

## Week Three: February 28, 2018 – March 7, 2018



### **HIS CHARACTER**

I am becoming like Jesus in my attitudes, behaviours, and character.

If you can say “I have begun following Jesus and am depending on the Spirit of Jesus in my journey” and “I am being sent by Jesus to bless others and invite them to follow Him,” you are probably also experiencing the reality that is expressed this week. The evidence of life in the Spirit that is a large part of the first two sayings shows up in our lives in God’s work of transforming us to be like Jesus. This transformation is not merely acceptance of religious regulation on our lives. True personal holiness is the fruit of becoming like Jesus in our attitudes, behaviours and character.

Good behaviours oft repeated become habits. Good habits form the basis of character. But just behaving well enough and often enough is not the key to becoming like Jesus. It is in identifying with Jesus (lining our lives up with Jesus) that we develop good attitudes and healthy emotional responses to the challenges of life. There may be aspects of the focus of this week that are uncomfortable but as we depend on the Holy Spirit we will find that he gives us the moral courage to make the tough choices that go into character development.



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Aircraft are equipped with an Attitude Indicator which shows the pilot how the aircraft is oriented relative to the horizon. Believers have been given an Attitude Indicator as well. This is not a mechanical device but a personal communication as the Holy Spirit brings to our attention God's horizon which we are given in the Bible. Jesus' follower (and brother) James compared God's Word to a mirror (James 1:23). While a mirror reflects physical features we understand James' point to be that God's Word reflects things like our attitudes, behaviours, and character. The Bible is a record of divine self-revelation most fully revealed in the person of his son, Jesus. As we follow him we will have in view the divine horizon by which our lives are to orient. How is your flight?

Read and reflect on the following passage. You can record your reflections on the next page.

John 13:1-13

**Let's Get Personal:**

Following Jesus is not an exercise accomplished by the best of our ability. The Way of Jesus is not possible for us to walk except for the working of the Holy Spirit. What are some things you would like to have the Spirit transform in your attitudes, behaviours, and character? Tell Jesus.

## My Reflections

LISTEN – What did God say to me?

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TRUST – What do I have to believe in order to act on this?

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OBEY – What are some ways that I should act on this?

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We all have behaviours that might be appropriate at some times and places that would be totally inappropriate at other times and places. As you think about this you might want to reflect on how some behaviour that might have seemed to fit your life before you became a follower of Jesus just no longer fits. Yet, it is not only our behaviour that is to change. God's intention is to transform our attitudes and character as well. While we might think our behaviours are subject to our own decisions it is easily recognized that a change of attitudes and character really requires the work of the Holy Spirit.

Read and reflect on the following passage. You can record your reflections on the next page.

Galatians 5:22-26

**Let's Get Personal:**

You probably have seen some people who have been powerfully transformed by Jesus. You might have also seen some people who appear to be living the Christian life in their own ability and think it is about keeping a behaviour code.

How do you identify the difference between these two types?

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It is true that each of us has a certain emotional predisposition that seems to have inherited traits. Yet, it is equally true that our emotional profile has also been powerfully shaped by the people who share life space with us. Regardless where we might come down on this nature / nurture debate of psychology, all of us have observed that we can be affected by the company we keep. We certainly believe this to be the case with our children. So, the decision that we have in our choice of role model is an extremely important one.

As you may anticipate in a study that is entitled *The Way of Jesus*, the strong recommendation is to choose Jesus as that role model. The early Jesus follower that we know as the Apostle Paul understood this well and invited others to follow after him even as he followed after Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

Read and reflect on the following passage. You can record your reflections on the next page.

Philippians 2:1-8

**Let's Get Personal:**

The experience of following Jesus leads to a character change. It is not uncommon to find people who are following Jesus who have regrets from their old life. Those regrets often include being a poor example for others. If you have those regrets and if it is possible you may want to make opportunity to share with those people about the transformation that is occurring in your life.

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It doesn't seem to be a mere stereotype to say that the topic of discussion easily turns to work in a gathering of men. Yet, for the purpose of investigating character it might be of greater interest if people would talk about what they like to do on their days off. Instead of interrogating others on this we might want to look at ourselves and think about what our leisure activity shows about our character. Do we expend our leisure time on ourselves or do we invest it in others?

Read and reflect on the following passages. You can record your reflections on the next page.

1 Peter 4:7-11

**Let's Get Personal:**

When you serve others do you find the greatest satisfaction in gaining recognition for that service or in knowing that you have served in an important way that might not ever receive public recognition? What does that say about your character?

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## **The Anchor for this Week**

If you want to see the non-abbreviated listing of the 10 Commandments you can look in Exodus 20. For the purpose of the Way of Jesus training they have been abbreviated to make it a little easier to memorize. If you haven't memorized them already, see how you can do by the end of today.

## **The Ten Commandments Abbreviated**

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy...Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony.
10. You shall not covet



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Even though we want to be known as people of good character we don't always like what it takes to produce that good character. The apostle Paul wrote that perseverance is what produces character. If this sounds like work it was probably intended to suggest that. If this isn't bad enough, we are reminded that it is suffering that produces perseverance (Romans 5:3-4). This idea that adversity is character building is not always comforting. Consider your present situation and thank God if he is building your character. Whatever our circumstance we need to be more like Jesus.

Read and reflect on the following passages. You can record your reflections on the next page.

Romans 5:3-4

James 1:2-4

I Peter 1:3-9

**Let's Get Personal:**

What are some ways that you have grown in character during this past year? What are some points that God is working on in your life at the present time? Do you have anyone who holds you accountable and encourages your growth? If you don't then maybe you should find someone this week.

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The following prayer is attributed to Francis of Assisi:

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

This prayer is a way of expressing that we find our life by losing it. In the Way of Jesus Handbook it is pointed out that we must not overlook that the aspirations expressed here are only possible as we fix our eyes on Jesus. In fact, “If we stop short of fixing our eye on Jesus, it ceases to be about our living relationship with the living Lord, and it becomes about our ‘spiritual quest.’” However, as long as that caveat is taken under consideration there is a lot to consider in this famous prayer.

Read and reflect on the following passages. You can record your reflections on the next page.

Philippians 3:7-11

**Let’s Get Personal:**

This ends the third week of the Way of Jesus training. In the focus on character are there things that have made you uncomfortable? Are there some encouraging signs that you are in fact becoming like Jesus in attitudes, behaviours, and character?

During Lent remember to thank Jesus for coming into the world and walking the way of the cross so you could have a new life.

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