

Welcome to Digital Discipleship, a weekly video teaching from Pastor Shawn and a downloadable weekly devotional guide. We pray that you will grow stronger in your walk with Jesus as you lean into these teachings and devotions.

## DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP – LESSON 5 –

# Ten Steps to Grow in Godly Character

### Day 1

#### Engaging the Mind

##### Introduction

1. In the previous lesson, we discovered that God expects ALL of us to participate with Him in growing ourselves in godly character.
2. But what does it mean to grow spiritually – in godliness or godly character?
3. Let's first address three things we shouldn't confuse in this regard.
4. **First:** don't confuse intellectual growth with spirituality (growth in godliness)
  - a. It's astonishing that so many Christians pursue intellectual achievement, while virtually ignoring moral (holiness) progress in their lives. Many Christians mistake intellectual growth for moral growth; or worse, they intentionally ignore moral advancement for intellectual advancement.
  - b. The result is that we are left with unholy churches who are lacking the moral authority required to speak to the culture!
  - c. Furthermore, Scripture warns that we will be judged not only on our works, whether good or evil (2 Corinthians 5:10), but also on the motivations (moral) which spawned those works (1 Corinthians 3:13-15).
  - d. Don't misunderstand: we need as many Christians as possible occupying every legitimate kind of office, career or position in our culture. And for that we NEED training. Period.
  - e. And we need full-time Christian ministers who are well trained for the work of the ministry.
  - f. However, intellectual growth apart from growth in godliness is dangerous. It doesn't make better people. It just produces more clever sinners.
  - g. When was the last time you specifically took time to ask the Holy Spirit to make you more holy?
  - h. It's not fashionable to talk about holiness. It's time to make it fashionable!
5. **Second:** don't confuse emotionalism with spirituality (growth in godliness)
  - a. Emotion in worship
    - The prophets of Baal had emotionalism in their worship, but not godly spirituality (1 Kings 18).
    - Even in Christian worship, some, because of varying degrees of emotional quotient, may be stirred by the music alone, with no thought about God or what the lyrics are saying.
  - b. Emotion in sorrow
    - This is also true of sorrow. Paul spoke of different kinds of emotional sorrow ...
    - **2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV)** *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*
    - From this passage we can see that emotions can be prompted by either godliness or ungodliness, one leading to repentance and life; the other leading to death.
  - c. So, don't be fooled. Emotions alone are no indication of godliness.
6. **Third:** don't confuse the gifts of the Spirit with spirituality (growth in godliness)

- a. Much like God causes the sun to rise and sends rain to all people, whether good or bad (Matthew 5:45), so too God gives talents to all people.
- b. Similarly, it is possible to have gifts of the Spirit given to ALL believers, whether or not they are SPIRITUAL (godly).
- c. That was the problem with the Corinthian church
- d. **1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV)** *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*
- e. They had the gifts of the Spirit, but they didn't have LOVE! **What is love?** *It is a FRUIT of the Spirit!*
- f. Paul was in prison when he wrote the letter to the Church at Philippi – see what he wrote ...
- g. **Philippians 1:15 (NIV)** *It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.*
- h. Those who preach have a gift of teaching, isn't it true?
- i. But is envy a fruit of the Spirit? NO! it is an act of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19-21).
- j. **1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (NIV)** *If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup> his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. <sup>14</sup> If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. <sup>15</sup> If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.*
- k. What exactly is Jesus going to bring to light in believers?
- l. **1 Corinthians 4:5 (NIV)** *He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts.*
- m. In other words, it is possible to do good works, and do them with false motives – in which case we lose our reward!
- n. We won't be judged by the GIFTS of the SPIRIT we possess, because they are just that – GIFTS!
- o. **We will, however, be judged on the FRUIT of the SPIRIT!**
- p. And, as we've already discovered, that's just another way of saying, holiness or godly character.
- q. What this all means is this: just because you are a gifted pastor, evangelist, prophetic person, teacher and so on, doesn't mean that you are godly. Sobering, isn't it?

## Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. When it comes to growing in godly character, what do people often get confused about? Name the three points from today's reading.
3. What will be judged on? Will be judged on whether we have spiritual gifts? Explain why or why not.

## Life Application

1. Have you ever been proud about your knowledge, or passion or spiritual gifts BUT had significant problems with a specific character trait? Write down any examples.
2. In the previous lesson, (Lesson 4), you were invited to write down a character trait that you needed to grow in. Are you giving as much effort with this as you are with growing your knowledge?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Record what it says about character.

## Day 2

### Engaging the Mind

#### We are required to participate with God in growing godly character

1. Paul said that we are being transformed into Jesus' likeness.
2. **2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)** *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*
3. This is in the passive, meaning that we are receiving this transformation or sanctification from the Lord.
4. Here's what God does:
  - a. He gives us the desire for growth (Philippians 2:13)
  - b. He gives us the ability or empowerment to grow (Philippians 2:13)
  - c. He guides the process for our growth.
5. But Paul didn't mean by this that we could passively sit back and just let God do it all for us – not at all!
6. In sanctification, unlike justification, we are REQUIRED to participate as well.
7. Paul himself said that!
  - a. **2 Corinthians 7:1 (NIV)** *... let us purify OURSELVES from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*
  - b. **Philippians 2:12 (NIV)** *...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling ...*(also 2 Peter 3:18)
8. Neither does character development happen accidentally.
9. Even life teaches us that:
  - a. If you don't intentionally attend to your garden, it will soon be overgrown with weeds
  - b. If you don't intentionally attend to your marriage, it will soon be broken
  - c. If you don't intentionally attend to raising your children, they will become unruly or unproductive
10. In the same way, if we don't intentionally attend to our character, it will worsen – be certain of that!
11. Time alone won't mend or reverse this.
12. Frequently, people will say things such as, "Well, that's just who I am."
13. Well, yes, that may be how you are, but that's not the way you're supposed to be, or even have to be!
14. Someone may object that changing patterns of ingrained behavior is so difficult.
15. Yes, it is. But the good news is that God doesn't leave us alone in this – He stands ready to help us!
16. We have His divine power available to help us.
17. **2 Peter 1:3 (NIV)** *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*
18. In fact, not only is His power available, it is essential to make character changes!
19. See what Jesus had to say about that ...
20. **John 15:5 (NIV)** *I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*
21. When it comes to character building, **God has to work in me, and I have to work at it!**
22. The whole Christian life is to be lived out in an intentional partnership!
23. See what Paul has to say about this partnership between God and us ...
24. **Colossians 1:29 (NIV)** *To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.*
25. **Philippians 2:12-13 (NIV)** *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*
26. Because God is working in you, you need to work!
27. He has a plan to help you with this! You just need to ask Him for it!
28. **Psalms 139:23-24 (NIV)** *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. <sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
29. When David got serious about this, he not only prayed for God to reveal where he needed to grow, but then he asked the Lord to reveal to him the pathway from sinful and offensive patterns in his life, to spiritual and character wholeness!

## Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. Are we required to participate in our sanctification (character growth)? Please explain.
3. What are some other examples from life, where we are required to do our part – where things do not happen automatically?

## Life Application

1. Imagine, reflect and write out how different your family and church and country would look if every adult intentionally changed in just one character trait each.
2. Ask the Lord to give you a deepening desire and commitment to grow in the character trait that you have identified for yourself.
3. Pray for the church in your country – for very real character growth for each member, and for the pastors of these churches.

## Day 3

### Engaging the Mind

#### Means by which we can grow in godly character

**First:** Daily pressures, difficult people and responsibilities

##### 1. Daily irritations:

- a. Small irritations in our daily lives can become a means of growing our character
- b. For example, when you wait in long lineups or in waiting rooms, do you become irritated?
- c. Use these times to grow your character. Use **S.T.A.R.** in this situation!
- d. Some possible responses:
  - Thank the Lord that He is using these irritations to prepare you for the greater pressures and trials and sufferings and that He is using this to grow your character.
  - Pray for the person ahead of you in the lineup.
  - Ask the Lord if there is something He wants to say to you. Yes – he can speak to you in a lineup!
  - Review some Scripture verses to do with the character trait you wish to grow in.
  - Strike up a conversation with someone next to you – perhaps God is giving you time to minister to someone.

##### 2. Difficult people:

- a. One of the ways daily pressures prepare us is through the difficult people in our lives.
- b. We all have them: a co-worker, family member, neighbor, employer, employee and so on.
- c. They may treat us poorly, or they misunderstand us, or our personalities clash.
- d. In some cases, they hate us, or disrespect us.
- e. Whatever the case, James counsels us to rejoice (James 1:2-4)!
- f. We just want to get rid of them – get them out of our lives; and God likes them right where they are.
- g. **Why?** Because He views them as a gift to us, to produce character that will result in more fruit, or more reward and so on!
- h. It seems backward to think like this – but these difficult people have been given us as a love gift from God to grow the character that will make us more fruitful and get us more reward in the life to come!
- i. That is one reason we are to pray for them, bless them, love them and bear with their bad behavior.
- j. **Remember:** God cares more about the line of your eternity, than the dot of your present!

##### 3. Lifetime responsibilities:

- a. Other types of pressures God uses to build character in our lives includes the pressure of meeting our spouse's needs in marriage.
- b. In many cases, what one spouse really likes or enjoys may not be what the other likes or enjoys.
- c. Yet, Paul admonishes husbands to love their wives as they love their own bodies and to love them like Christ loved and gave Himself up for the Church (Ephesians 5:25-29).
- d. For example, your wedding anniversary is coming up and you are SO busy. STOP. Do what you know you should do – love your spouse as you love yourself! Guys, take the time to buy your wife flowers or take her for a date. Wives, buy a card or do something special for your husband.
- e. And what about singles? The same goes for you! You too are called to love others (Matthew 22:39)!
- f. Invite someone over for a meal. Bless someone in need. Give time to someone who needs support.
- g. This is what it means to love others. And when we obey, we begin to grow in character.

**Second:** Suffering and trials in your life

1. James tells us to rejoice in trials because they give us opportunity to grow the character which, as we saw above, benefits us in so many ways.

2. **James 1:2-4 (NIV)** *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

### **Third:** God's discipline

1. Does God discipline us? Of course, He does – He's a good Father!
2. **Hebrews 12:5-11 (NIV)** *And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, <sup>6</sup> because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." <sup>7</sup> Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? <sup>8</sup> If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons ... <sup>10</sup> Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup> No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*
3. He does it for our good so that we will grow in holiness (godly character), which as we saw above has SO MANY good results!
4. While struggles and storms aren't necessarily to correct us (e.g. Job), the way we respond and grow in them is similar, if not identical.

### **Fourth:** Initiating the process ourselves

1. We're not to passively wait for God to bring about discipline or circumstances in our lives to change us.
2. We are exhorted to intentionally initiate a training regimen which will grow our character!
3. **1 Timothy 4:7 (NIV)** ... train yourself to be godly.
4. Peter said the same thing ...
5. **2 Peter 1:5 (NIV)** ... make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge ....

## **Reflecting and Reviewing**

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What are the four means by which we can grow in godly character?
3. Why does God discipline us? What is His motive? Does it mean that He is mad at us?

## **Life Application**

1. Can you think of a time in your life where God disciplined you? What was the issue He was working on? What were the details of His discipline? Write this down.
2. If you have children over the age of 7, or a cell group, share with them what you wrote down in Question 1. Such sharing is one way to spur others on; everyone is supposed to grow in godly character!
3. Is there anyone difficult in your life right now, who is stressing you out, or stretching your ability to be godly? Spend some time thanking God for them and pray that God would move in them and bless them. This may not be easy and will take time – but it will grow your character, for sure!

## Day 4

### Engaging the Mind

Today, we will look at the first five of ten steps in growing our character. On Day 5, we will consider the final five.

#### **Step 1: Choose a godly character trait**

1. There are several ways by which we can identify the character trait we should work on.
2. **First**, observe disturbing and ongoing patterns in your own life.
  - a. Are you continually angry at your children? Are you easily hurt or offended? Do you habitually procrastinate? Are you often pitying yourself?
  - b. If you already are self-aware of a glaring problem, then begin there.
3. **Second**, listen to what your spouse or friend says:
  - a. By specifically asking them.
  - b. By recalling what they routinely say about your responses.
4. **Third**, listen in prayer to see what the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.
  - a. The blessing about listening in prayer is that the Holy Spirit is always willing to help on this.
  - b. Further, He won't list everything at once – He is merciful and gracious; not content to leave us in our brokenness, yet concerned not to overwhelm us.
  - c. Start with what He reveals to you – the order in which He takes you on a journey to grow godly character may be important to the process.
  - d. As you listen in prayer, you may also wish to review New Testament passages which list a combined total of 45 character traits.
    - a. Most of these traits are found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-5; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:31-5:4; Colossians 3:8-14; 2 Peter 1:5-7; 1 Timothy 2:2-12; and James 3:2-12.

#### **Step 2: Pray daily for that trait**

1. See how David prayed in this regard ...
2. **Psalm 119:133 (NIV)** *Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.*
3. **God really wants to answer such prayers!**
4. See how Paul prayed for the Philippian believers to grow godly character (righteousness) ...
5. **Philippians 1:9-11 (NIV)** *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,<sup>10</sup> so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,<sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God.*
6. We can and should pray the same!
7. Some say, "Don't ever pray for patience, because you will be sure to invite tests."
8. Well, of course, you will – you can't grow without repeatedly doing it over and over again.
9. If you wish to learn to drive a car or fly a plane, you can't do that without repeating the skills over and over until they become natural to you – the same is true of growing godly character!
10. God will surely answer this prayer by coming to assist you in the process.

#### **Step 3: Continue renewing your mind by meditating on eternal things**

1. **Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV)** *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*
2. This is precisely what Paul did when he wrote to the Church in Thessalonica.
3. He got them thinking about the things above, and this was to be a source of comfort for them.
4. **1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 (NIV)** *According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage each other with these words.*



5. He also encouraged the church at Corinth, by turning their minds to things above (1 Corinthians 15:51-58).

#### **Step 4: Identify a time you failed, and listen for practical steps**

1. Write out the story (doesn't need to be long) when you failed; then stop to think about this incident.
2. Ask yourself: **"How does it make me feel when I think about this?"** Write it down.
3. Ask Jesus and listen: **"What do you (Jesus) want me to know about this memory?"** Write it down.
4. Ask Jesus and listen: **"Where are you (Jesus) in this memory?"** Write it down.
5. He may show you a simple practical step or two, to help you avoid repeated failure and to help you overcome in the future.
6. **Example:** My friend and mentor, Pastor Ray Doerksen tells a story of how God grew his character. He says, "I really wanted to grow in self-control."
  - a. I had just lost self-control again in a particular area, so I stopped to think and pray about it.
  - b. I felt embarrassment for my failure in that area. I was so done with this. I needed victory – but how?
  - c. When I went to listen in prayer about it, the Holy Spirit reminded me of how Moses had lost self-control toward the end of his life.
  - d. In front of the people he dishonored the Lord when he disobeyed Him, by striking, rather than speaking to the rock; and by rash words that came out of his mouth (Psalm 106:32-33).
  - e. He reminded me that Moses had been disqualified from further ministry, due to this failure in character.
  - f. I shuddered as I realized the Lord was warning me, not because he was angry at me, but because he was eager to keep me from losing my reward (1 Corinthians 9:27)!
  - g. Then I admitted to Him that I just didn't know what to do to gain victory in this.
  - h. Quickly, He gave me four practical steps to gain victory in this:
    - Pray for it
    - Select and memorize a few verses about this trait
    - Admit my failure in this to my wife – (of course, she already knew!)
    - Ask her to begin praying for me in this
  - i. I immediately went to work on these steps, and I gained lasting victory.
  - j. And my wife noticed it, because one day she asked me if it was really necessary to continue praying for this character trait!
  - k. For good measure, I asked her to pray for a couple of more months – I was so excited about the freedom I was enjoying in this, that I wanted to be really sure, that I wouldn't lose it!
7. **NOTE:** If the Lord reveals to you deeper identity-based or lie-based reasons (e.g. "I am such a failure/loser" or "No one loves me") as a cause for these failures, then you'll need more inner healing.

#### **Step 5: Confess any bitterness or offense**

1. You may not need this step for some of the character traits you wish to grow in, such as self-control.
2. However, if you are working on a trait such as not being rude, or easily angered or not keeping a record of wrongs, or learning to trust, you may need to forgive someone along the way.
3. If that is the case, it probably means that we have been rude, mean and ungracious to others.
4. In that case, the Spirit may require that you go to that person and confess your offense.
5. **Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)** *Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*
6. Or perhaps the Lord wants you to grow in forgiveness.
7. In that case you will probably have incidents in your life for which you haven't forgiven the person.
8. **Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV)** *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

### **Reflecting and Reviewing**

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What five steps for growing in godly character are noted in today's reading?
3. How might we handle someone that we are struggling to forgive?



## Life Application

1. What is the character trait that you need to grow in? Go through Step 1 to confirm if this is the one.
2. Next, work through steps 2-5 (or at the least, start the process).

## Day 5

### Engaging the Mind

On Day 4, we looked at the first five of ten steps in growing our character. Today, we will consider the final five.

#### **Step 6: Receive inner healing, deliverance and freedom from destructive family patterns**

1. Sometimes the character trait cannot be changed because you need inner healing.
2. This is a lie-based or identity-based problem, and inner healing is required in such cases.
3. For others a demonic stronghold may be preventing spiritual growth in a particular area.
4. It is also a possibility that the negative character trait we are trying to replace is a behavioral bondage passed on through our family tree.

#### **Step 7: Tell someone and ask for their prayers**

1. That's not easy to do, but the Scriptures tell us that it comes with a promise.
2. **James 5:16 (NIV)** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*
3. Telling another human being is powerful, and note that we include a request for prayer as well.
4. You'll never be as intentional about growing a character trait in secret as you will be if you tell someone and ask for their prayer support.

#### **Step 8: Be filled with the Spirit**

1. We cannot grow godly character if the Spirit of Christ isn't powerfully working in us.
2. **2 Peter 1:3 (NIV)** *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*
3. And that's why we need the filling of the Spirit!
4. **Ephesians 5:18 (NIV)** *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*
5. The Greek present tense is saying, "Be being filled." In other words, continually be filled by the Spirit
6. **But how do we do that?**
7. Of course, a special event (like a retreat or conference) in which we experience the filling of the Spirit, is wonderful! We need it.
8. It is good when we intentionally put time aside just to come into God's presence and be refilled.
9. But it isn't the only way; nor is it the way we will do it most of our life time!
10. So how do we get refilled on a daily basis?
11. Paul gives his answer in a series of participles that follow the verb, "be filled."
12. **Ephesians 5:18-21 (ESV)** *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*
13. Paul named **four** ways to be filled:
  - a. When we minister to others – addressing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
  - b. When we worship the Lord – singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord.
  - c. When we are grateful to the Lord – giving thanks to God always and in all circumstances.
  - d. When we submit to one another – submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.
14. Jesus gave us another when He said ...
15. **John 15:5-7 (NIV)** *I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.*
16. When He remains or abides in us, it is essentially the same as being refilled by His Spirit.
17. And that's what these devotional lessons are all about – equipping us to **Abide** in Christ.

## **Step 9: Learn & memorize Scripture about your trait**

### **Part 1: Learn about your trait**

1. We need to proactively learn the truth about character.
2. That's why we need to learn and understand the reasons why growing godly character matters. Why?
3. When your mind receives such understanding, it is being renewed!
4. **Romans 12:2 (NIV)** *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.*
5. And when your mind is renewed, you will be motivated – or as Paul puts it – have the WILL (desire) to do God's good purposes!
6. **Philippians 2:12-13 (NIV)** *... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*
7. We'll have to search for and hunt for this truth!

**Part 2: Meditate (memorize Scripture) about your trait** – we will be learning more about this in a future lesson.

## **Step 10: Keep in step with the Spirit (stop & choose correctly)**

1. **Galatians 5:25 (NIV)** *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*
2. When you pray to grow in a particular area of your character, the Holy Spirit is more than happy to assist you in this. He wants to help you!
3. First He sets up tests so that you may begin to exercise the new patterns of character growth – that's the only way you can establish a new character trait.
4. God will not tempt you to sin, to fail and to fall (James 1:13) – the devil does that.
5. But He will test you, in order to grow you!
6. **James 1:2-3 (NIV)** *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*
7. ***The tests are designed to cause us to repeat the proper behavioral responses, until our responses become part of our habits.***
8. Though the test may blindside us, what happens next, is incredible.
9. Have you ever noticed that when you make a resolution to change in some kind of behavior, when the next test comes, time almost seems to freeze for a few moments?
10. A battle within you ensues, as you weigh your resolution, on the one hand, with how you feel like responding, on the other.
11. At this point **STOP – DON'T ACT**. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you.
12. Let's just say that it takes 10 seconds before you choose correctly and act out properly.
13. VICTORY! That one correct choice equals one **RIGHTEOUS ACT**.
14. You feel wonderful! You did the right thing!
15. *However, it **isn't** part of your character at this point.*
16. So, another test comes along: same time freeze; same internal battle; and once again you choose correctly – maybe this time it only took 9 seconds for you to choose properly.
17. A third test comes along – this time it only took 8 seconds; then 7 seconds; then 6, 5, 4 or 3 seconds.
18. Each deliberate act is becoming a little bit easier to choose.
19. There is still a pause, a bit of a battle, and a conscious choice.
20. But at this point, you already know that when the next test comes you will make the right choice.
21. It's becoming a **HABIT!** .
22. Life goes on, and you begin to forget that you have been intentionally making every effort to grow in a particular part of your character.
23. Then one day someone, like your spouse, says to you: "I've noticed something different about you; you don't (\_\_\_\_\_) anymore!"
24. Or the Holy Spirit taps you on the shoulder and reminds you that you were working on a particular character trait, and that you have been making the right choices, as a pattern in your life.
25. The choices are no longer conscious, but unconscious!

26. At this point you have moved from one righteous act to a habit and then to **DISPOSITION!**
27. It has now become part of your character!
28. This is how you now act; this is what you now become known for! Praise God!

### Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What five steps for growing in godly character are noted in today's reading?
3. How can we be filled with the Holy Spirit?
4. What does it mean to keep in step with the Spirit? Explain.

### Life Application

1. What is the character trait that you need to grow in?
2. Next, work through steps 6-10 (or at the least, start the process).

## Day 6

### Conclusion: A word of encouragement

1. You may have become discouraged by this point
2. Perhaps it's because you see how far you have to go
3. However, differences in your personality, life circumstances, spiritual maturity, upbringing, motivating factors such as love for Christ, and so on, will all influence your character development
4. We don't all start off at the same place in life. **SO, RELAX!**
5. What counts in an authentic faith is not where you are, but whether you are committed to obeying Christ and moving forward for His sake and for His glory.
6. He'll guide you by His Spirit at HIS pace – the one right for you. You need not worry or fret.
7. But, you DO need to obey and move forward.

### Obedience

1. For this final day, we want to focus on OBEDIENCE, as we as disciples are to be doers of the Word (James 1:22-25). The Bible clearly teaches that obedience is a clear echo of our love for God (1 John 5:3).
2. It is also through obedience that we find blessing and our lives are built on a rock (Matthew 7:24-27).
3. Take this lesson and quickly scan the title and headings – do not re-read the entire lesson.
4. Humbly go before God and ask – “**what is one step of obedience that I can take as a result of this weeks lesson?**”
5. Perhaps have a section in your journal where you record this step (and steps from future lessons). Or put it in the calendar on your phone. This shows God that we are both intending and committing to obey.
6. Write or speak out a prayer of commitment based on the step.

# GROW GODLY Character

## Godly Character Traits

1 Cor 13:1-13; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 4:31-5:4; Col 3:8-14; 2 Pet 1:3-11; 1 Tim 2:2-12; Jam 3:2-12

### Grow Your Thoughts

1. Bible knowledge – 2 Pet 1:5; 1 Tim 3:9
2. Meditation (memorization) – Deut 30:14; Josh 1:8; Psa 1:1-3; Rom 12:1-2
3. Think about: true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent & praiseworthy things – Phil 4:8

### Grow Your Emotions & Attitudes

1. Love (feel) – Gal 5:22; Rom 5:5
2. Joy – Gal 5:22; Rom 15:13
3. Gratitude – Col 3:16
4. Peace – Gal 5:22; Phil 4:5-7
5. Hope – 1 Cor 13:5; Rom 5:5; 15:13
6. Contentment – Phil 4:11-12; 1 Tim 6:6; Heb 13:5

### Grow Your Speech

1. Not malicious talkers or gossips – 1 Tim 3:11
2. Not quarrelsome – 1 Tim 3:3; 2 Tim 2:24
3. Not slanderous – Col 3:8; Eph 4:31
4. No foul language – Col 3:8; Eph 5:4
5. No complaining – Phi 2:14
6. Not boastful – 1 Cor 13:4
7. Not harsh – Prov 15:1
8. No foolish talk or coarse joking – Eph 5:4
9. No arguing – Phi 2:14
10. Honesty & integrity – Lev 19:11
11. Soft answers or responses – Prov 15:1
12. Edifying & gracious words – Eph 4:29; Col 4:6

### Grow Your Behaviors

1. Sexual purity – Col 3:5; Eph 5:3; Job 31:1
2. Patience – Gal 5:22; 1 Cor 13:4; Col 3:12
3. Kindness – Gal 5:22; 2 Pet 1:7;  
1 Cor 13:4; Col 3:12; Eph 4:32
4. Goodness – Gal 5:22; 2 Pet 1:5
5. Faithfulness – Gal 5:22
6. Gentleness – Gal 5:23; Col 3:12
7. Compassion – Col 3:12; Eph 4:32
8. Humility – Col 3:12
9. Forgiving – Col 3:13; Eph 4:32
10. Boldness – Phil 1:14; 2 Cor 3:12
11. Courage – 1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 5:6,8; Josh 1:9
12. Self-control – Gal 5:23; 2 Pet 1:6; 1 Tim 3:2
13. Love (people) – 2 Pet 1:7; Col 3:13
14. Anger/rage – 1 Cor 13:5; Col 3:8; Eph 4:31
15. Self-discipline – 2 Tim 1:7
16. Perseverance – 2 Pet 1:6
17. Not envious – 1 Cor 13:4
18. Not proud – 1 Cor 13:4
19. Not rude – 1 Cor 13:5
20. Not self-seeking – 1 Cor 13:5
21. Does not keep record of wrong – 1 Cor 13:5
22. Always protects – 1 Cor 13:6
23. Always trusts – 1 Cor 13:6
24. Hospitable – 1 Tim 3:2
25. Temperate – 1 Tim 3:2
26. No drunkenness – 1 Tim 3:3,8
27. Not a lover of money; dishonest gain; greed  
– 1 Tim 3:3,8; Eph 5:3

### Grow Your Motivations

1. Praise of man or praise of God? – 1 Cor 3:13-15; cf. 1 Cor 4:5; Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4
2. Envy, rivalry and selfish ambition, or love – Phil 1:14-17

## Reasons to Grow Godly Character

1. Character makes us fruitful in this lifetime
2. Character affects the outcome of our prayers
3. Character keeps us from falling from the faith
4. Character qualifies us for ministry
5. Character helps us win the war against the devil
6. Character reveals Christ to others
7. Character determines our heavenly reward

## Steps to Initiate Growth in Godly Character

1. Choose a character trait
2. Pray daily for that trait
3. Continue to renew your mind, by meditating on eternal things
4. Identify a time you failed, and listen in prayer for practical steps
5. Confess any bitterness or offense
6. Receive inner healing, deliverance & freedom from harmful family patterns
7. Tell someone & ask for their prayers
8. Be filled with the Holy Spirit
9. Learn & memorize Scripture about your trait
10. Keep in step with the Spirit (stop & choose correctly)

## Steps to Character Growth in Trials & Suffering

1. Worship God, knowing He is working all things out for your good
2. Go to Him daily for comfort & strength to carry on
3. Set your eyes on eternity by meditating on eternal things
4. Ask God to reveal what His purpose(s) in this are
5. Pray daily for that character trait
6. Confess any bitterness or offense
7. Receive inner healing, deliverance & freedom from harmful family patterns
8. Tell someone & ask for their prayers
9. Be filled with the Holy Spirit
10. Learn & memorize Scripture about your trait
11. Keep in step with the Spirit (stop & choose correctly)

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