

Introduction:

How would you define "character"? Can be hard for it encompasses the totality of the person. The way they think, talk, behave, and respond are all parts of our character. It has been said that stress and trials build character but they also reveal it. Therefore, how we react says a lot about our character.

I) How Do We React: To A Command That is Contrary to Our Way of Thinking?

A) It is easy to do that which we find easy and goes along with our way of thinking.

1. But there are things in the Bible we may not like.
2. How do we react then.

B) Naaman the commander of the Syria army, *2 Kings 5*

1. He had no problem of going to the king of Israel, *v. 5*
2. Going to Elisha the prophet of God.
3. But he had a really big problem with Elisha's instructions, *v. 10*
 - a. you can just see his rage when Elisha didn't meet him, *v. 11*
 - b. he couldn't understand why he had to go to the *Jordan*, *v. 12*
4. Eventually he listened to two servants and did what he was told.

C) A man blind from birth, *John 9*

1. Jesus anointed this man's eyes, *v. 6*
2. Go and wash in the pool of Siloam, *v. 7a*
 - a. The man complied with Jesus' command, *v. 7b.*
 - b. Did not get angry or throw a fit or argue about going to the pool.
 - c. Frankly, it did not matter what he thought about it, he was simply to do it.

II) How Do We React: To Criticism?

A) It is easy when you are told you are doing a great job.

1. Have a bunch of "yes men" around you.
2. But none of us are perfect and eventually someone will criticize you.

B) Paul had a problem with taking John Mark on the second missionary journey, *Acts 15.37, 38*

1. This was a sharp disagreement and Paul insisted John Mark not go along, *v. 39*
2. Some people would have harbored a grudge the rest of their lives, continually bring it up, resent any good John Mark and Barnabas had done.
3. Not Paul, *2 Timothy 4.11*

C) Nehemiah and the children of Israel rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem, *Neh. 4*

1. Sanballot and Tobiah were adversaries, did not want the walls built. *V. 3*
2. Some folks will quit, get angry and walk away to never return.
3. How do you react?

III) How Do We React When: We Don't Get Our Way?

A) There are matters of judgement and sometimes our judgement may not be the prevalent one.

B) Paul did not always get his way, *Acts 16*.

1. Second missionary journey, *Acts 16.7*
2. Paul was not able to go back to the churches he had helped to established.
3. God had a better plan for him as he was told to go to Macedonia, *v. 9*

C) Jesus was determined to do the Lord's will

1. Yet He did pray for the cup to pass from Him if it was possible, *Matthew 26.39*
2. Yet He went to the cross without complaining or grumbling, *Hebrews 5.7-8*
3. I am always impressed when someone puts aside their think so's and want to in order to do the will of God.

IV) How Do We React: To Failure?

A) Success is easy to accept but there are times we will fail.

1. In sports, school, job, even in the area of religion.

2. What then?
 - a. I had a roommate in college who never made a B in his life but suddenly he made a B.
 - b. You might try to give a sermon, teach a class, do some personal work and not get the desired result. What then?

B) The disciples were fishermen, *Luke 5*.

1. They do out at night and catch nothing.
2. Jesus comes along and tells them to cast their nets, *v.4, 5a*
3. What did they do? They cast out their nets, *v. 5b*
4. Do we try harder when we fail? Successful people are not always successful but they Learn and keep on trying.

V) How Do We React: To Persecution?

A) That is not a concept we are used to.

1. But some people may not be fair to us.
2. Ridicule us, get passed over for promotions, or left out of social events, etc.

B) Christians faced persecution on a regular basis.

1. Paul was beaten and stone for preaching, *Acts 14.19*
2. He then went on and preached somewhere else, *Acts 14.20-22*.

3. He gives a virtual list of torture and mistreatment in *2 Corinthians 11.23-28*.
4. He was still preaching.
5. Peter speaks of the ill treatment some might incur but he tells them to suffer and not be ashamed, *1 Peter 4.11-16*.
6. There are a lot of worse things than being unpopular, social outcast, passed over, etc.
7. The worse is to lose your soul but you are the only one who can do that.

Conclusion:

Then next time you face any of these things be sure to reveal the character of faithfulness.