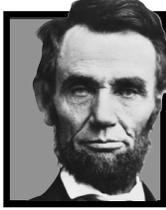


Abraham Lincoln



“He has a right to criticize, who has a heart to help.”

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

challenge #3

Managing Relationships

Godly character builds community through connecting with others.



Character is revealed in relationships with respect to:

how we see others.

how we talk to others.

how we care for others.



Character is revealed in relationships with respect to:

how we see others.

how we talk to others.

how we care for others.



How we care for others?

A person of Godly character cares as Jesus did

1. integrating faith & hope with talk and walk.
2. following the Golden Rule (empathetic compassion)



How we care for others?



A person of Godly character cares as Jesus did

1.
integrating
faith & hope
with talk & walk.

That which is of use in saving us in this life.

That which justifies before man.

That which saves us in the life to come.

That which justifies before God.

James



Paul



Faith

Matthew 12:34

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (and the life shows).

It's hard to hide our true faith (vision, hope).

James 2

Faith without action is dead with respect to our ministry.

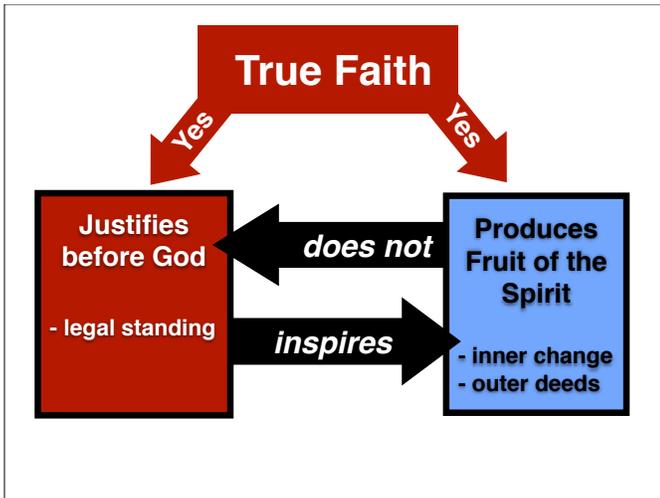
“¹⁴ ***What use is it***, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, ***what use is that?*** ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”

Faith without action is dead with respect to our witness.

“¹⁸ But someone may well say, “You have faith, and I have works; ***show me your faith*** without the works, and I will ***show you my faith*** by my works.” ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is ***useless?***”

Faith without action is dead with respect to our identity.

“²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that ***faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;*** ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”



Like James, Paul sees (good works) as an extension of authentic faith.

Ephesians 2:8-10

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**”

Galatians 5:6

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but **faith working through love.**”

Peter also links faith with love through spiritual maturation.

2 Peter 1

“⁴ . . . you may become partakers of the divine nature, . . . ⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your **faith** supply **moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, **knowledge**, ⁶ and in your knowledge, **self-control**, and in your self-control, **perseverance**, and in your perseverance, **godliness**, ⁷ and in your godliness, **brotherly kindness**, and in your brotherly kindness, **love**. . . . ⁸ If he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.”

“So don’t lose a minute in building on what you’ve been given, complementing your

basic faith with
 good character,
 spiritual understanding,
 alert discipline,
 passionate patience,
 reverent wonder,
 warm friendliness,
 and **generous love**,
 each dimension fitting into and enveloping the others.”

2 Peter 1:5-8 (The Message)

1. Note the attention to inner life.

basic faith with
 good character,
 spiritual understanding,
 alert discipline,
 passionate patience,
 reverent wonder,
 warm friendliness,
 and **generous love**,

2. Note the suggestion of process.

3. Note what is NOT mentioned:

How would you respond to this person?

- ✓ They are **eager to listen** to you and empathize with you.
- ✓ They are **generous** with their time, things, and praise.
- ✓ They **tell you the truth** in ways that are sensitive and constructive.
- ✓ They **open their heart** to you as though you were their trusted friend.

If you are attracted to this kind of person just imagine how many friends you will have if you become like this.

You might be a generous giver if:

- ✓ You take time off work to be with a friend at a time of great pain or joy in their lives.
- ✓ You are open about your finances with those to whom you are accountable.
- ✓ You take the initiative in seeking out needs, so that you can give your, time, money, and prayer.
- ✓ You willingly share financial resources with a person in need without a tax deduction.
- ✓ You take the initiative to throw a party in honor of another.
- ✓ You count it a great honor to sacrifice for the well-being of others.

- ✓ You welcome the help of others who seek to minister to you.
- ✓ You put the needs of others above your own personal comfort.
- ✓ You find great satisfaction and joy in the giving of yourself to the benefit of the larger community.
- ✓ You see the needs of others as opportunities and invitations to minister to them.
- ✓ You treat your spiritual family like your biological family when it comes to offering assistance in areas of need.
- ✓ You make giving a priority in the management of your time, treasure, and talents.
- ✓ You manage your stuff as though it belonged to someone else.

Take home

- ✓ **Strive for an integrated life.**
- ✓ **Work to be the kind of person you would like to meet.**
- ✓ **Think - gratitude, generosity, graciousness.**

A person of Godly character manages relationships

- ✓ **with a vision of people that is reverent**
- ✓ **a tongue that is gracious and truthful**
- ✓ **and a walk that is generous and sensitive.**