

LIVING LIKE JESUS

2 Corinthians 3:2-3, "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."

John Wooden, former basketball coach at UCLA said, "Be more concerned with your character than with your reputation. Your character is what you really are while your reputation is merely what others think you are." As believers we should all have the desire to want to have a good name, and to have people picture us with a good and positive mindset when our names are mentioned. And down deep inside everyone has the desire to know that their life makes a difference in others. We want to know that others can look at us and say, "That person loves Jesus. That is a person of faith. I can tell that person is a Christian."

Character can be good or bad, and it will be determined by certain distinctive qualities. You need to look at how you are living, what your habits are, and whether or not it all lines up with the expectations of Jesus. We need to ask the question, "What does Jesus think about my character?"

Mark Twain said, "Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits." His statement implies the negative about others, and another problem with it is what is so prevalent with most people, is they see the need for other people to improve their character, and not themselves.

When God sees us put on our Sunday best around the rest of the church, and then go home and act like Christianity is the farthest thing from our life, which one does God believe? When we seemingly offer praise to God and then criticize something about a brother or sister in Christ, or something about His church as a whole, which one does God believe?

Henry Wingblade used to say that "Christian character is hidden deep inside us. It is unseen, like the soup carried on a tray high over a waiter's head. No one knows what's inside - unless the waiter is bumped and he trips! Just so, people don't know what's inside us until we've been bumped. But if Christ is living inside, what spills out is the fruit of the Spirit."

I personally believe we don't have to wait until we are bumped before people can see our character. It should be so evident to others that we are Christians. Once again we need to ask, "Can others we meet see Jesus in us?" What can people say of your character today? Can they say, "He or she is a person of their word? They are authentic? That person really does love the Lord? Their faith is seen in the way they live and worship? They practice the presence of Jesus in their worship and in their lives?" If not, then it is time for a change of heart.

Roy Goodlet is a retired minister and a member of Murphy Church of Christ. Email him @ royfcc@yahoo.com.