 25:26; 1Co 3:1-2; Heb 5:11-14; Rev 3:14-19; 1Pt 2:2; Php 3:12-15**

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Should children and young people expect to have what their siblings have? What their parents have? What their friends have? When should parents start teaching their children contentment, and how can they do it?
2. If children do not learn contentment, what are the potential pitfalls as they grow older, get married, and start a family? Consider the impact of a lack of contentment financially, on time, on health, etc.

Reliable / Trustworthy / Conscientious / Loyal

Similar to “Honesty, Truthfulness” (previous lesson), but here in reference to *duty*.

Contrast: undependable; sloppy in performance of duty; careless; untrustworthy in handling things put at their disposal

1Co 4:2 - What is required of “stewards”?

We are not apostolic stewards of the “mysteries of God,” but we are “stewards” in regard to those duties that have entrusted to us ... husband/wife ... parent/child ... employer/employee ... etc.

Neh 13:13 (see **vv10-14**) - Why did Nehemiah appoint the men he did?

We have been “appointed” by God to certain duties, e.g. husbands to wives (**Eph 5:25-28; 1Pt 1:7**), wives to husbands (**Eph 5:22-24,33; 1Pt 3:1-6**), parents to children (**Pro 1:8; Eph 6:4**), children to parents (**Eph 6:1-2; 1Tim 5:4,16**), employees to employers and employers to employees (**Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-25**), etc. *Are we “reliable” to fulfill those duties as God intended?*

Mt 24:45-51 - What is the difference in the “faithful and sensible slave” and the “evil slave”? Apply to work ethic, both as doing the work and managing those under you. Compare **Col 3:22; Eph 6:5-8**.

This is the ultimate benefit and demonstration of this chapter trait - being a “faithful” — trustworthy, reliable, loyal — servant of our Master!

Mt 25:21 - What does the “good and faithful slave” do? Contrast what the lazy slave did.

Lk 16:10 - What is the principle Jesus uses in teaching this lesson to his disciples?

Ac 6:3 - What kind of men were chosen to handle dispersion to the needy?

Observe the concern to avoid corruption and suspicion in these two cases - **Ezra 7:12-23...8:24-34; 2Co 8:20-21**

Reliability and loyalty will be reflected in dedication to the “team” effort of a local church when one understands and embraces this concept - **Php 1:27**

Suggested discussion points for parents (feel free to add to this list to share with the class)

1. Men were put on this earth to *work*. **Gen 2:8,15**. Is it not the responsibility of parents to *demonstrate* and *inculcate* the work ethic? How can they do that? When should they start?
2. Being reliable, trustworthy, conscientious, loyal will impact your children in the rest of their lives ... relation to parents, family ... work, jobs ... marriage ... service in the kingdom of Christ. Use some examples to illustrate this to your children.
3. What can you do as a parent to instill reliability, conscientious fulfillment of responsibilities, loyalty to duty?