

“BUILDING GODLY CHARACTER”

PART 3

OBJECTIVE: STUDY THE WORD OF GOD CONCERNING CHARACTER BUILDING AS A CHILD OF GOD. CONSIDER THE ELEMENTS OF OUR LIFE WHICH EITHER MAKE US MORE LIKE GOD IN LIFESTYLES OR FAR FROM GOD THROUGH OUR LIFE PATTERNS.

KEY SCRIPTURES:

2 PETER 1:2-11

HEBREWS 11:1-6

JOHN 15:1-5

MATTHEW 6:33

DEVELOPING GODLY CHARACTER INVOLVES A DISCIPLINED LIFE THAT SUBSCRIBES TO THE TENETS OR PRINCIPLES THAT GOD REVEALS TO US IN HIS WORD.

THE NEXT TENET OR PRINCIPLE WE WILL LOOK AT IN THIS PART IS LEARNING HOW TO DILIGENTLY SEEK GOD!

IN **HEBREWS 11:6** WE READ, "BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM: FOR HE THAT COMES TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, AND THAT HE IS A REWARDER OF THEM THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM." IN THIS PASSAGE WE HAVE TWO IMPORTANT CONCEPTS: FAITH, AND A REWARD TO THOSE WHO SEEK GOD. TO HAVE GODLY CHARACTER, WE MUST FIRST BELIEVE IN GOD.

ANYONE WHO DOES NOT EARNESTLY BELIEVE THAT GOD CAN SOLVE PROBLEMS IS LACKING IN FAITH. THAT IS WHY EACH OF THE OUTLINED TENETS IS CRITICAL TO BUILDING CHARACTER. HOW MANY REALLY TAKE JESUS AT HIS WORD IN **MATTHEW 6:33**? HE SAYS, "SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE ADDED UNTO YOU." IT TAKES FAITH TO MAKE THIS PASSAGE A TRUISM. MOST OF US IN AMERICA DEPEND ON OUR EDUCATION, LABOR SKILL, MONEYMaking ABILITY, AND OUR OWN RESOURCES. FOR A CHRISTIAN TO TRUST IN GOD AS JESUS HAS

SUGGESTED MAY BE FOREIGN TO US. IT MAY BE, AS WE SAY, "A GIANT LEAP OF FAITH!"

MANY PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY AFRAID TO TRUST IN GOD, BECAUSE WE CANNOT SEE HIM OR TALK TO HIM. THERE HAS TO BE A GENESIS OF TRUST IN OUR LIVES. MAYBE WE STARTED OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY WITH LESS THAN A MUSTARD SEED OF FAITH, BUT TIME ERODED OUR FAITH OR WE GOT CAUGHT UP IN "WORLDLY" ACTIVITIES THAT NEVER ALLOWED US TO GO ON TO DEEPER FAITH.

***FAITH IS BUILT JUST LIKE CONSTRUCTING A BUILDING—ONE BRICK, ONE WALL, ONE NAIL AT A TIME.** THE TRUST, THE FAITH, COMES ONE TENET OF BELIEF AT A TIME. WHEN BLESSINGS COME FROM TITHING, FOR EXAMPLE, IT BUILDS TRUST. WHEN A HEALING TAKES PLACE, MORE TRUST IS BUILT. JUST LIKE A BUILDING, WE KEEP GROWING BY BUILDING CHARACTER EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES. WE HAVE TO LEARN THAT IT IS GOD WHO PROVIDES FOR US UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. WHEN WE ACTUALLY SEE GOD WORKING IN OUR LIVES, OUR FAITH GROWS AND INCREASES.*

*ONE WAY TO BEGIN TO TRUST GOD AND DEVELOP FAITH IS TO TITHE FAITHFULLY. RECOGNIZE WHAT **DEUTERONOMY 8:17-19** REALLY MEANS.*

"AND THOU SAY IN THINE HEART, MY POWER AND THE MIGHT OF MINE HAND HATH GOTTEN ME THIS WEALTH. BUT THOU SHALT REMEMBER THE LORD THY GOD: FOR IT IS HE THAT GIVETH THEE POWER TO GET WEALTH, THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH HIS COVENANT WHICH HE SWARE UNTO THY FATHERS, AS IT IS THIS DAY. AND IT SHALL BE, IF THOU DO AT ALL FORGET THE LORD THY GOD, AND WALK AFTER OTHER GODS, AND SERVE THEM, AND WORSHIP THEM, I TESTIFY AGAINST YOU THIS DAY THAT YE SHALL SURELY PERISH."

*THIS MEANS THAT THE BELIEVER MUST REALIZE THAT GOD **"ALLOWS"** US TO GET OUR WEALTH. WE CERTAINLY GET THE EDUCATION AND GO TO WORK EVERYDAY, BUT IT IS GOD WHO GIVES US THE POWER TO DO WHAT WE DO. WE HAVE TO MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO REMEMBER GOD AND HIS INTERVENTION ON OUR BEHALF. WE ONLY SEE THIS PHYSICAL WORLD AND THE BOOKS WE READ, THE*

BUILDINGS WE WORK IN, AND THE MONEY DERIVED FROM OUR LABOR. GOD IS, IN A SENSE, IN THE BACKGROUND. WE HAVE THE DUTY TO BRING HIM TO THE FOREFRONT AND GIVE HIM THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT HE DESERVES.

*WHEN WE FORGET GOD, OUR FAITH DIMINISHES. WHEN WE STAY AWAY FROM SABBATH SERVICES, OUR FAITH SUBSIDES. "FAITH COMES BY HEARING!" SAID THE APOSTLE PAUL (**ROMANS 10:17**). FAITH IS NOT BUILT IN A VACUUM. WE NEED ACTIVITY TO DEVELOP FAITH. ABRAHAM IS THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL BECAUSE HE WAS WILLING TO TRAVEL THREE DAYS AND SACRIFICE HIS SON BECAUSE GOD ASKED HIM TO DO IT.*

*WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT COMES OUR WAY, THEN IT'S TIME TO BELIEVE WHAT JESUS SAYS IN **MATTHEW 6:33**: "BUT SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD...AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU." GOD WILL SHOW US HOW HE CAN CARE FOR US AS HE DOES THE ENTIRE NATURAL WORLD. WHEN WE ARE OUT OF WORK OR TERRIBLY SICK, WE CALL ON GOD. WHY NOT PRACTICE "SEEKING" HIM BEFORE TRAGEDY OCCURS? ATTEND CHURCH SERVICES; REMEMBER WHO GIVES US OUR WEALTH; RECOGNIZE GOD'S POWER TO DELIVER US OUT OF ADVERSITY; GIVE THANKS FOR ALL WE HAVE IN OUR LIVES.*

REMEMBER THAT GOD REWARDS THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM. GOD REALLY WANTS US TO FIND HIM, DISCOVER WHO HE IS, AND LEARN WHAT HIS PLAN IS ALL ABOUT. THIS CAN BE CALLED THE "EUREKA PHENOMENON." BEN FRANKLIN MAY HAVE SHOUTED "EUREKA!" AT HIS DISCOVERY OF ELECTRICITY WITH HIS KITE-AND-KEY EXPERIMENT; THE EXPERIENCE OF DISCOVERING GOD AND HIS PLAN FOR US EVOKES A SIMILAR RESPONSE. THERE IS NO GREATER SATISFACTION THAN TO DILIGENTLY SEARCH FOR SOMETHING AND THEN FIND IT. GOD WANTS US TO EXPERIENCE JUST THAT FEELING OF CONTENTMENT IN FINDING HIM AND TRUSTING HIM TO BE THERE FOR US WHENEVER WE NEED HELP OR ENCOURAGEMENT.

GOD WANTS TO REWARD US FOR ALL WE DO. DAVID WANTED TO BUILD A PERMANENT TABERNACLE FOR GOD, AND GOD WAS IMPRESSED WITH DAVID'S GESTURE OF RECOGNITION TO GOD. WE AS PARENTS WANT OUR CHILDREN TO REMEMBER US ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS. OUR MATES REALLY APPRECIATE RECOGNITION WHEN IT COMES UNEXPECTEDLY. SOMETIMES WE MAY FIND THE MATE ASKING, "OKAY, WHAT DID YOU DO WRONG?" THIS IS PROBABLY AN INDICATION THAT WE DO NOT EXPRESS APPRECIATION OF MATES, CHILDREN, AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS AS MUCH AS WE OUGHT TO. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE WITH GOD. HE WANTS RECOGNITION! HE WANTS US TO SEARCH FOR HIM! HE REALLY ENJOYS OUR SEARCH, MUCH LIKE A CHILD LIKES TO FIND THE "HIDER" IN PLAYING "HIDE AND SEEK"!

GOD DOES NOT REALLY HIDE FROM US, BUT HE DOES WANT US TO MAKE THE EFFORT TO FIND OUT HOW MAGNIFICENT HE REALLY IS. DISCOVERY IS A REWARDING EXPERIENCE. GOD SEES TO IT THAT WE ARE REALLY REWARDED FOR FINDING HIM. UNFORTUNATELY, WE OFTEN DELAY THE SEARCH FOR GOD UNTIL WE ARE IN DIRE NEED AND HAVE NO PLACE ELSE TO GO. THIS IS THE OFTEN REPEATED STORY OF THE ISRAELITES WHO SOUGHT GOD WHEN THEY WERE ENSLAVED AND FORGOT HIM WHEN TIMES WERE GOOD.

WHEN WE HAVE FOUND HIM WE CAN CALL ON HIM EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES. SHOULD DISASTER BEFALL US, WE ARE ALREADY IN TOUCH WITH HIM AND THE SEARCH WILL NOT BE LONG AT ALL. THE CONSTANT CONTACT WITH GOD MAY ALSO PREVENT US FROM FALLING INTO A DISASTROUS SITUATION. SO THERE IS EVERY REASON TO HAVE FAITH AND SEEK GOD.

DEVELOP FAITH AND DILIGENTLY SEEK GOD SO YOU CAN EXPERIENCE THE HEART-WARMING FEELING OF FINDING HIM.