

# CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

By: Bill Richardson      Edited by: Fay Camp

In this writing we will be studying about ourselves, people, and yes, of all people—that is to say God's created humans. We should do well in that, shouldn't we? We must admit that we need to know what God and His Word says about our character. Don't you think? Why? Well, let's see! We need to identify study, learn, develop, and improve characteristics in our lives that are such as what would be called, "Characteristics of God's People."

It can be said that *character* is one's total personality. How far could we go with that should we take all avenues in the search of our total make-up? Just what could be said or explained should that be the task? Using the *right words*, descriptive adjectives, and phrases would certainly be the challenge at hand. To me there has been, and always will be, I pray, a great desire in my heart to labor in making sure to use the right words, and the right word arrangement, to present the best, yea, the most needed message of what is being studied, explained, and communicated.

I read a quote by Mark Twain in which he said, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug." I'm not saying he's the authority, but there is a vast difference in the example he used. The right word is very important, and what he said emphasizes well the point on my heart. Words are important; they have meaning and convey a message and are used to communicate study, teach, and learn. And hey! I just thought, that is the purpose of this study lesson; to communicate, teach, and learn. Let us in this study, communicate and learn about the "Character of God People" and endeavor to work together toward improving our character, and for our own good, and to His glory.

In recognizing character to be the total of ones personality and I believe that to be true, we do need to evaluate our character. In doing so we need to look at the *attractive* and make *active* biblical attributes that work in our life to make us morally strong and pure, and influence others, and thus gain and maintain favor with God.

If character is the total of ones personality, we do need to evaluate ourselves, (judge ourselves) by the Word so that we can know and readily recognize the "Character of God's People." This would require us to know the attractive biblical attributes that we must possess and having them active in our lives making us pure and morally strong; thus influencing others and we ourselves being and remaining in favor with God.

We need to list, identify, and study the attractive Christian attributes which we must admitted that they should be active in our life, molding our character. We are to be:

1. Humble      2. Obedient \*
3. Hospitable      4. Steadfast \*
5. Loving      6. Pure      7. Generous      8. Gentle

9. Humility    10. Sincere    11. Peaceable    12. Zealous \*

13. Patient    14. Merciful    15. Courteous    16. Content

17. and unity of mind \*    Code: marked by asterisk (\*), they are discussed below.

This is a lengthy list and I can't say it is all-inclusive. We can agree that these attributes should be active in our total personality, can't we? Let's agreed that we are to discern more and better ways of affecting them in our lives and should study these graces and others not listed. It will let or (make) our light shine!

What I want us to do now is choose several of the graces, (attractive qualities or behavior), study them by scriptural application and let us make personal conclusion as to our own behavior in their activeness in your and my life. The word judges, (AND WE KNOW THAT), us but we must make our own personal conclusion, making sure we can pass the test as we are judged, and we will be, and we know that also. The graces, which we do not analyze in this study, listed above, can and should be a challenge to us to do a personal study of them.

(#17 above): *"Unity of mind"*: How beautiful the thought! What a need, it is a wanting need that our minds be in unity with one another and all in unity with the mind of God. I'm not saying that to be critical, but it truly is a need. Remember how Jesus prayed so fervently to His Father for the oneness of His people. How great the need of unity, (oneness), of mind of *all mankind*. I just can't help my self, but I have to state here, in full text, 1 Peter 3:8-12. What a beautiful desired counsel this is: *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessings, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing: For 'He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and HIS ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."*

(#12 above) *"Zealous"*: Defined; eager interest and devoted in an activity characterized by showing zeal ardently devoted to a purpose. (In this context the purpose is; exemplifying the characteristics of God's people in doing HIS Will, the work HE set before us.

Note Titus 2:13,14 which reads, *"...our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."* Galatians 4:18, admonishes us by saying, *"But it is good to be zealously affected always, in a good thing..."*

We must manifest zeal for others' salvation, (Romans 10:1).

We must manifest zeal in concern for good works, (Titus 2:14).

We must manifest zeal for missionary work, (Romans 15:18-25).

We must manifest zeal for reformation of character, (2 Corinthians 7:11).

We must manifest zeal in repentance, (Revelation 3:19).

(#2 above) *“Obedience”*: Defined to say; submission to authority. The greatest example of obedience was Christ our Lord: Christ learned obedience (Hebrews 5:7-10); please read and study that Christ was submissive (Matthew 26:39-42); please read and study that Christ was obedient to death (Philippians 2:5-11, please read and study).

Our obedience is made manifest by submission to authority. Who has authority over us is to whom we must obey. Here is the spiritually authoritative line-up: *God*, (Acts 5:29); *Christ*, (Hebrews 5:9); *Truth*, (Galatians 5:7); and *Faith*, (Acts 6:7).

It is then incumbent, (duty) for each of us, in fact all mankind, to know to whom and what they are to be in subjection. There are other entities to which we owe obedience.

Obedience to civil government is required in order to meet our obligations, (Mark 12:13-17). Read and study, Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17. Our character, the total of our personality is the Christian's life of obedience.

(#4 above) *“Steadfast”*: Defined is to say; firm persistent and determined in one's endeavor. Colossians 2:5, counsels us to, *“.....steadfastness of your faith in Christ.”* Firm commitment to Christ and stability of faith, thou shalt have is a must in the character and life of God's people. Hebrews 3:16, *“.....hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*

1 Corinthians 15:58, *“....be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.....Hebrews 12:1-2, “....let us run with patients, (steadfastly) the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...Hebrews 3:14”, “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”*

Hebrews 6:18-19, *“....lay hold upon the hope set before us which is an anchor of our soul, both sure and steadfast.”*

Galatians 5:1 *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free...”*

Revelation 3:21, *“To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me in my throne....”*

*(NEVER GIVE UP) (HOLD FAST)*

Your servant, Bill Richardson, Member Hartselle Church of Christ, Hartselle, AL

There are four enclosures by two Ministers and Elders of a congregation of the Lord's Church. Each is a great lesson and has applicability to Characteristics of God's People. I am sure you will have great appreciation for these good lessons. God Bless.

## WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT NEED OF MAN

Mark N. Posey – Minister

QUESTION: What is the single most important thing I need to focus on as a human being?

ANSWER: The single most important need of every human being is the forgiveness of sin. Jesus came to earth to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Paul clearly stated: “*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

These scriptures clearly identify forgiveness as our deepest and most important need. Ephesians 1:7 says, “*In whom (Jesus) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*” Therefore, the only way to enjoy fellowship with God is through His Son (1 John 1:5-10).

If one is outside of Jesus (those who have never put Christ on in baptism (Eph. 2:11-12) fellowship with God does not exist. However those who have heard the gospel (Romans 10:17), believed that Jesus is God’s Son (Mark 16:16), repented of sins (Acts 17:30-31), confessed Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10) and been baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16) are added to the Church (Acts 2:47).

Paul identified forgiveness as his greatest need in 1st Timothy 1:15, “*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptances, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*” Paul humbly acknowledged his total dependence upon Jesus to meet his deepest need. He knew forgiveness came only through God’s Son.

Peter informed Simon of his greatest need in Acts 8. Simon acted contrary to the will of God and Peter told him, “*Thy money perishes with thee because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*” (Acts 8:20-22). Simon sincerely asked, “*Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me*” (Acts 8:24).

Please recognize that your deepest need and mine is the forgiveness of sin. Only in Jesus can this need be met.

## Spiritual Fatigue

By: Bill Irby – Minister, West Hobbs Church of Christ, Athens, Al

We know that for the child of God Christian service is a “given.” We attend the services of the church and we worship God according to the pattern revealed in the Text. But we know that there is more. And as James said, “*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin*” (James 4:17). The faithful Christian serves God.

The question of “How?” arises. The all-inclusive answer is that Christian service is comprised of doing those things that are required to live in this world as a faithful Christian. There are worship ‘services’ and services of other type and nature that we undertake as Christians service. Cutting the grass for a dear sister is not worship but is service. There is intellectual work that one does in the service of God (2 Timothy 2:15, Romans 12:2). Indeed, Romans 12 contains quite the handy list of actions and attitude that are components of Christian service.

So the “How” is not so hard to learn, after all. There is however a problem we face of, “How long?” We know that the Bible says “*unto death*” (Revelation 2:10). And we know that Paul fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith, (2 Timothy 4:6-8). But it is still hard for us sometimes, don’t you think? Paul knew that service could become difficult, for he encouraged us with these words: “*And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*” (Galatians 6:9). Doing what is right can get to be tough things...if it hasn’t yet for you, it will.

So, we must fight this thing called “spiritual fatigue.” It is a dangerous item. Those who study these things for a living tell us that spiritual fatigue attacks the body (folks don’t feel good), the behavior (folks act badly), the mind (folks think irrationally), the emotions (folks lose control of themselves) and can lead all the way to a perilous level of self-doubt (to the point where a person just gives up).

How do we fight spiritual fatigue? First, it helps to accept the possibility that it can happen to you. Then remember that we are involved in a great cause and the most important purpose that can be undertaken by man, the cause of Redemption in Christ. Be stubborn about this. Remember Paul’s words to Timothy (who could get a little shaky from time to time): “*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*” (2 Timothy 1:7).

Service to God is a blessing (Galatians 6:10). So serve we shall, even in the face of fatigue. We may grow tired but we will not quit. He didn’t, did He (Luke 22:42)?

## LAZYBONES

By: Bill Irby – Minister, West Hobbs Street Church of Christ, Athens, AL

When I was young and didn't want to get up in the morning, my mother would come into my room and say tersely, "Get up, lazybones"! She meant it and between her, my father, and desperate necessity, I learned early that hard work has built in rewards and that laziness carries with it its own doom.

People who hire workers today will tell you quickly that a huge problem in the world of work is that some folks are just lazy. They don't get to work on time and when they do show up, they seem to expend more energy in an effort to avoid their work than would be required to just do the job in the first place. We should not be surprised at that; human beings can be lazy. We can all be lazy at times. God knows this about us and He has included in His Word some helpful warnings and instructions about being a *lazybones*.

Consider these words from Proverbs (in the NKJV):

*He who has a slack hand becomes poor,  
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.  
He who gathers in summer is a wise son;  
He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame (10:2-5).  
The hand of the diligent will rule,  
But the lazy will be put to forced labor (12:24).  
Laziness cast one into a deep sleep,  
And an idle person will suffer hunger (19:15).  
Go to the ant, you sluggard!  
Consider her ways and be wise,  
Which, having no captain, overseer, or ruler,  
Provides her supplies in the summer,  
And gathers her food in the harvest.  
How long will you slumber, O sluggard?  
When will you rise from your sleep?  
A little sleeps, a little slumber,  
A little folding of the hands to sleep—  
So shall poverty come on you like a prowler,  
And your need like an armed man ((6:6-11).*

These passages underscore the seriousness of overcoming the temptation to be lazy. Add to these common sense truths the idea that God has blessed us with the abilities we have, and He expects us to use them well and properly. This is the lesson of the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). Notice there that the lazy servant is called "*wicked*" (25:26). A key to overcome laziness is found in Paul's letter to the Romans where he encouraged them to be "*not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*" (12:11). If we work with an eye toward pleasing God, we can defeat laziness.

## I FELT IT IN MY HEART

Elders of, Westside Church of Christ, Salem, VA

More and more professional pulpiteers who describe themselves as 'dynamic', 'energetic', 'motivating', and 'charismatic' are telling their listeners what they 'feel in their heart' as opposed to what they glean from God's holy Book. Bible quoting has given way to touching stories and emotional pleas and too often the "people love to have it so" (Jeremiah 5:31). What the 'new breed' of preacher overlooks is that Christianity is a religion designed to appeal to the intellect and then the emotion.

The 'feeling' that one develops in his or her heart is supposed to be attained by intellectual means and mental industry. The 'feelings in the heart' are to result from thoughts of the mind. Instead, many preach thoughts that are results of 'feelings in the heart' (emotions).

The Bible says, "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was on evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Indeed, the Bible indicates that the 'heart' has thoughts, not emotions.

If we trust upon 'what we feel in our hearts' we are apt to teach and to believe error, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God" (Psalm 14:1). Though the fool's heart, or emotions, tells him there is no God, an intellectual survey would inform him otherwise (Romans 1:20). This offers ample proof that the old 'feeling down deep in the heart' could be a lie!

The Bible urges us to believe what we reason, study, test, and intelligently conclude to be factual based on Bible teaching (I Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:15; I John 4:1; Acts 17:11). Men whose behavior pleased God were emotionally convicted because of a rational, intelligent examination of facts and truth (Acts 2:37).

It is OK to have emotional feelings in Christianity; in fact, emotions are stirred every time inspired men preach the Word of God (Acts 4:2; 7:54; 8:39; 16:14; etc). But be careful not to allow your emotions to persuade you unless they are the result of Bible teaching.

Admonishment by the Elders of, Westside Church of Christ, Salem, VA 24153

Copied Bill Richardson