

Cultivating Christlike Character

1 Peter 3:8-12

PART THREE

Introduction

“contempt” ‘the belief that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, worthless, or deserving scorn.’

Change that does not begin in the heart is destined to fail.

- I. **The Inner Principles of Christlike CHARACTER (v8).**
- II. **The Outer Production of Christian CONDUCT (vv. 9-12).**

5 INNER PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER (v8)

1. Unity
2. Sympathy
3. Love
4. Compassion
5. Humility

THE OUTER PRODUCTION OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT (vv. 9-12)

“Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing” (v9).

Do not retaliate.

“do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling”

“Do not say, ‘I will do to him as he has done to me; I will pay the man back for what he has done’” (Proverbs 24:29).

“Vengeance is mine, and I will repay” (Deuteronomy 32:35).

“For we know him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge his people’” (Hebrews 10:30).

It’s hard to determine who suffers more harm, the vengeful or his enemy.

“He that studieth revenge, keepeth his own wounds open” (Francis Bacon).

How to avoid being overcome by a vengeful spirit:

1. **A vengeful spirit is overcome by a *humble* heart.**

“When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things” (1 Corinthians 4:12-13).

“the scum of the world, the refuse of all things” = the scum scraped off the bottom of a dirty dish or pot.

“The Lord lifts up the humble; he casts the wicked to the ground” (Psalm 147:6).

“Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor” (Proverbs 3:34).

“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom” (Proverbs 11:2).

“Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility” (Zephaniah 2:3).

“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5).

2. A vengeful spirit is overcome by a heart of *forgiveness*.

“Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense” (Proverbs 19:11).

Stop Counting! Keeping a record of how many times you forgave someone panders to our pride.

“Then Peter came up and said to him, ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven’” (Matthew 18:21-22).

“So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart” (Matthew 18:35).

“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable in others because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you” (C.S. Lewis).

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

3. A vengeful spirit is overcome by *love*.

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:44-45).

“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses” (Proverbs 10:12).

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

If you want to help the evil accuser with the reviling tongue find his way to repentance, then show him love, give him grace (cf. Romans 2:4).

“Love is the only fire that is hot enough to melt the iron obstinacy of a creature’s will” (Maclaren).

“Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends” (Proverbs 17:9).

The capacity to quench the fires of retaliation is only possible when *love* reigns in the heart of the believer.

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7).

4. A vengeful spirit is overcome by *faith*.

Vengeance finds no foothold in a heart where *faith* is strong.

“continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:23).

“Trust in the Lord, and do good.... Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday” (Psalm 37:3, 5-6).

“Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good” (1 Peter 4:19).

Jesus asked: “And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Luke 18:7-8). Good question.

“Do not say, ‘I will repay evil’; wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you” (Proverbs 20:22).

Romans 12:14-21

“or reviling for reviling”

“on the contrary, bless”

Love them unconditionally. “Love your enemies.”

“bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you” (Luke 6:28).

“for to this you were called”

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:21-23).

“that you may obtain a blessing”