

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION IN THE CHURCH LIFE

Message Four

Building Up the Children's Character to be Vessels unto Honor

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:8-9; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8, 10-12

I. Whereas our words represent our person, our character is our very person; a person's usefulness, the things which can be entrusted to him, the responsibilities he can bear, and the things he is able to accomplish altogether depend on his character—cf. Phil.4:8:

- A. Character has very much to do with the Lord's service; consider those persons in the Bible whom God used; they were used by God because they possessed a character that was fit for His use—Dan. 1:3-4; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 4:11:
 - 1. Since Abraham, Moses, and Paul all had an excellent character, God greatly used them; the destiny of our usefulness to the Lord hinges on our character—Acts 15:40; Matt. 1:2; cf. Heb. 11:17-19, 24-27; 2 Tim. 4:7-8.
 - 2. Moses' character was nearly perfect, as we see in the Old Testament—cf. Heb. 11:23-27:
 - a. First, he received the knowledge of God from his parents when he was young; this is a factor that contributed to the development of his character—cf. Acts 7:20-21.
 - b. Second, God prepared an environment, bringing him to the Egyptian palace to learn the culture of that age; this also was a factor in the cultivation of his character—cf. vv. 22-23.
 - c. Third, God sent him to the wilderness for forty years for character training—cf. vv. 23-29.
 - d. Once a prince in the Egyptian palace, he now shepherded a flock, learning patience and humility and spontaneously acquiring a lowly character—Num. 12:3.
 - 3. Paul in the New Testament was a man who is tender, helpful, accommodating, and frank; he was full of Christ, and the fire of Christ was burning within him and upon him.

II. Our character is constituted of our inborn nature plus our acquired habits' whereas disposition is inborn, character is cultivated; a person's character is thirty percent nature and seventy percent habit:

- A. For this reason, a young person must pay full attention to character building because acquired habits are more important than inborn nature.
- B. Never neglect your daily living, for it builds up your habits which is able to mold your character; beginning today you need to have a change in your concepts concerning everything great and small:
 - 1. In our sleeping, in our rising up, in our dressing, and in every detail of our life we should be very strict to be built up in a good character and learn to take care of even the small matters in a proper way—Mark 1:35.
 - 2. We must be strict in our speaking; we have to learn what to say when we talk to others; we should not be free and loose to express ourselves—Titus 2:8; Eph. 4:29; 5:4; Col. 3:8; cf. John 7:18.
 - 3. Every matter related to our life should be in order:
 - a. You need to have a set time to rise up, a set time to pray, a set time to read the Word, and a set time to study; everything must have a set

time.

- b. We need to be polite and should rush to do the unpleasant jobs and let others do the easy ones; this is not life but is the sign of a good character.
- C. The cultivation of a person's character is almost complete by the time he reaches the age of fifteen and if a person's character is not changed before he is fifty years old, then it will be impossible to change his character.

III. Character is the way you behave as a person, plus the person behind such behavior; a person's character is his disposition which has become his way of living—1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8:

- A. When our inborn nature combined with our acquired habits become the way we live, the result is our character; neither your spirit, nor your soul, nor your body can replace you; nearly your whole being exists in your character—cf. 2:9-12.
- B. A person who is loose in his character cannot be three-dimensional and is like a flat, two-dimensional surface which cannot be a vessel and cannot contain anything—cf. Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7; Acts 9:15; 2 Tim. 2:20.
- C. Character is a serious matter; the measure of grace we receive of the Lord and the degree to which the function of that grace is manifested are determined by the kind of character that we have—Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10.

IV. Today, many young people have been damaged with respect to their character; it is because of this that we have a children's work for the children; we need to build up their character—Acts 6:3; Prov. 28:20a:

- A. The children must be built up as proper human beings; this is a matter of character, that is, behavior and habit—Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15.
- B. From their youth they must learn to honor their parents, love their brothers and sisters, and respect others—Matt. 19:19.
- C. We do not need to give the young ones too much knowledge of the Bible; we should rather build them up with the proper ethics and morality that will constitute a proper character—Prov. 22:6.
- D. The most important matter is to build up the humanity and character of the children; this is neglected by many parents today:
 - 1. The teachings of Confucius and Chinese ethics build up character according to the self with self-pride and self-confidence.
 - 2. The kind of character building we practice is absolutely different; we should build up the children in the way of realizing that they can do nothing in themselves because they are fallen and need a higher life—John 15:5; Phil. 4:13.

V. We must realize that life and character are not independent of each other; our life and our character should be blended as one; although character does not equal life, life can become a great part of our character; the life within us can be mingled with our outward character.