

As Christians, we should strive to develop a balanced, well-rounded character

The thing that we call “balance” is one of the hardest things in life to achieve. Compared to the ease of working on just one or two areas of our conduct, it is much more challenging to tend to our character as a whole. But we can’t afford to ignore any of the basic issues that are involved in being a Christian. ***As Christians, we should strive to develop a balanced, well-rounded character.***

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because of their lop-sided emphasis on certain aspects of God’s will and their serious neglect of other matters that were actually more important. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others” (Mt. 23:23). Notice, first of all, that Jesus clearly said that some things constituted the “weightier matters” of God’s law. But second, notice that Jesus said that the lesser things must also be taken care of: “These [the weightier matters] you ought to have done, without neglecting the others [the lesser things].” Jesus is calling us to be balanced in both our character and our conduct.

One of the ways we sometimes get unbalanced is in putting so much emphasis on external actions that we neglect to work on the inner spirit that should motivate our actions. Perhaps one reason why we pay more attention to our actions than to our heart is that externals are somewhat easier to get right. But we are taught in the Scriptures that what God primarily wants is our heart. If our inner character is not conformed to His character, then our outward actions are relatively meaningless. Jesus said, “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:23,24). Without question, the “truth” of our actions is important — but so is the “spirit.”

Let’s work on being more balanced. And this week, let’s do that by looking at five different words used to describe the Lord’s people in the Scriptures. These words look at our responsibilities from different viewpoints — and by looking at them all, we can have a more balanced understanding.

Monday: Acts 26:28

Key Idea: The word “Christian” means that we must make it our aim to be Christ-like.

Questions for Family Growth: Who is a “Christian”? How does one become a Christian? Is it right to wear the Lord’s name but not emulate His character and His way of life? What did Jesus say in Lk. 6:46-49?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 20:15.

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 1:1,2

Key Idea: The word “saint” means that we must make it our aim to be holy, sanctified to the Lord.

Questions for Family Growth: To whom was this letter by the apostle Paul addressed? Who are the Lord’s “saints”? What does the word “sanctify” mean? What do we mean by the word “holy”? What does **1 Pt. 1:13-16** say about holiness?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 20:16.**

Wednesday: Acts 11:25,26

Key Idea: The word “disciple” means that we must make it our aim to follow and learn from Christ.

Questions for Family Growth: What does the word “disciple” mean in the New Testament? According to **Jn. 15:8**, how do we show ourselves to be truly the Lord’s disciples? Concerning discipleship, what did Jesus say in **Jn. 8:31** and **Jn. 13:35**?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 20:17.**

Thursday: 1 Timothy 4:12

Key Idea: The word “believer” means that we must make it our aim to live by our faith in Christ.

Questions for Family Growth: What must we do to be “believers,” as the term is used in the Scriptures? Is more involved than simply accepting the fact that Jesus is the Christ? What does it mean to “walk by faith” (**2 Cor. 5:7**)? What does James say in **Jas. 2:26**?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 20:18.**

Friday: 2 Thessalonians 1:3

Key Idea: The word “brothers” means that we must make it our aim to love those in the Lord’s family.

Questions for Family Growth: According to **1 Jn 5:1**, is it possible to love God without loving His family? What does **1 Jn. 4:20,21** say? What are some practical ways that being brothers and sisters in the Lord’s family should make a difference in our lives?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 20:19.**

Gary Henry — *WordPoints.com*