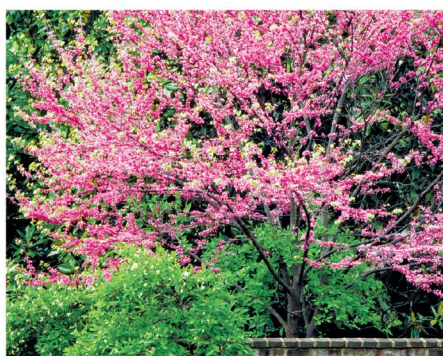


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The Importance of Character

1. Trace Conflicts to Character Deficiencies

Every conflict in life can be traced to the neglect, violation, or misapplication of one or more character qualities. For example, conflicts that a teenager has toward his parents may be traced to a lack of honor, obedience, or forgiveness. The conflicts that a wife has because of her circumstances may be traced to the need for contentment, gratefulness, or joyfulness. A father who is harsh toward his family would need to “camp” on the qualities of patience, gentleness, wisdom, flexibility, humility, self-control, and genuine love.

Every character quality also needs balancing qualities. For example, flexibility must be balanced with responsibility and decisiveness, and attentiveness needs to be practiced with alertness and discernment.

2. Understand the “Impossibility” of True Character

The more we understand the true nature of character, the more we realize how it is humanly impossible to fully demonstrate it. For example, we may think that we are grateful, but are we grateful to everyone and for every situation, even tragedies? Are we fully grateful to God? Do others regard us as grateful people, and do we have the right motives for expressing gratefulness?

Furthermore, every character quality is a practical expression of genuine love, which springs from a heart that is willing to give and is not focused on personal gain.

3. Learn How to Gain the Power for Character

The very situations that cause most people to become discouraged and bitter and to violate character qualities are actually designed or allowed by God to help us realize our need for Him and His power in our lives. It is only by the power of God that we will be able to achieve genuine love and all its related qualities.

Gaining this power of genuine love is a process. It begins by being indwelt, filled, and controlled by the Holy Spirit of God and includes a time of testing as guided by the Holy Spirit. Our responses to each trial or tribulation must include:

- Thanking God for all things—even trials
- Rejoicing in all things by finding benefits in them
- Engrafting and using the *rhemas* of Scripture
- Crying out to God when necessary
- Doing good works for all people—even our enemies

To the degree that we carry out these responses, we will experience the power of genuine love and every other related character quality.

