

UNSHAKABLE: CHARACTER

2.18.19 by Brian Flewelling; 2 Timothy 2:14-26

Intro: Unshakable in Character

- Who you are absolutely matters.
- Who you are becoming is absolutely of eternal concern.

Story: Bill Cosby – Johnny & Lily Stoltzfus

- **Cosby** - An international reputation built on family values, beautiful voice of the African American, brought joy to so many people
- But somewhere along the way the power and popularity he possessed made it easy to listen to the appetites of his heart.
- His entire legacy collapsed in bitterness and betrayal and lost trust and isolation and great sadness, like a mighty tree that looked healthy, but it decayed from the inside out.
- You don't want to be that casualty. His life serves as a Stop sign. Don't go that way.

- **Jonny & Lily Stoltzfus** – unknown to most of the world. But honored in this region.
- They left a legacy. One person said, Johnny's funeral was a worship service.
- When people talk about them: how humble, sweet, godly, courageous, gentle
- Sacrificial – left the American dream to serve the broken communities in nowhere Canada for 30 years.
- Stood beside the broken, those who struggled with Alcohol.
- Legacy of affirming and releasing young leaders in Jesus
- Legacy of imparting the power of the Holy Spirit
- Legacy of a godly marriage: where ever one was, the other was.
- That's character!!! People will be thanking them for an eternity to come. Imitate them.

- **Who Jesus is calling us to be is so much more beautiful than what our desires are telling us to act like, or what the world is telling us we can become.**
- Jesus was the embodiment of self-less love. His human life still echoes throughout the world as an example of sacrificial, generous love. And he's calling you to walk in his character.

God is stamping us into His image.

Did you know that a karekter was the word for an ancient Greek stamping tool?

- Visualize play-do stamps
- God “predestined (us) to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...” Romans 8:29
- 2 Timothy 1:13 “the pattern...is faith and love in Christ Jesus.”

“Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good.” 3 John 1:11

Read 2 Timothy 2:14-26

How do we become unshakable in character?

This one verse clearly displays the pattern in all twelve verses.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace

We are running away from something, and we are running toward something.

(as fast as we can-like Indiana Jones and the temple of doom)

We often think that character is stationary. But our lives are always heading in a direction-- even when we're drifting. Character is about the habits you practice that determine the direction you're heading in.

v.14 "Keep reminding them..." not enough to say it once; until it gets into your muscle memory. You have to keep correcting bad habits. Keep working on good habits too.

- When we started following Jesus, and we asked for his forgiveness to receive salvation, he adopted us into his family. He paid the outstanding debts we owed. His sacrifice was perfect. He has washed away every sin you have committed and every sin you will ever commit. God has already predetermined to be radically generous towards you. Paul says that before God even created the world he had already decided Christ would die for every sin you're not even aware of yet.
- But your body and your mind have bad habits
- They run Like a river, they flow in a direction without us even thinking about them.
- Habits associated with guilty pleasures, peer pressure, religious pride, dysfunctional relationships, insecurities, judgmentalism, or self-sufficiency, or certain environments, or sexuality, or racial profiling.
- Even though you've been adopted by God, he's gone through the legal process of calling you his own...you don't always act like a daughter or a son.
- So now he begins the parenting process. He wants to stamp his family character into your life. He starts to cut away the bad habits and create new and healthy/holy habits.
- He want to renew your mind. Create habits of running after the good. Habits of empathy and compassion, initiative, immediate confession and not hiding our sin, choosing the truth even when it hurts, gazing on the Father, resting in Jesus, creating safe boundaries that protect people, that honor people, that avoid unnecessary temptation, habits of generosity...
- On a habit level, he is refocusing the flow of your life. You are going through a reformation process, so that the volume of your life is moving in the right direction.
- It doesn't mean God is angry with you. He loves you enough to parent you.
- "Keep reminding them..."

And this is why...

In verse 14 Paul is addressing their specific situation

v.14 "quarreling about words" "only ruins"

v.16 "Avoid godless chatter" "become more and more ungodly"

v.18 there rumors "destroy the faith of some"

“Only ruins...” imagine if you were hiring someone and you called their previous employer for a reference, and they said this person has *ruined* and *destroyed* the previous 5 companies they’ve worked for. How many of you would hire that person? There are certain things in your business you do not associate with. There are certain things in faith that we do not associate with. We have to put distance between us and it.

v.19 “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”

v.22 “Flee the evil desires of your youth.”

v.23 “Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments/investigations.”

v.26 “escape the trap of the devil”

Summary: As followers of Jesus we are in the habit of distancing ourselves from evil.

Many of us have stopped here. “Don’t do this.” “Stop that.” “You’re bad if you do that!”

This is where we’ve gotten it wrong in the past. We’ve defined holiness as everything we run away from. We forgot that holiness is everything we run towards. Christians shouldn’t be known as people avoid things. We should be known as people who are on pilgrimage to meet God face to face.

God says, “Be Holy, As I Am Holy.” [Leviticus 11:44](#)

The reason we disregard the sinful ways is because we won’t make it into his presence with all that baggage and filth. It keeps us from enjoying the Father.

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children.” [Ephesians 5:1](#)

Vs 20-21

“In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy”

- Would you serve the queen of England her morning tea in the fine china, or from the dog bowl that your dog’s been slurping out of?
- Even if you’ve been the dog bowl, there is a cleansing process and you can become fine china.
- [Those who cleanse themselves](#)

Vs 22 “Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace.”

V.15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved”

- The Father has already approved of you, so get yourself ready, you’re about to have a home coming.
- Jesus gave his best. Now you are to “do your best”; “exert yourself, do diligence.”

- Exert yourself – like a soldier, athlete, farmer. (2 Tim 2:3-7).
- We aren't going to be perfect. We've got bad habits. We like to hide them.
- God's grace meets you at the limits of what you can do.
- Jesus' blood is there to cover your sin. And the Holy Spirit's power is there to help you
- [2 Timothy 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but of power, love, and self discipline.](#)

Final Summary:

God wants to stamp the pattern of his son Jesus into your life. The only way that's going to happen is if you exert yourself. Run away from evil. Every day you wake up keep running from evil. Chase after God. Every day you wake up, keep chasing after God. But don't do it on your own strength! Do it under the power of the Holy Spirit. If you keep setting those habits in your life, you will be remembered in God's hall of fame Johnny and Lily—Unshakable in character. Beautiful in love. Fierce in battle. Intimate with God. Gentle with the broken.

Unused Notes:

- When financial hardship squeezed Jesus –what came of him? His disciples are freaking out. I know what comes out of me--hoarding, control, fear...
Jesus--Thankfulness to his father, generosity towards people, creative abundance.
- When physical depravity (fasting) crushed his strength, and Satan tempted him in the wilderness, did self comfort, entitlement (I deserve to have a little bit of comfort). Pure truth of God's words.
- When Jesus was maligned and slandered publicly, did he go around trying to prop up his reputation like we do, when his own family scorned him, did he go around throwing Tomohawks back at his brothers? No. He was silent. He sucked up evil and he buried it in the cross.
- When popularity and crowds started crushing in against him, what came out of him? Selfish appetites. Sinful pleasures. "Let's go find some other lost and broken people."
- When they literally crushed his life, blessings came out of him.