

Cultivating Character

Not all the wrong things our children do are in direct rebellion to authority. Much of the wrong they do (and the good that they fail to do) is because of a lack of godly character.

Character:

- The qualities distinctive to an individual. *“Running away was not in keeping with his character.”* Synonyms: personality, disposition, temperament
- Moral and ethical strength. *“She had character as well as beauty.”* Synonyms: integrity, honor, moral strength, uprightness
- In the Bible:
 - “All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character” (Ruth 3:11).
 - “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies” (Proverbs 31:10).

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Think of people you most admire, look up to. What is it about their character that is attractive?

<p><i>Now the works of the flesh are evident...</i></p> <p>sexual immorality idolatry and witchcraft hatred discord (strife) fits of rage rivalries (selfish ambition) dissensions divisions (factions) envy drunkenness</p> <p><i>(Galatians 5:19-21)</i></p>	<p><i>But the fruit of the Spirit is...</i></p> <p>love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self-control</p> <p><i>(Galatians 5:22-23)</i></p>
<p>Although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened (Romans 1:21)</p>	<p>The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love (Galatians 5:6)</p>

In what ways were “flesh” or “Spirit” character revealed in my heart and in my home this week?

He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

-Luke 6:39-49

Small group discussion

What images does Jesus use in each section? How would you summarize the truth illustrated by each of these images?

What do we learn (especially in the first two sections) about the relational aspects of training and growth?

What do we learn (especially in the last two sections) about the nature of character/fruit in our lives?

How are the truths depicted by these images at play in my parenting and family life?



Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:1-2).

“Before you talk to your children, you and I need to talk to ourselves and to our Lord. We need to confess that it’s not just our children who lack character; we do as well...When you confess that when it comes to character struggles, you are more like your children than unlike them, then you deal with situations when character problems are revealed with patience, kindness, and grace. This confession frees you to see these moments not as anger-producing irritants, but as what they are: moments of grace.” (Tripp *Parenting* 139)

*Wrapping it up: What do I need to **believe** in order to cultivate soil that will lead to godly character in my life?
What do I need to **do** to cultivate soil that will lead to godly character in my child's life?*

