

Cultivating Christlike Character

1 Peter 3:8-12

PART TWO

- I. **The Inner principles of Christlike CHARACTER (v8).**
- II. **The outer principles of Christian CONDUCT (vv. 9-12).**

5 INNER PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER (v8)

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

4. “a tender heart”

“tender heart” Gk *eusplagchnos*; ‘full of *compassion* and pity for the ills of others.’

“And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’” (Matthew 9:35-38).

Compassion moves from simply sharing the grief to acting to bring relief.

“Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way”” (Matthew 15:32).

“**compassion**” Gk *splagchnizomai*; ‘to feel deeply or viscerally, to yearn.’

“But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us” (Mark 9:22).

“**help us**” Gk *boetheo*; to run toward a cry for help; to render assistance.

“But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back’” (Luke 10:33-35).

“You go, and do likewise” (Luke 10:37).

“Man may dismiss compassion from his heart, but God never will” (Wm. Cowper).

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:12-14).

Love generates the tears of sympathy that fuels the heart of compassion that moves the body to help.

Love looks at sinners differently.

5. “a humble mind”

“a humble mind” Gk *tapeinophron*; ‘lowliness of mind.’

True humility is not berating yourself unrelentingly, or belittling yourself unrealistically. It is to think accurately about yourself.

Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it’s thinking of yourself less” (C.S. Lewis).

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Romans 12:3-5).

“For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7).

“True humility is a kind of self-annihilation, and this is the center of all virtues” (J. Wesley).

Where love is the lifeblood of Christianity, humility is its beautiful adornment.

Without a true humble mind, no one can get anywhere near God. Humility invites intimacy with God.

“But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word” (Isaiah 66:2).

“For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite’” (Isaiah 57:15).

“For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar” (Psalm 138:6)

“But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, ‘God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (James 4:6).

As light dispels darkness, so humility melts away anger, jealousy, and bitterness of heart.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

The cross was the strongest, most vivid sign of humiliation. So the humility of Christ should remain in our hearts and at the center of our Christian faith.

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:1-8).

“We must view humility as one of the most essential things that characterizes true Christianity” (Edwards).

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:3-4).