

## The Way of the Lord

### 21. Developing the Character of Jesus (Part 1)

*“For we are to God the AROMA OF CHRIST among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life...”* (2 Corinthians 2:15,16).

Think about that. YOU are the aroma of our Lord Jesus Christ to everyone you meet! An aroma is a distinct and pleasant odor. And, the aroma of Jesus within His followers has a pervasive quality about it that others can't miss. It's a sad but true reality that many will reject His aroma in you. That's because they *love* the darkness of their sin *more* than the light Jesus offers. But those who *do* seek Him or know Him already will be encouraged by the fragrance of life that is Jesus in you.

Paul intentionally describes Jesus followers as being the AROMA of Christ. The Spirit of Christ dwells *within* each of His own. And since your Father's goal is for you to become *like* your Lord, everyone you encounter should be able to discern His Spirit in you, whether they're *attracted* to Him or *repelled* by Him.

In our previous five segments we exposed hindrances that can keep you from experiencing the spiritual power our Lord Jesus gives you. When the Spirit exercises His power *through* you, people can recognize the aroma of Jesus *in* you. They can also detect His aroma when you reflect the character qualities of Jesus. Too many Christians today separate their *spiritual practices* from the *ongoing character development* the Spirit wants to do in the course of everyday encounters and situations. But developing the character of Jesus in you is your Father's priority for you as His child. You're Christ's *ambassador* to the world, and your being transformed into His likeness *authenticates* whatever you speak about Jesus.

Let's pause here to make a distinction between your *personality* and your *character*. *Personality* represents the temperament and traits you're born with. Words such as lively, shy, optimistic, strong-willed, compliant, and moody are examples of this. The personality you were born with is strongly influenced by your *sin nature* and any *demonic strongholds* you've inherited from your parents.

*Character* describes the moral and ethical qualities that are instilled in you throughout your life. The Greek word for character means “minting a coin.” An image is impressed on the coin, an image anyone can recognize. If you follow Jesus as your Lord, you find in the Bible clear guidelines of the Christ-like character HE wants to impress into you through the working of His Spirit.

Each Christ-like character quality you develop reflects the *aroma of Jesus* to others. Each Christ-like character quality you develop also deepens your loving confidence in your relationship with your Lord. As each character quality develops and strengthens in you, your desire grows to become more like Jesus.

In earlier video segments we noted that *suffering* is one means by which our Father develops Christ-like character in us. Listen to Paul's encouragement to the Jesus followers in Rome, which was a hub of persecution and affliction: *“suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, CHARACTER; and character, hope”* (Romans 5:3-5).

Don't be surprised that the most common suffering you'll experience is the battle your *sin nature* advances to resist any Christ-like character development in you.

For most children, especially those raised by followers of Jesus, character is impressed on them from their earliest years. It's *imprinted* on their way of life so they'll readily assume responsibilities that their sin nature and stronghold-controlled personalities would avoid. Good manners, healthy relationships, responsible work attitudes, and proper deference are just a few qualities that are part of character development.

We hope you realize that the character qualities of Jesus *aren't* being developed in an empty mind. Within your mind are the sin nature and stronghold-influenced personality traits you were born with. And these innate traits are generally the *opposite* of the motivations and actions of Jesus. But when Jesus becomes Lord of your life, you can see your negative personality traits as YOUR opportunity to change and develop HIS character. And from our Father's perspective, your need to be transformed in these areas is HIS opportunity to help you become more like Jesus. He just needs your sincere willingness and desire to develop His character.

You've probably recognized in your relationships that negative personality traits can create emotional tension with each other. That ongoing apprehension is often reflected in anxiety, fear or discomfort when you're around a certain individual. Maybe it's some attitude or particular behavior in them that makes you nervous or fearful. That's why so many of our Father's commands in the Bible are aimed at *removing* apprehension in your relationships. Then you can bless and encourage one another rather than awkwardly tolerate discomfort.

In our book *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation* we discuss how Satan uses apprehension in relationships to gradually drive people apart. Test yourself. Ask those close to you, "Is there anything about me that makes you tense or uneasy?" Wherever there's ongoing tension in a relationship, LOVE can't flourish, and LOVE underlies all of God's commands and the character of Jesus. Emotional tension discourages love. The two can't exist together.

Most interpersonal conflicts in your life can be traced to negative personality traits that haven't been transformed into Christ-like character. Many of these may have emanated from strongholds of past generations that you inherited. If you're to develop His character qualities, you need to demolish these strongholds and replace any toxic motives and responses with Christ-like ones. And that will most likely come about as you cooperate with others who care about you.

Earlier we mentioned that one aspect of suffering you'll experience is the battle your sin nature mounts whenever you're *convicted* to develop a character quality of Jesus. CONVICTION is the operative word here. We mentioned in Segment 20 that the Spirit of Christ within you *convicts* you when you sin (John 16:8). That means you have *God's perspective* on your sin. Conviction is the pain you feel inside when

- you realize you've violated God's command; or,
- you recognize how your negative personality trait(s) falls short of the character of Jesus; or,
- you perceive that your negative personality trait(s) is creating apprehension in someone you care about.

In order for the Spirit to develop a particular Christ-like character quality in you, you must first *rid* yourself of the negative trait(s) through repentance and confession. First, OUT with the bad, then IN with the good.

We have much more to discuss in upcoming segments about developing Christ-like character. Please be sure to explore the articles and materials we suggest at the end of the videos. You can't walk in the *way of our Lord* if you're controlled by these negative personality traits. And only the Spirit of our Lord Jesus can do this IN you so that you may reflect His aroma to others.

**For Further Study**

- Book: *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation*
- Lifebyte 62. *Does Your Marriage Reflect Your Covenant With Our Father?*
- Discussing How to Restore the Early Church: Lesson 30. *God's Purpose for Marriage*

Each is a free download on our website: <[restorationministries.org](http://restorationministries.org)>