

**Calvary Chapel O'Hare**  
**Men's**  
**Servant Leadership Study**

Week 3

**CHARACTER**

Memory Verse for the Week: Philippians 4:8-9

**Day 1**

CHARACTER - the collective qualities, features and traits that form and define an individual's nature.

This week, we will study Character as a building block of our leadership skills. Our inner character determines our thoughts and actions. Before we begin this week's study, write down your personal definition of Character.

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What are the Character traits needed to be an effective leader in the workplace, community and government.

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Are they different from those needed to be an effective leader in the home and church? \_\_\_\_ If so, please list these different Character traits.

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**Reading - Proverbs 2:1-11**

**Discussion** - Solomon provides us with an excellent jumping off point for developing the character qualities essential to good leadership. Leaders cultivate character by acquiring wisdom and understanding. Of course, those possessions don't come without a price. They require the kind of dedicated and patient labor exercised in mining for gold and silver. Leaders must diligently "search" for the wisdom that is buried within God's word like treasure covered by layers of earth and rock. That means using the right tools and exercising patience and diligence as we spend time immersed within this life-changing volume. The writer uses words that call his readers to energetic and passionate action. Take a moment to reread verses 1-4, and note the quality of effort Solomon is talking about here.

As we dig, we must ask God to provide us with insight and understanding. Ultimately, only God can open our eyes to see spiritual truth and then enable us to apply that truth to our lives (Ephesians 1:18). As God fills our minds with wisdom, our character will develop so that we'll possess the ability to consistently make right choices – choices that are

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just, fair and moral. As we seek to possess God’s wisdom, we’ll be able to move beyond simply expressing the vision and values of a leader. We’ll possess the kind of character from which lofty visions and values flow. Our character will be truly godly, so that others will delight in following us.

Chuck Swindoll wrote that God is “forever on a quest...The pattern he follows is set forth in Romans 8:29, where He promises to conform us to His Son’s image. Another promise is stated in Philippians 1:6, where we’re told He began His work in us, and He isn’t about to stop...He is hammering, filing, chiseling, and shaping us! Peter’s second letter goes so far as to list some of the things included in this quest (2 Peter 1:5-7). In a word...character.

1) Reread Proverbs 2:1-11. In your own words, what is the value of wisdom and understanding, and how are we to conduct ourselves in the pursuit of wisdom and understanding? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) 2 Peter 1:5-7 provides a list of character qualities we are to gain in our walk with the Lord. Please list them and briefly write down why each quality is important to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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3) What contrasts are evident in your own life between the times when you seek to impress people and the times when you seek to please the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

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As you reflect on the eight qualities in these verses, ask the Lord to make them increasingly real in your life.

## Day 2

### Character and Who God Is

Who are the people you admire? The chances are that the common quality in the people you esteem is inward character. If we admire quality people, how much more should we value the perfection of the living God from whom all truth, goodness and beauty are derived? Look at Exodus 34:6-7 to catch a glimpse of the exquisite character of the God of Israel.

#### Reading - Exodus 34:6-7

**Discussion** - When Moses asked God to reveal His glory to him, the Lord said He would pass by in front of him and proclaim His name to Moses (33:18-19). God had to shield Moses from the fullness of His glory by covering him in

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the cleft of a rock, and as He passed in front of Moses, God accompanied this awesome display by proclaiming the perfection of His own character.

When God revealed Himself as the compassionate and gracious God who is slow to anger, who abounds in love and faithfulness, who maintains love to thousands and who forgives wickedness, rebellion and sin, He made it clear that His personal character is the absolute standard by which all of these qualities are defined. God is accountable to no one, and there is no higher standard to which He must conform. His own eternal and uncompromising character is the unchanging standard that gives ultimate meaning to love, graciousness, faithfulness and forbearance.

- 1) Reread Exodus 34:6-7 and take a few minutes to reflect on and list each of God's personal attributes that are revealed in these verses. \_\_\_\_\_

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Ask God for the power to make these qualities more real in your own life.

- 2) How important is character and leadership? If a person has impressive skills but a defective character, should we promote or follow that person? Read Judges 9:1-15. In your own words, describe what takes place in these verses and how God views the character/competency question. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Day 3

### Character and Who I Am

How does a leader cultivate character? One thing is certain – it isn't quite overnight. Building character takes time and requires a teachable mindset. It involves the acquisition of wisdom. Look at Deuteronomy 5:32-33 for a glimpse of the discipline it takes to acquire godly character, and the rewards of such discipline.

#### Reading - Deuteronomy 5:32-33

**Discussion** - Many people desire a quick fix for their character problems. They want some sort of magic wand they can wave over their problems, and – Presto! – they'll be gone. While a person may be able to acquire quick, easy techniques that provide short-term solutions, those don't help build character that lasts. Ultimately, lasting character is forged on the anvil of experience, self-discipline and dedication. If a person lacks integrity and character, the challenges of life will melt down and undermine any short-term successes.

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How can a leader gain wisdom that leads to character development? It won't be acquired by an unguided groping in darkness. A leader's search for wisdom must be directed. Its starting point is God's revelation in the Scripture, and it involves specific injunctions and practical commandments.

Character isn't shaped by the intellectual comprehension of truth. It's forged by biblical truth that penetrates to the depth of the human heart. That only occurs as a man or woman grapples with God's Word and contemplates its meaning and application. Ultimately, the goal of such a diligent study of God's revelation is to develop a healthy fear of the Lord (Proverbs 2:5). A wise leader has a reverential awe of God, holding Him in high regard. And that high view of God shapes character, which in turn controls thoughts and actions.

1) Why does it take time to develop character? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) How will godly character be revealed in a leader's life? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) How will ungodly character be expressed? \_\_\_\_\_

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As you consider where you are in the process of character development, honestly assess your progress on a scale of one (beginner) to ten (flawless). Since you're probably neither a one nor a ten, thank God for building character in your life and then ask him to help you to continue to grow in this area.

People are not impressed by facades or manipulation, but by authenticity and by those who are genuinely other-centered. Character is not a matter of outward technique but of inner reality. What are you really like when no one is looking? \_\_\_\_\_

Reconsider 2 Peter 1:5-8, and reflect on the qualities of life and godliness that God wants for each of his children. But 2 Peter 1:3-4 provides an important key: In Christ, we have been permitted access to God's divine power and have been granted the incomprehensible privilege of participating "in the divine nature." We have not only received a new nature in Christ (Romans 6:6-13), but we are also indwelt by the Holy Spirit, whose power within us makes it possible for us to manifest these qualities of Christ like character.

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## Day 4

### Character and How I Think

Today we return to Peter's inspirational words in the first chapter of 2 Peter. When you read such material, do you ever ask yourself, "Who writes this? Where do people with such ideals and insights come from?" Read the character study on Peter below and note that the man who wrote these inspiring words, the man who exhibited such character strength, wasn't always such a man.

#### Reading - 2 Peter 1:1-21

#### Discussion – Peter (a character study)

The Gospels leave us with two impressions of Peter. The first is that he was at times an impulsive character. Twice he jumped out of perfectly seaworthy boats. He challenged Jesus; he spoke out of turn; he sometimes demonstrated more energy and creativity than was appropriate. But that energy and creativity underlie the second impression of Peter.

Peter was the disciples' unofficial leader and was often their spokesman. He was one of the three disciples in Jesus' "inner circle." After Jesus' departure, the disciples looked to Peter for direction. Luke's record of the church's early years (the book of Acts) leaves no doubt about Peter's leadership.

This seemingly conflicting combination of qualities exists in many young leaders. We can call it "high mental energy." Peter was always thinking with a view toward action. When he heard "question," he immediately thought "answer." When he observed "problem," he thought "solution." When he encountered "options," he thought "decision." But he also showed the downside of that same characteristic. When he heard "silence," he thought "talk." When he encountered "disagreement," he thought "challenge." "Error" (or Peter's perception of error) sparked "correction." But whatever the situation, he did think, and his thinking inevitably led to action.

In his younger years Peter exercised little constraint, and sometimes his actions seem buffoonish. At times his behavior was perceived as immature, but like many great leaders, Peter survived himself. With Jesus' guidance, Peter's active mind matured and he developed a more godly character. This maturity shaped his thinking process. Peter became a leader because he was not afraid to make a decision. And his godly character informed the decisions he made.

Anyone serving under a leader who suffers "paralysis by analysis" will appreciate Peter's quick response time. Anyone working in an organization in which "decision by indecision" is the rule understands why people were drawn to Peter. As we follow Peter's life through the Gospels and then hear his mature voice resonate in his two epistles, we appreciate this optimistic, energetic, highly intelligent man of action and deep character. In fact, the Gospel of Mark, which many believe Peter dictated to Mark, is the Gospel that portrays Jesus as a man of action and urgency. The Greek word translated "immediately" is used 42 times in Mark's 16 chapters.

When the church was on the move and both Roman and Jewish leaders were opposing it, someone had to make quick, spirit-led decisions. And we can only imagine the kinds of issues that could have splintered this frail organization when the church leaped over its cultural boundaries to include Samaritans and Gentiles. Because Peter was a leader whose ego could endure the threat of disagreement and challenge he was not afraid to act. He was not careless, but he was not afraid to move, and under his leadership the church got things done. Peter was a leader who made decisions that mattered.

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1) When it comes to making decisions as a leader, you must have developed the character traits necessary to effectively make sometimes quick decisions. It has been said that any times, the worst decision of all is to not make a decision. Discuss the difference between “Waiting on the Lord”, and “Walking in God’s Will” when circumstances demand an immediate decision. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2) What part does Faith have in the above answer? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Day 5 Character and What I Do

Our final study in character and leadership focuses on another passage that encourages us to develop strong spiritual characteristics. This message from the apostle Paul also carries with it a subtle message about the importance of mentoring and demonstrating a life of character to others. Read about it in Philippians 4:8-9.

### Reading - Philippians 4:8-9

**Discussion** - Paul encouraged his readers to develop those characteristics that, when added together, attest to character. No one can lead long or build any kind of quality organization without personal character.

Robert Rosen and Paul Brown, in *Leading People*, also recognize the importance of character: “With a net worth estimated at \$250 million, Malcolm Forbes was frequently asked how he decided where to invest his own fortune. His answer never varied. ‘I bet on the jockey, never the horse...I don’t need to know what industry the company is in, or what its financials are. All I need to know is what kind of person the CEO is’” (p. 283).”

Rosen and Brown tell us that “the character of an organization is established by the character of the people who work there. And that character is determined by the integrity of the leader.” They make the important observation that, while ethics are subjected to various fads and whims, “the concept of integrity never changes.” The leaders most people want to follow are “driven by fundamental, undeniable principles” that are “deeply ingrained in the leader’s makeup.” These authors observe that such leaders “know that consistency is better than hypocrisy, and acting ethically is better than deceiving. To them [the people], how we produce things is just as important as what we produce. The means are fundamental to the ends.”\*

Sounds as though Paul and these contemporary writers are on the same page. Whatever else we focus on in developing our leadership capabilities, we must focus on character.

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1) How would your followers respond if you were to write what Paul did in verse 9? \_\_\_\_\_  
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As a leader, pray that God will help you to develop the strength of character these two short verses depict.

2) Look back at what you wrote down as your definition of Character on Day 1. Has your definition of Character changed as a result of the things you have learned this week? If so, list the changes. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3) It's amazing what God can do with a person who wants to grow personally and develop character. The great news is that God wants you to grow as much as you can. He redeemed you for that purpose. What Character traits discussed this week are in need of improvement in your life and what specific steps will you take to make them a part of your life.  
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4) **Self evaluation.** Taken from A. W. Tozer. Mediate on the following questions. They will lead you to what you internally believe is important in your life. God knows our character. He desires to show us our character as He sees us. As you answer these questions, prayerfully ask God to show you any area of your life that needs adjustment and/or character development.

- a. What do you want most out of life?
- b. What do you think most about in this life?
- c. How do you use your money?
- d. What do you do with your leisure time?
- e. Whose company do you enjoy most?
- f. Who and what do you most admire?
- g. Who and what do we laugh at the most?

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