

The Lord's Character Building Program

Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-4, 12

Introduction:

- A. Our Lord's two-fold objective: Prepare us for next world and develop *character* in this world.
 - 1. The two go hand in hand - character produces hope. (v. 4; Jas. 1:12)
 - 2. The idea is "proven character" or character proven by experience. (comp. KJV/NKJ v. 2 & Phil. 2:22).
- B. Our Lord's character building program includes two basic parts:

Discussion:

I. Teaching (Tit. 2:11-13).

- A. Teaching that draws sinners to God. (John 6:44,45; Matt. 28:18-20).
- B. Teaching that shows Christians how to live in this present world.
 - 1. Negatively -- "denying ungodliness..." (cf. Gal. 5:19-21).
 - 2. Positively -- "soberly, righteously, godly."
- C. Teaching that give Christians hope for the future world. (Tit. 2:13; 1 Cor. 15)

II. Experience. (Rom. 5:2 KJV).

- A. The experience of patient obedient service and sacrifice builds character.
 - 1. Obeying difficult commands. (Heb. 11:17-19).
 - 2. Patiently teaching the wayward. (2 Tim. 2:24-36).
 - 3. Sacrificing goods for the Lord. (cf. Heb. 10:34; Acts 20:35).
- B. The experience of patient endurance of life's difficulties builds character.
 - 1. Patiently enduring "thorns in the flesh." (2 Cor. 12:7-10).
 - 2. Patiently suffering wrongfully. (1 Pet. 2:19-25; Matt. 5:11-12).
 - a. Takes more strength to take it than to retaliate.
 - b. Get even by doing good to perpetrator. (Matt. 5:43-48; Rom. 12:20,21)
 - c. Does not mean either approving or overlooking sin or extending him fellowship.
 - d. May sometimes mean giving perpetrator the benefit of doubt - may not have intended harm.
 - 3. Patiently enduring the "chastening of the Lord." (Heb. 12:3-11).
 - 4. Patiently enduring church problems. (1 Cor. 11:19).

Conclusion:

- A. As free moral agents, we can:
 - 1. Accept or reject the character building teaching.
 - 2. Profit or not from the character building experiences.
- B. As Christians, we need to constantly build character to live successfully here prepare for hereafter.
- C. As an alien sinner, are you ready to enter the Lord's character building program?
- D. As a backslider, are you ready to get back into the Lord's character building program?