

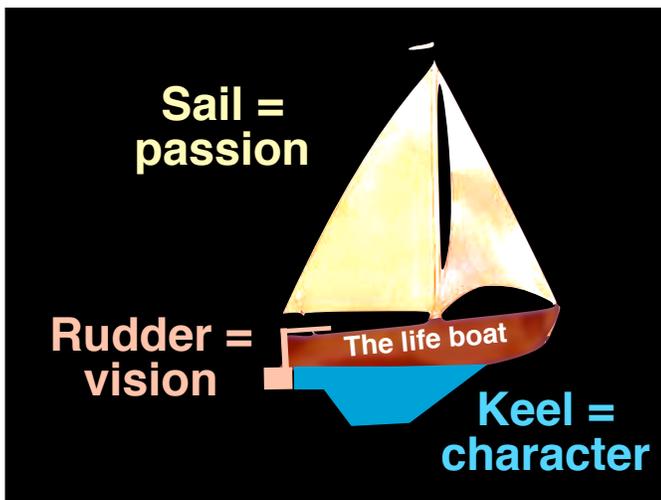


Helen Keller

“The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.”

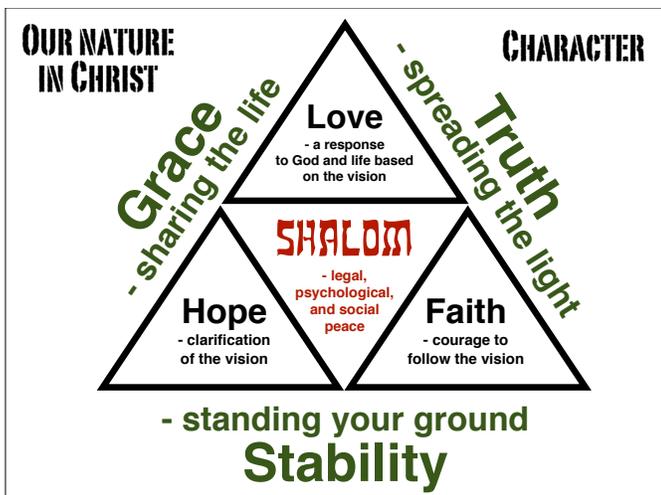
Proverbs 29:18

“Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law.”



Where are we going?

1. Character and Christianity
2. Character and the image of God
3. Character and the Body of Christ
4. Challenges that shape and show character.
 1. **Vision** - direction & expectations
 2. Fear - faith
 3. Relationships - community
 4. Conflict - differences
 5. Change - growth
 6. Success & Failure - stress
 7. Private life - the heart



1. **Seeing** - is the key to believing and behaving.
2. **False hope** - is the root of cynicism and despair.
3. Five things we **must see**.
 - **What we should be** - ideal calling.
 - **What we can be** - realistic goals.
 - **What we are** - hard, cold reality.
 - **What we might be** - fears.



1.



***Seeing
is the key to
believing & behaving***

Ephesians 4:14

“As a result, we are no longer to be **children**, tossed here and there by **waves**, and **carried** about by every **wind** of doctrine, by the **trickery** of men, by **craftiness** in **deceitful** scheming;”

Proverbs 29:18

“Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law.”

Matthew 6

“²² The lamp of the body is the eye; **if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.** ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

Romans 12:1-2

“¹ I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

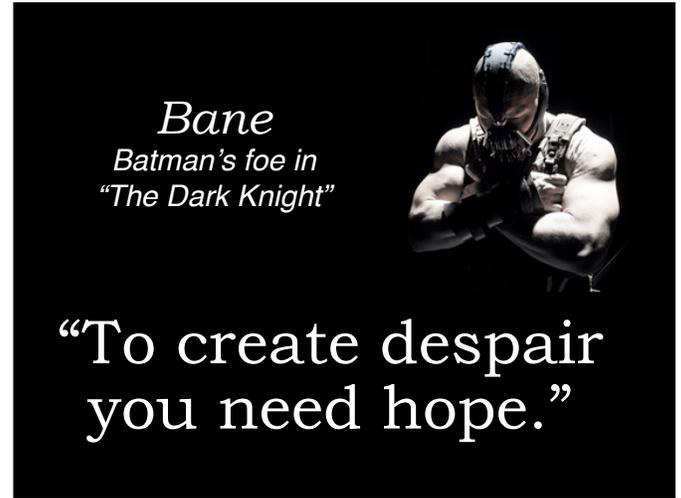
**Christian character
starts in the mind.**

**It is a vision of Christ
(the image of God)
installed in us and
manifested through us.**

2.



***False hope
is the root of
cynicism and despair***



*Bane
Batman's foe in
"The Dark Knight"*

**"To create despair
you need hope."**

**Satan
inspires
hope**



**in anything and
everything but Christ.**

*Some popular "false hopes"
where we expect the deep longings
of our soul to be satisfied*

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| My heritage | My government |
| My family | My church |
| My leaders | My talents |
| My friends | My work |
| My net worth | My physical health |

*should rather be issues where
our hope in Christ is revealed.*

Two false hopes

"I don't really
need God"

"God will get me
what I don't
really need"

**Eve's temptation
Gen.3**

**Jesus' temptation
Matt.4**

**confusion about
the King**

**confusion about
the kingdom**

Paul's theology

Philippians 3:7

"But whatever things were gain to me,
those things I have counted as loss for the
sake of Christ."

is reflected in his testimony

Philippians 4:11

"Not that I speak from want, for I have
learned to be content in whatever
circumstances I am."

The problem is not our lack of faith.

It is that our faith is **in** something other than God and / or **for** something other than His kingdom.

Don't just trust God to answer your prayers

but pray that He will make you an answer to someone else's prayers.

3.



A vision of hope sees what we should be.

Ephesians 1

“18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is **the hope of His calling,**”

Knowing the Hope of Christ's calling is a sight issue, a heart issue, & a prayer issue.

What is the Hope of His calling?

Ephesians 1

“18 . . . what are the riches of the glory of His **inheritance** in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe.”

“inheritance” “power”

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| heaven | earth |
| security | significance |
| we are “in Christ” | Christ is “in us” |

“Anthony De Mello, a Jesuit priest from India tells us the story of a monk who in his travels once found a precious stone and kept it. One day he met a traveler, and when the monk opened his bag to share his provisions with him, the traveler saw the jewel and asked the monk to give it to him. The monk did so readily. The traveler departed overjoyed with the unexpected gift of the precious stone that was enough to give him wealth and security for the rest of his life. However, a few days later he came back in search of the monk, found him, gave him back the stone, and entreated him, ‘Now give me something much more precious than this stone, valuable as it is. Give me that which enabled you to give it to me.’”

4.



A vision of hope sees what we can be.

What should we realistically expect?

Matthew 19:8

“He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.””

1 Corinthians 11:19

“For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.”

5.



A vision of hope sees what we are.

The parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

✓ We don't all start at the same place.



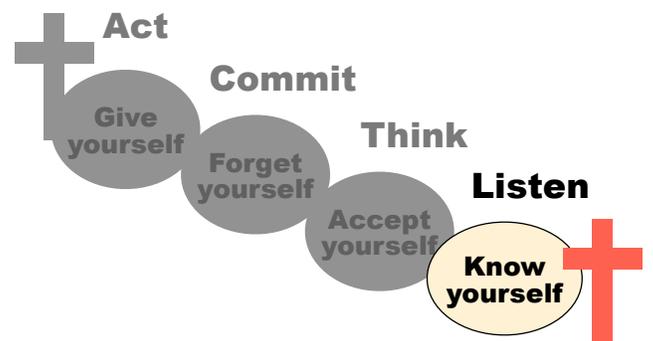
✓ To whom much is given, much is expected. *Matthew 13:12*

Don't outrun your gift, your calling, or your faith.

Romans 12:3

“For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you **not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think;** but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”

Character is not centered on us but it can't exist apart from us.



Our character is shaped by:

How we listen to ourselves

How we talk to ourselves

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Where does my anger come from? | I have the power of Christ in me. |
| What am I afraid of? | Trials in life are opportunities. |
| What do I really want and why? | Jesus will use me if I let him. |



6.

A vision of hope sees what we might be.

Mature disciples know how to manage fear & help others with it.



This is our topic next week



Vance Havner
(revival preacher)
1901-1986

“The vision must be followed by the venture.

It is not enough to stare up the steps - we must step up the stairs.”

Take home

- ✓ Take your baptism seriously as a statement of your new hope in Christ (inheritance & power).
- ✓ Identify and repent of misplaced hope or prepare for cynicism and despair.
- ✓ Get comfortable with what should be, can be, and is.