

Dear Friend,

Character is built and not born.



As I watched the news the other evening I was struck by the lack of ‘character’ that was demonstrated by those who gave us the news and those to whom the news was about. It seems that in our culture we are fast losing sight of the significance of possessing character. It is time we bring character back to being ‘in vogue’. There is a difference between being called a ‘character’ and building ‘character’. Between being a character and having character.



Each of us has been given a lifetime in which to build a character that we will live with throughout all of eternity. It is the greatest thing we have to do while we are here, greater than any other task that the world may deem as important. It is our journey through life that offers us the tools and opportunities to perfect character within ourselves.

A friend came up to Michael Angelo while he was working and said, “I was here months ago and you have done nothing to this statue since.” “O yes,” Michael replied to his friend, “I have removed the blemish from that limb, softened that expression, given a gentler look to the eye, and carried it forward some steps toward completion.” “But these are all trifles,” said his friend. “Yes,” replied Michael, “but trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle.” And so the artist toiled on with patient devotion to the seemingly petty details of his work, which unskilled eyes would rarely notice. Nothing is unimportant in a world where every whisper goes sounding through the universe adding either harmony or discord to the plans of God.

Character is often refined in the fires of Adversity.

Many a person has found that in life’s journey trouble will find its way upon them. It is not if it will find its way but when it finds it’s way that I want to talk about today. For it is in the mines of our personal discomfort that we will unearth some of the greatest gemstones of God’s provision for ourselves. To make that journey without acquiring the wealth that is there is an opportunity missed.

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”

Helen Keller

Often times our misfortunes are the result of others whose selfishness has intentionally or non-intentionally caused us to live for a time in a place of frustration and deep unrest. We all have suffered wrong at the hands of others and our waking and sleeping are then filled with unrest over what could have been. But there is another way of looking at the events that have befallen us. That all things are under the rule of God; so even if they came from the actions of others they must first pass through the atmosphere of God’s Divine Presence, and having passed through them they become transformed into His own Divine Opportunity for us to unearth divine treasure in the midst of pain.

With this we must not be surprised when these trials come upon us bringing distress to our outer life and disturbing our inner peace. If all our days would be filled with sunshine, if we would be prosperous within and without then how could we ever learn to *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”* Proverbs 3:5

But not all misfortunes are the results of outside forces. Sometimes we make personal errors in judgment. Which got me to thinking of a quote by the columnist Ann Landers, “Don’t accept your dog’s admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful.” However when trouble does come our way we must not be like Job’s three friends and believe that good only comes to the good, and evil only to the bad; that prosperity is always a sign of Divine favor, and adversity a sign of Divine anger. If you have sown seeds of holiness and righteousness and have found in times of reaping disappointment, loss, suffering and even

hatred you know that bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people.

The life of Joseph is the story of character refined in the fires of adversity. Beloved, hated and exalted are chiseled into the signpost that mark his life's journey. As a boy he lived a life of ease, surely he was spoiled by his father. He was too proud of the coat his father had given him and perhaps too filled with the dreams that foreshadowed his greatness. None of these were great faults; but he lacked strength and the character to rule. But what a difference the trials of life made upon him. During each test the Master's chisel chipped away at his imperfections till immersed a man of uncommon wisdom, modesty and courage.

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

Abraham Lincoln

Have you or someone you have known ever felt forsaken by friends, family, and colleagues for doing something right? Have you ever been bothered by the memories of what could have been? Are you buffeted by opposition and misunderstanding? Then you must take heart for the time is not wasted. Though Joseph was in prison it says that the Lord was with him. As the Lord was with Joseph in the palace of Potiphar he also went to prison with him as well. The only thing that separates us from God is sin. So long as we walk with God, God will walk with us. If you are absorbed in God then all places and experiences that you find yourself in will be much the same because God is constantly with you.

Three things to keep in mind!

1. Do not be surprised! If it happened to the perfect lamb of God then we his followers should not be surprised when misunderstanding and persecution befall us as well. Remember the one's who said, "*I find in Him no fault at all.*" Are the same ones who called Him "*Beelzebub!*" Do not think it strange when people say all kinds of things about you as if something strange is happening to you. Just be sure that you are suffering wrongfully, and as a Christian rather than because of something you did either intentionally or unintentionally.

2. Do not get weary in well-doing! Joseph could have easily said, "I give up! What does it profit me for being good if I am being treated so unfairly?" Do right, because it is the right thing to do. Why? Because God sees you and you realize that there are opportunities to be acquired that can be found in no other place. With this in mind when you are misunderstood and persecuted it will not deter you from taking full advantage of the moment. Learn to listen for the voice of God for He often speaks in that still, small voice that is sometimes too loud for our personal comfort.

3. Do not avenge yourself! When Joseph was in trouble he did not talk badly about those who were responsible for the condition he was in. Neither did he blame himself for saying things and putting himself in circumstances that enabled his demise. We make a grave mistake at times when we try and clear ourselves. We would do much better to continue onward, being humble and letting God vindicate us. Psalm 105:19, "*Till the word of the Lord proved him true.*"

It would seem that common sense is not that common anymore. That integrity and character are viewed as signs of weakness. That dishonesty and infidelity can be excused by the wave of the hand or a wink of the eye. That restoration of position is more important than restoration of having a personal relationship with God. But we know as Christians that "**God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.**" Gal. 6:7

"You do not wake up one morning a bad person. It happens by a thousand tiny surrenders of self-respect to self-interest."

Robert Brault,

May God make our paths straight and our hearts pure before him. May He watch over our coming and our going that we may continue to walk in his favor not only in the daylight but in times when darkness comes upon us. We pray that all of us will find ourselves strong in Him who is strength so that we may all run the race with integrity and honor.

Much Love to all,



Rex & Lois

'Kingdom Healing Conference'
Lake Stevens WA—March 4th—6th
Register at: www.kcmi.com

Sao Paulo Brazil
March 22—30th
Speakers: Randy Clark & Rex Burgher