

ARMED FOR WAR Discipleship Course

SECTION 2 – True Character: Saul vs David

Lesson 3 – What is God focused on?

We are going to begin to lay an incredible foundation of what God is really interested in, and what God is really focused on in our lives.

NKJV – John 15:1-8

¹“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear **fruit**, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears **fruit** He prunes, that it may bear more **fruit**. ³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear **fruit** of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵“I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much **fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much **fruit**; so you will be My disciples.”

We live in a day where many people believe that the sign of God's favor, or fruit, on someone's life is that they have money. In fact, there are a lot of people who have a lot of stuff, but don't have the favor of God. Jesus said:

NKJV – Mark 8:36

³⁶For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Then there are other people who believe that fruit relates to miracles, but Jesus said about the end times (in that day when He comes back).

NKJV – Matthew 7:22-23

²²Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Notice that Jesus never discounted the fact that the miracles were real. He simply said that although people did all those things in His name, they never knew Him. So, obviously the fruit that Jesus is talking about here cannot be miracles. Fruit is not the manifestations of these different things, and fruit is not prosperity.

We also live in a day where the church is obsessed with crowds. Many think that a church that has a big crowd is the one that has the favor of God. It can have 10,000 people that are not growing up or not maturing in the things of God. The concept here is to make church as comfortable as possible, or to

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make it the least offensive as possible so the people will come. We delude ourselves into believing that the crowds (who come and go through some level of religious ceremony along with us) are a sign of God's favor. We often say, "Look at the fruit," but crowds are **not** fruit.

What is the fruit that God is focused on in our lives?

God is much more focused on the **transformation of your character** than on the outward blessings or the outward things He can provide for you.

The 'fruit' typology is consistent throughout Scripture.

NKJV – Galatians 5:22&23

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

(See question in section "For Further Study", page 4)

The fruit Jesus is talking about is the **fruit of the Spirit** (the character and nature of Christ). God would rather have you live a life that takes you through drudgeries and suffering, in order to bring about those things in your life to create a character in you that is like His nature.

*The purpose of God
is for you to be transformed
into the image and nature of Christ.*

How could you describe character?

Character is who you are in private. Character is who you are when no one else is looking. Character is what you do when no one else is looking, when you cannot suffer negatively for what you've done.

NKJV – 1 Samuel 16:6&7

⁶So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before Him!" ⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does not see as man sees*; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

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(Verse 7), “But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” God says (paraphrasing), “What I'm interested in is what's happening on the inside.”

We're impressed by what's going on down here on Earth because we're looking at it all the time without comparison to Heavenly things. We're living in a day where we're so committed to personality instead of character. God says (paraphrasing), “No, no, no. I want to deal with your character. I want people of character. I'm not impressed by your beauty. I'm not impressed by your talent. I'm not impressed by your body. I'm not impressed by all those things. I'm not impressed by that at all. I want the character of My Son Jesus to be developed on the inside of you.”

Our public persona is more important to many of us than our private character. We care what people think about us.

Jesus also says (paraphrasing), “I'm coming back, not for a Church that looks so good, not for a Church that dresses so great, not for a Church that is so perfect in all the ways they do everything. I'm looking for a Church that's without spot or blemish. [That's an internal thing, not an external thing.] I'm looking for a people that are purified on the inside.”

NKJV – Ephesians 5:27

²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Who is God going to use in His Church?

[Those who have surrendered their life to Christ, and have had created in them a Christ-like character.](#)

This is why God in His end-time is going to raise up many unlikely individuals, many unlikely vessels.

NKJV – 1 Corinthians 1:26-28

²⁶For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. ²⁷But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

God said (paraphrasing), “I can use them because it's not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord.

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NKJV – Zechariah 4:6

⁶So he answered and said to me: “This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.

Character is what is going to come out and reach the lost, dying, and hurting world. Character is what God is after in your life, and what God wants to develop.

Your character

being conformed into the image of Christ

is more important to God than anything else.

For further study:

Question: How could you describe character?

NKJV – Galatians 2:20

⁵I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

NKJV – 2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

NKJV – Romans 8:29

²⁹For whom He foreknew, He [God] also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

AMP – Philippians 2:5

⁵Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: [Let Him be your example in humility:]

Question: What are some practical definitions for the Fruit of The Spirit?

NKJV – Galatians 5:22&23

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.