Christian Character

A Christian should stand out in the crowd. Not in the sense that he should purposely call undue attention to himself. But, from the perspective of character a Christian should be distinct from the world. Simple observation makes it clear that immorality, unrighteousness, and ungodliness are generally the norm within our society. A Christian's lifestyle should naturally exhibit godliness and faithfulness. He should be determined to avoid sin and its consequences in his life. A life with that kind of focus is exemplary. It's different, of a higher caliber than is common to society. As a Christian lives his life by that standard of character he will stand out in the crowd.

 But how does a Christian develop that kind of character? How does he incorporate it into his life, make it a natural feature of whom and what he is? The apostle Paul gives guidance along this line in his letter to the Philippians (***Philippians 4:8-9***). He gives a long list of qualities that contribute to Christian character. He states, *"Finally, brethren whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, meditate on these things. [9]The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you"*. He then gives a key instruction as to how to develop these traits within one's personal life: *"meditate on these things."*

Christian character does not happen by accident. Neither is it bestowed by God upon a person as a gift. An individual must set his mind to develop within his life the high quality traits that exemplify Christian character. Paul puts it this way: *"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit"* (***Romans 8:5***). When our lives are actively focused on a spiritual emphasis, there won't be as much opportunity for the devil to lure us into sin through fleshly desires. *"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish"* (***Galatians 5:16-17).***

The characteristics Jesus taught His disciples in ***Matthew 5:2-12*** (*Beatitudes*), the *"fruit of the Spirit"* (***Galatians 5:22-25***), and the *Christian Virtues* (***2 Peter 1:5-11***) all stress similar qualities of Christian character as those included in Paul's letter to the Philippians. Does your life exhibit the caliber of character exhorted and admonished by Christ and the apostles Paul and Peter? Study, think, focus, and set your mind to develop the Christian character that is God's will for your life. Your life here in this world will be better, and you can look forward to the ultimate life in Heaven for all eternity.