

# Cultivating Christlike Character

1 Peter 3:8-12

## Introduction

The inner principles of Christlike CHARACTER (v8).

The outer principles of Christian CONDUCT (vv. 9-12).

## 5 key characteristics of Jesus Christ:

- † His mind is in perfect harmony with the Father's will (John 12:49-50)
- † He is called our *sympathetic* High Priest (Hebrews 4:15)
- † He loves the brethren perfectly and eternally (John 13:1)
- † He has a tender heart of compassion for people (Matthew 9:36)
- † He is the humble Servant (Matthew 21:5; Philippians 2:8)

## 5 INNER PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER

### “unity of mind”

Does *not* mean:

- *blind ignorance* of error;
- *placid indifference* to error;
- *disengaged discernment* in responding to error.

**Peace in the absence of truth is no virtue.**

**You cannot have *unity of mind* with someone who has not the *mind of Christ* (1 Corinthians 2:16).**

“This oneness of mind does not demand the monotony of similarity, but unity in variety” (F.B. Meyer).

**Allow latitude in non-essentials.**

**Unity is the central victory of the cross.**

“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father” (Ephesians 2:14-18).

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:1-6).

- Beware of conviction formed by convention alone.
- Beware of ‘keeping an open mind’ regarding your beliefs. When “tolerance” of any view becomes the ultimate virtue.
- Beware new approaches to interpreting long-standing, well established biblical orthodoxy.

**Satan’s Scheme: *divide and conquer*. Christ’s Credo: *unity of truth is impregnable*.**

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” (Psalm 133:1).

“**sympathy**” Gk *sumpathes*; ‘adj. from *sun*, together or with, and *pathos*, suffering, misfortune.’

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (Colossians 3:12).

**The word literally means ‘to suffer *with*,’ ‘to suffer *together*.’**

“Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body” (Hebrews 13:3).

The apostle Paul expressed this shared feeling of sympathy when he wrote: “Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?” (2 Corinthians 11:29).

“so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.... Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another” (Romans 12:15-16).

“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Corinthians 12:26).

**Replace judgmental anger, frustration, or irritation over someone’s sin with sympathetic grief.**

“for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world” (John 12:47).

“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me’” (Romans 15:1-3).

“May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (Romans 15:5-7).

**“brotherly love”** *Gk philadelphoi*

**Love is the life blood of the body of Christ.**

“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 3:13-14).

**Love is the wellspring from which all other Christian virtues bloom and grow.**

“For the love of Christ controls/compels us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Jesus is “the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:29).

“For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin/Father. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers” (Hebrews 2:11).

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection” (Romans 12:9-10).