

5-Day Devotional: Christian Character

AM Message by Bro. Mike Bentley – August 2, 2026

Based on Matthew 5 and the Theme of Christian Character

Day 1: The Foundation of Humility

Reading: Matthew 5:3-6

Devotional: True spiritual growth begins not with achievement but with emptiness. To be poor in spirit is to arrive at the honest conclusion that apart from God, you have nothing of eternal worth. This is not self-loathing but clear-eyed honesty. The prodigal son only turned toward home after he recognized his own spiritual bankruptcy. From that recognition came mourning over sin, and from mourning came submission. Before you can hunger and thirst for righteousness, you must first admit you are starving. Ask yourself today: Have I truly acknowledged my need before God, or am I still trusting in my own sufficiency?

Day 2: The Character of Mercy and Purity

Reading: Matthew 5:7-8; Proverbs 4:23

Devotional: Mercy is not merely a warm feeling toward those who suffer. It is an active disposition that moves a person to forgive quickly, condemn slowly, and serve consistently. Jesus identified it as a weighty matter, not an optional sentiment. Alongside mercy stands purity of heart, which is the absence of division within the soul. A double-minded person is pulled in two directions at once and ultimately serves neither well. The heart is the source from which all conduct flows. What you allow to take root inwardly will eventually express itself outwardly. Guard your heart with the same seriousness you would guard anything precious and irreplaceable.

Day 3: Peacemakers and the Persecuted

Reading: Matthew 5:9-12; Ephesians 4:1-3

Devotional: Peace does not happen by accident. It must be made, which means it requires intention, sacrifice, and the willingness to absorb personal loss for the sake of unity. Abraham chose the lesser land so that strife would not divide him and Lot. That is the spirit of a true

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peacemaker. Yet even those who pursue peace faithfully will face opposition. Christian character, when genuinely lived out, makes the world uncomfortable. The humble, the merciful, and the pure are a quiet rebuke to those who have chosen a different path. Do not be discouraged by resistance. The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who remain faithful under pressure.

Day 4: Salt, Light, and Purpose in the World

Reading: Matthew 5:13-16; Romans 12:1-2

Devotional: Jesus did not call His followers to retreat from the world, nor to be absorbed by it. He called them to change it. Salt preserves. Light reveals. Both are only useful when they come into contact with what they are meant to affect. A Christian who withdraws entirely from the world abandons his function. A Christian who conforms to the world loses his distinctiveness. The calling is to remain fully engaged while remaining fully transformed. Your neighborhood, your workplace, and your family are not obstacles to your faith. They are the very fields where your faith is meant to bear fruit. Let your light shine without apology.

Day 5: The Higher Standard of Christian Character

Reading: Matthew 5:43-48; Galatians 5:22-23

Devotional: Loving those who love you back requires no transformation of character. Even the most self-centered person can manage that. But loving an enemy, praying for someone who has wronged you, and refusing the impulse toward retaliation -- these things require a heart that has been genuinely reshaped by the Beatitudes. The call to be perfect, or spiritually mature, is not a demand for sinless achievement. It is an invitation into ongoing growth. The fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians is not produced by striving alone but by abiding. As you hunger and thirst for righteousness each day, you become the salt and light the world desperately needs.