

Christian Character—Shepherding a Child's Heart

Introduction: Fruit Trees

Definitions

⇒ **Virtue**: Behavior showing high moral standards.

⇒ **Attitude**: A way of thinking or feeling about someone or something.

⇒ **Character quotes**

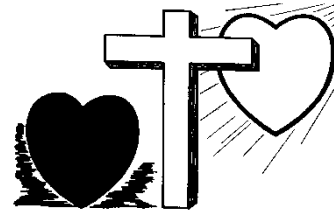
“Character is who you are when no one is looking.” (Warren Wiersbe)

“Success is all about character - having a heart molded into the shape of God's heart.”
(Rick Warren)

⇒ **Character includes thoughts, feelings, desires and motives. It is words, looks, action.**
Character is the outward reflection of the spiritual condition of the heart and mind.
It's moving from a selfish nature, which we're born with, to a Christ-like nature. It's a lifelong process.” (Dr. Kay Kuzma)

Biblical Basis

- * I Samuel 16:7
- * Jeremiah 17:9,10
- * Luke 6:45
- * Proverbs 23:7
- * Luke 2:19, Deuteronomy 6:5, Psalm 105:25, Ephesians 6:5, Ezek. 14:4, I Samuel 2:1, Proverbs 4:23, Romans 10:9
- * Children need a new heart. They need the Gospel.



A Child is Capable of Being Shaped

⇒ “A child's spiritual character will be shaped early! It will either be shaped by believers or it will be shaped by nonbelievers!”

⇒ By three years old: the child's basic PERSONALITY is established!

⇒ By five years old: the BRAIN is almost the adult size, with over half of its capacity in place.

⇒ By seven years old: the child's CHARACTER is almost a miniature of what he/she will be as an adult

(Adapted from *Teaching Preschoolers* (Warrenton, MO: Child Evangelism Fellowship, 1999) p.60

A Piece of Clay

I took a piece of plastic clay
And idly fashioned it one day,
And as my fingers pressed it still,
It moved and yielded to my will.

I came again when days were passed;
The bit of clay was hard at last,
The form I gave it still it bore,
But I could change that form no more.

I took a piece of living clay
And touched it gently day by day,
And molded with power and art
A young child's soft and yielding heart.

I came again when years were gone'
It was a mind I looked upon;
That early impress still he wore,
And I could change that form no more.

(Henrietta Mears, quoted by Elizabeth George in *A Woman's High Calling*)

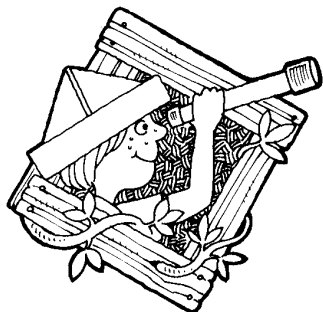


Character

“What one is, that is the supreme thing. Sincerity, honesty, unselfishness, intelligence, the spirit of cooperation and justice, cheerfulness, courtesy, concentration and all the rest help make one what he is. What one is— that is CHARACTER. Strong, fine character stands the test of life with all its danger and pitfalls - nothing else does.

Everyone has the power of making his character what it ought to be. The power lies in the little words “Yes” and “No.” saying, “Yes” to all that life offers which is good and right, and saying “No” to all that can weaken and defile, will form character strong, pure and fine.”

Margaret Slattery *Of America I* (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Books, 1999) p. 5.



The Five Watches

Watch your thoughts— they become words.
Watch your words—they become actions.
Watch your actions—they become habits.
Watch your habits— they become character.
Watch your character— it becomes your destiny.

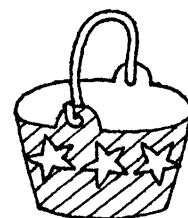
(Elizabeth George, *A Woman's High Calling*.)

Four Spiritual Walls of Protection for the Family

* Godly Parents

* Sincere Love

Every child has a “love bucket” that needs to be filled on a daily basis.



* Persistent Prayer “Building Character on your Knees”

(Adapted from “Building Character on your Knees” by Becky Winn. *The Teaching Home*, May/June 1998, p. 15.)

Pray for their relationship with God.

That they may know the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:18)

That they may accept Christ as their Saviour as a child (II Timothy 3:15)

That they will “let the Lord have His way” in their lives (Philippians 2:13)

That they will have a heart for God and desire to worship with other believers (Psalm 122:1)

That they will be caught and disciplined when guilty (Psalm 119:71)

Pray for Godly Character (use your bookmark)

That they will develop the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22,23)

That they will hate sin (Psalm 97:10)

That they will respect all those in authority (I Samuel 15:23)

That they will learn to control their anger (Ephesians 4:26)



Pray for Protection with a Hedge of Protection

From the Evil One (John 17:15)

Pray for Family Relationships

That they will obey parents (Their obedience should be immediate, complete, without negotiation and with a right heart attitude.) (Proverbs 1:8,9; Colossians 3:20)

That they will accept discipline (Proverbs 3:11,12; 23:13)

That they will love their brothers and sisters (Matthew 5:22, I John 2:10)

That the parents will draw our children to the Lord (Matthew 5:16)

Pray for their Relationship with Friends

That they will choose godly friends (Proverbs 27: 6,9)

That they will be kept from being led astray (Proverbs 1:10)

That they will develop firm Biblical convictions (Ephesians 4:14)

Pray for their Future

That they will meet their mate at the right time (Proverbs 19:14)

That they will choose their career wisely (Proverbs 3:6)

That they will make use of their gifts, talents, and abilities to God's glory (Matthew 25:21)

I Chronicles 28: 9 (NKJV)

“As for you, my son (my daughter) _____ KNOW the God of your father,
And SERVE Him with a loyal heart and with a WILLING MIND, for the Lord searches all
hearts and understands all the intents of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you.”

I Chronicles 29: 18 (NKJV)

Keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of _____ and fix their heart
toward YOU!”

4. Word of God

They will understand the Gospel as explained through a tool like Wordless Book or Flipper
Flapper

They will learn to read the Bible personally

They will see Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Friend

Their heroes will be Men of Faith (*Patriarchs, Joseph, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Esther, David*)

They will enjoy Topical Studies (*Living God's Way*)

They will love Christian books (*The Princess and the Kiss, The Squire and the Scroll, God's
Wisdom for Little Girls, God's Wisdom for Little Boys*)

Conclusion: Will you aim for the heart of the child for true Christian character to
develop?