

The Character Quality Method

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Week 7

Bible Study Methods

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Introduction

A major goal of Christian living is to develop Christ-like character in our lives. We want to work to become more like Christ by replacing bad character traits with good ones. Before we can work on these qualities we must be able to identify them. This study is designed to help you identify negative and positive characteristics and to be able to understand them so that you will be able to work on setting aside negative qualities and building positive ones.

Definition

This method involves find out what the Bible says about a particular characteristic of a person, with heavy emphasis on personal application.

It differs from the Biographical method in that here you are studying the characteristics of a person, rather than the person himself.

These qualities can be negative, positive, or both.

Why this method?

The purpose of this method of Bible study is to identify character qualities taught in the Bible with the view of learning how to avoid negative ones and building the positive ones.

For example, if we want to become meek, we would have to know what meekness is before we can really apply it.

Some tips on Personal Character Development

1. Only work on one quality at a time. It takes a concentrated effort to see how one quality applies to every area of your life. It is far better to build one quality solidly into your life than to work on several weak ones.
2. Don't rush it. Character development takes time. It took more than a week to make you the way you are, it will take more than a week to break you of it. Sometimes it takes months or even years of God working in your life before the quality becomes part of your daily walk.
3. Stay with that one quality until you get victory in that specific area. Don't skip around trying to work on many qualities. Remember, it is quality of the quality that matters.
4. Be alert for a negative quality that is actually positive, but being misused. Realize that God wants to turn your weaknesses into strengths. For example, if you are rigid, legalistic, and unbending, it might be

that the quality of self-discipline is being misused. The quality needs to be tempered with compassion and concerns for others.

5. Trust the Holy Spirit to build these qualities into your life. In the final analysis, it is God's power that reproduces the Fruit of the Spirit in your life. God alone changes character.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

The Form

Name the Quality

1. Select the quality and write it down
2. Look it up in an English Dictionary and jot down the definition of the word
3. List any synonyms or related words

Name the Opposite Quality

1. Write down the antonym (the opposite quality)
2. write out its dictionary definition
3. List any synonyms or similar words
4. There may be more than one opposite

Example:

Unfaithfulness is the opposite of faithfulness

Faith and doubt

Faith and apathy

Faith and fear

Do a Simple Word Study

Look up the Bible definition of the quality you are studying.

Find ways it is used in scriptural contexts; then check a Bible Dictionary, encyclopedia, or words study book for the way it was used in Biblical times.

Example:

Meekness in the original Greek meant "breaking something and bringing it under submission" and was used to describe the training of horses. A stallion would still have all the power and strength of its wild days, but is now under the master's control. Meekness, therefore, is not weakness, but power and strength under the control of Jesus.

Find some Cross-References

Using cross-references will give you additional insights from other portions of the Bible. ***Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.***

Use your concordance and topical Bible to find all the verses you can relating to this quality.

Don't forget to look up the synonyms, as well.

Write down the cross-reference and a brief description of that verse.

Ask some of these questions about the quality as you meditate on the cross-reference verses:

- What are the benefits this trait can bring me?
- What are some bad consequences this trait can bring me?
- What are benefits this trait can bring to others?
- What are some bad consequences this trait can bring to others?
- Is there any promise from God related to this trait?
- Is there any warning or judgment related to this trait?
- Is there a command related to this trait?
- What factors produce this trait?
- Did Jesus have anything to say about this quality? What?
- What writer talked about this quality the most?
- Is this trait symbolized by anything in Scripture? Is that significant?
- Is this trait listed with a group of qualities? What is the relationship between them? What does this suggest?
- What Scriptures tell me directly what God thinks of this trait?
- Do I want more or less of this trait in my life?

Now, write a brief summary of the Bible's teaching on this quality. You may list any lessons or principles you learned. You may want to paraphrase a few key verses.

Do a Brief Biographical Study

Find at least one person (more if possible) who displayed this attribute. Write down the Scriptures that refer to it and ask these kinds of questions:

- What shows this quality in his/her life?
- How did this quality affect his/her life?
- Did the quality help or hinder his/her growth to maturity? How?
- What results did it produce in his/her life?

Example:

Find a Memory Verse

Write down at least one verse from your cross-reference or biographical portion of the study that really speaks to you and that you intend to memorize during the following week.

Select a Situation or Relationship to Work On

This is the application part of the study. Think of an area in your life in which God wants you to work on this character quality – avoiding it if it's negative or building it up if it's positive.

Situational Example:

Relational Example:

Plan a specific project

This is the practical part of your application and is actually the working out of the previous part.

Example:

Working on the trait of gracefulness

Project: I will write letters to 5 people who have been a blessing to me saying , “I am grateful to you because...”

Write out a Personal Illustration

A few days after you have completed the first eight steps, write out an illustration of how you were able to work on this quality. This is the “Provable” part of your application.

Be specific and write down where you have succeeded and where you might have failed. In just a short time you will have developed a whole set of examples of God is working in your life.

These illustrations serve a number of purposes:

- When you get discouraged, read over your backlog of illustrations to see how God has worked in you.
- If you are disciplining someone, these illustrations are great to teach him.
- When you are sharing your testimony or teaching a class, these examples add a personal element to your presentation.

Final Thoughts

God often builds character in our lives by putting us in situations where we are tempted to do the opposite. For example, God may teach you honesty by placing you in a situation where you are tempted to be dishonest.

You don't teach somebody to swim unless you get them wet!!!