



Sermon Series: Character Counts

To be used with Session 1: The Importance of Character

Sermon Title Possibilities: “No God; No Character. Know God; Know Character”

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:1-11

Connection with Unit Theme: The theme of this series is, Character Counts. This sermon is designed to complement the Bible study “The Importance of Character,” which specifically deals with the importance of Godly character. One cannot have true character without God, which is a necessary reminder for all of us. As you and your congregation delve into these lessons, invite yourselves to examine yourselves. Examine your character and how it shows up through you. It can be easy to become lax and complacent when it comes to checking and maintaining our character. Not only that, but we as the church have a tendency to instruct outward while failing to look and adjust inward. While God certainly wants us to be an example for others to follow, we can’t do that if we are not constantly working on ourselves, specifically our character. Nobody has perfect character, which is why we can’t have any kind of character worth having without The Lord.

Introduction: One common argument that opponents of Christianity (or religion in general) often make is that one shouldn’t do things because God told them to, but rather they should simply do it because, “it’s the right thing to do.” Those who make this argument often fail to address a very crucial question: Who/What determines what is right or wrong? The fact is that everyone doesn’t have the same moral structure, nor does everyone view the world in the same fashion. As the present state of our nation and world demonstrate, there are varying views when it comes to right and wrong. That’s why there must be a higher power to whom we submit and pattern our lives after. The same idea applies to character. No human can have true character devoid of a higher power. There is something or someone that is informing their interpretation of right and wrong. As we address this idea of character, let us not lose sight of the fact that with God, character abounds. However, without God, character seriously lacks.

If You Need It, Gods Got It! (2 Peter 1:2-3).

There’s a song that we sing in the Black Church entitled, “No Doubt (In My Mind). One of the best-known parts of the song says, “If you need it, Gods got it! He’s got everything you need!” This simple, yet encouraging line serves as a way of uplifting those of us who ever wonder if God will meet our needs, and it reminds us that there is nothing we need that He doesn’t have. Not only that, but God challenges us to develop a faith that doesn’t have any doubt whatsoever in

His abilities and faithfulness. If we need healing, God has it. If we need joy, God has it. If you need deliverance, God has it. The list goes on.

God speaks through the apostle Peter as he addresses displaced individuals struggling with their faith. Like many of Paul's letters to the various churches, he writes the first and second epistles (letters) in order to both instruct and encourage his audience. Peter says in verse 3, "His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness..." (2 Pet. 1:3). This is to convey that God is our own supplier and that He has equipped us with what we need to live lives of character. This further emphasizes how we cannot survive without God. While this is true in general, it is foolish for anyone to strive for character without God. It will not last.

Needed Ingredients for Godly Character (2 Peter 1:4-8).

Many individuals, including myself, enjoy cooking. One thing that every successful cook must do is have clear knowledge and understanding of the necessary ingredients to prepare certain dishes. No good recipe comes without clear list of the ingredients, as well as clear instructions on how to properly use them. The omission of necessary ingredients can result in disastrous consequences, as can the addition of unnecessary ingredients. The point is that it is extremely unwise to begin cooking without first ensuring that all the ingredients are present.

In verses 4-8 of 2 Peter, the apostle teaches his audience how to build upon the foundation that God had already provided them. In order to do so, they needed a number of virtues such as: Goodness, Knowledge, Self-Control, Endurance, and Love. These mirror the fruits of the Spirit that we learn from the apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22-23. As God uses Peter to emphasize this idea of character, this text centers us on the importance of the aforementioned virtues, as well as the dangers of not having them. There are certain situations that we can avoid if we have strong character, buffered by the virtues in this text. And all of these virtues come from God and God alone. Just as none of us can have true character without God, none of us can maintain true character without the ingredients.

2 Peter 1:9-11 – "Is Your Character as Loud as Your Shout?"

"Hollering in church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a driveway makes you a Cadillac." This timeless saying has been said for decades, and it warns us not to assume that every person who makes loud noises in church is saved. The reality is that some of the loudest voices at church are some of the worst examples of Godly character and integrity. One thing that God has a way of teaching us is that He is not impressed by a shout accompanied by a lack of compassion, character, and integrity. Some focus more on the shout and less on the heart. However, Jesus' warning in Luke 6:45 concerning the mouth being a microphone of the heart only further illustrates why our character far exceeds our outward expressions in terms of importance.

Peter uses verses 9-11 of II Peter to warn his audience of the dangers of stumbling and doing anything that will stand in the way of their effectiveness. Peter concludes in verse 11 by reminding us of the promise of eternal life with Jesus Christ, and how all that God has instructed us to do is to prepare us for that. He says in verse 10 to, “Make every effort confirm your calling and election...” This can only be done through Godly living, which essentially means Godly character. Therefore, God wants to make sure that our character is as loud as our shout. This mirrors Paul’s warning in 1 Corinthians 3 of sounding angelic but merely being objects of noise if we lack love. In a likewise manner, we can make all the noise in the world, but without Character, it means nothing.

Conclusion: Many people spend their lives trying to do the right thing, and their hearts are in the right place. However, there are those who are under the impression that they can do so without The Lord. As admirable as it may be to desire to do right, no effort to do so can last without God. Therefore, any such effort devoid of God is a wasted effort that will only yield disappointment. A car can’t run without gas. A tire can’t run without air. Most appliances can’t operate without electricity, and the heart can’t function without blood. In a likewise manner, none of us can live without God. He is our primary source and sustainer. This applies in all areas of our lives. Anyone who doesn’t know Him is at a permanent disadvantage. One that cannot be recovered from unless God is involved. In short, No God, No Character. Know God, Know Character.

Author Bio

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