

The Way of the Lord

22. Developing the Character of Jesus (Part 2)

*“For this very reason, **make every effort** to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities **in increasing measure**, they will keep you from being **ineffective and unproductive** in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-8).*

You can see that our Lord *expects* us to develop Christ-like character qualities. Peter affirms that the particular character qualities he cites will keep us from being ineffective and unproductive as we live out our relationship with Jesus day by day. Remember, you’re not alone in this transformation! First, the Holy Spirit is at work in and through you. And, God’s Word makes clear that His children are to help *one another* become more like Jesus. *together* we work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

This ongoing transformation into Christ’s likeness is driven by your heartfelt gratefulness to Jesus as Lord of your life. Out of love for Jesus, you long to become more and more like Him in His character. And as you walk in love-grounded, obedient trust, you discover just how essential the support of others in your faith family is.

But two powerful and negative personality traits can deter you from pursuing that transformational quest. These negative traits stem from Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden. We men are born with a particular sin-based personality defect: we blame others and give excuses—just like Adam did. In other words, when things don’t go right, we men refuse to take full responsibility for our actions. And like Eve, the negative trait we women are born with is the desire to rule men and exercise independence. We want to be in control, and we resist male authority, especially our husband’s.

These two gender-based, negative personality traits create a lot of apprehension in marriages as well as in other gender-related relationships. Remember, our Father intends for your marriage covenant to physically represent the Covenant you have with Him in Jesus. In order to do this, you and your spouse need to confront these negative personality traits *together* so that your marriage *will* reflect Christ. To help you in this, we strongly encourage you to read and discuss our Hebraic articles, *Mutually Growing Christ-like Relationships* and *The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*.

Keep in mind that you *and* your spouse lacked certain Christlike character qualities *before* you married. It’s within the fabric of your marriage that you’ll *both* be tested and tried so that these qualities can be developed mutually. But whether you’re married or single, as long as these negative personality traits dominate you, they’ll produce an UNChristlike response to the opposite sex.

We’re going to list for you some negative personality traits that you or those close to you may have. Obviously other traits exist, but these are some of the most relationally destructive ones we’ve seen. Be honest with yourself about any in the list that apply to you. Our Father already *knows* they’re there, hindering your growth in the character of His Son!

We've also listed some of Christ's character qualities that counter these negative traits. You're on a journey of transformation, so cooperate with those who are pursuing Christ-likeness with you. And begin by asking Jesus for the empowerment that only His Spirit can give you to change.

Negative Personality Traits

Moody and gloomy; habitually discourage others

Self-analyzing to the point of condemnation and doubt

Fearful of what others think of you; you camouflage your real self to meet others' expectations

Insensitive to the needs of others; haughty and domineering; cruel, blunt, sarcastic

Compromising; weak-willed with little conviction in your spiritual walk

Critical of others' imperfections; strong perfectionist tendency; tiresome and hard to please

Selfish and stingy; fearful of loss

Stubborn; hard to get along with; oppose changes of any kind

Can erupt into violent anger

Vengeful; carry a grudge

Christ-like Character Qualities

You're joyful, the second fruit of His Spirit, and habitually encourage others (Galatians 5:22).

You trust in the Spirit of Jesus within to guide you (Galatians 5:25).

Your deepest identity is as your Father's child (1 John 3:2).

You intentionally look to the interests and purpose to be kind and tender-hearted toward all (Philippians 2:3,4; Ephesians 4:32).

You live repentantly, always prepared to confess any sin (Psalms 51:10; Proverbs 28:1; Isaiah 26:3).

You honestly evaluate your own negative personality traits and purpose to turn from them out of love for God (Luke 6:42; Colossians 3:12).

You're open handed with all you have, especially with other Jesus followers in need (Acts 2:45; James 2:14-17).

You seek to be teachable, and are open to sound advice and wise counsel (Proverbs 15:22,31; 29:1).

You're willing to give up all your perceived rights for the sake of Kingdom goals (James 1:19; Ephesians 4:2).

You forgive from your heart as you've been forgiven by your Father (Luke 6:37).

Attitude of superiority; talk frequently about self; seek credit and approval; use people for your own benefit

You humbly do good without expecting anything in return, patient for the Lord to lift you up (Luke 6:35; James 4:10).

Undependable, late; many unfinished projects; easily distracted

You are eager for God to work through you to fulfill every good purpose (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

Given to impulse buying; disorganized and forget promises and obligations; frequently make excuses for negligence

You seek to live in simplicity and godly sincerity, and are willing to be confronted or corrected (2 Corinthians 1:12 Proverbs 4:7, 15:31).

Ridding yourself of negative personality traits and developing Christ's character is a lifelong, ongoing process the Bible calls "sanctification." Be discerning as you read your Bible. You're often prompted to press on in the *way of the Lord* when His Word convicts you of a trait that's NOT like Jesus.

For Further Study

- Download list of Negative Personality Traits <www.restorationministries.org/pdf/Wotl/22.TraitsQualities.pdf>
- Hebraic Article: *Mutually Growing Christ-like Relationships*
- Book: *Pastoring By Elders: Chapter 7. Authority: God's Training Device for Faith Chapter 8. Deference: The Character of Jesus in His Followers*
- Book: *Demolishing Strongholds, Chapter 5. After You've Demolished the Strongholds*
- *The Way of the Lord* series, Segments 7 & 8

Each is a free download on our website: <restorationministries.org>