



## The Importance of Character

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WHEN HAVE YOU SEEN SOMEONE PRETEND TO BE SOMETHING THEY'RE NOT?

## The POINT >

God equips us for Christlike character.

### > 2 PETER 1:1-11

<sup>1</sup> Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup> May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

<sup>3</sup> His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

<sup>4</sup> by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

<sup>5</sup> For this very reason, make every effort to supplement

your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

<sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

<sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup> For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

<sup>11</sup> For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



# THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

## FACT:

Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), and the satanic leaf-tailed gecko is a reptile with a devilish appearance that pretends to be a dead leaf.<sup>1</sup>



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // PEOPLE

Growing in Christlikeness is accomplished as we act intentionally to pursue Christ and as God works in our lives.

My freshman year of college, there was a guy on my hall (we'll call him Daniel) who had an interesting living arrangement. This was Daniel's story: Because he didn't get along with his roommate in another dorm, he slept on the floor in the room of a couple guys on my hall. Makes sense, right? However, this was the real story: Daniel had been accepted at my school and received some scholarship money but failed to take all the necessary steps to begin school. When he arrived on campus, he found out he wasn't actually enrolled. So Daniel asked a few friends he knew on my hall if he could crash at their place. For the entire school year, he lived as if he was a student but never went to class. All the while, his parents believed he was excelling in college.

People commonly buy into a fake-it-til-you-make-it mentality, but for Daniel, it was only a matter of time before his lies were exposed. People sometimes think they can take dishonest shortcuts in life. The truth is, though, that our experience is tied to the kind of people we are. Character counts! We all have our weaknesses, yet Jesus has made real change and growth available to those who are willing to trust and follow Him. This takes effort and discipline, but it brings real benefits when we commit to doing the work.

## 2 PETER 1:1-3

**1** How, like Peter when he was young in his faith, are you sometimes naive or immature?

**2** Why is it necessary that we believe people truly can change?



*We live in a broken world, and we will either be shaped by its values, or we will be shaped by God's power.*  
*#BSFLCharacter Counts*

## 2 PETER 1:4-8

**3** What does it mean that we grow in Christ-like character by God's power?

**4** What is our responsibility in this growth?

**5** From a biblical perspective, how would you describe the "evil desire" that corrupts people?

## 2 PETER 1:9-11

**6** How do we protect ourselves against the lies of the world?

**7** According to the three points that confirm genuine faith, where might you need to grow the most?

**8** How are you making every effort to experience transformation?



# LIVE IT OUT



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // PEOPLE

*Growing in Christlikeness is accomplished as we act intentionally to pursue Christ and as God works in our lives.*

As we follow Jesus, live in obedience to His Word, and strive to honor God with our words and actions, the Spirit works in our lives to shape us to be more and more like Jesus.

## > CHRIST

As followers of Jesus, we are called to live like He did, and we see an example of perfect character through the life of Christ.

**9** Write down three words you see as characteristic of Jesus. How did Jesus live these out?

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**10** How will you commit to living out this same kind of character?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

**PEOPLE**

FAMILY

COMMUNITY  
& WORLD

## ➤ COMMUNITY

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This week, discuss 2 Peter 1:5-7 with a group of Christian friends. Share one quality where you see room to grow in your own life. Commit to working on this area and ask your friends for accountability.

**11** Commit to praying for one another to grow in character.



## ➤ CULTURE

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The Great Commission tells us to make disciples of all nations. This involves not only sharing the gospel with non-believers in our lives but supporting our message with the ways we live.

**12** What are some ways your lifestyle supports the gospel? What are some ways it might hinder the gospel?

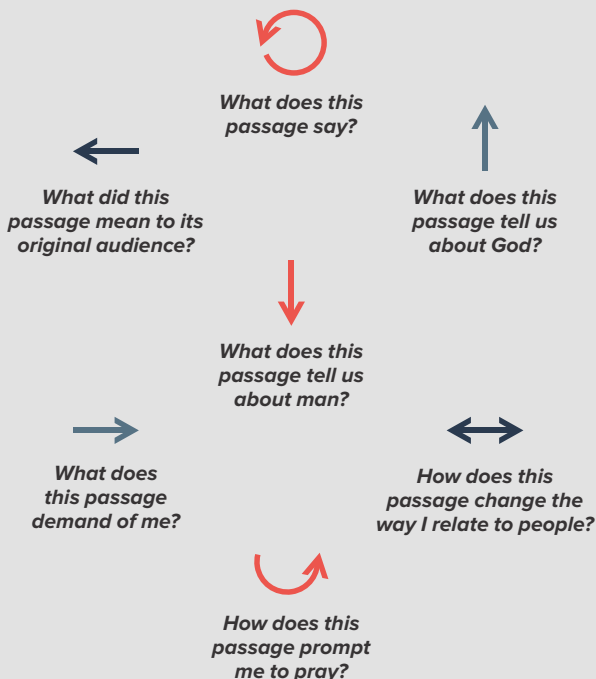
**13** Share the gospel with a non-believing friend. Make sure your character helps, and not hinders, your message.



# DAILY DEVOTIONS



## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



## Day One

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:29

Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian church because although they'd put their faith in Jesus and had committed their lives to Him, they'd fallen into old and sinful patterns of living. In 1 Corinthians 15:25-26, Paul said that because all things are subject to Jesus as the King of creation, one day He will ultimately and finally defeat sin and death. The baptism of the dead in this verse likely refers to us following the example of faithful people who have gone before us. They were devoted to Jesus throughout their lives, and though they died, we can know that they will one day rise from the grave to dwell eternally in heaven. Ultimately, we are to follow Jesus in all the ways we live. Additionally, though, it's important that we have faithful people in our lives who we look up to who provide an example of faithful living.

- > **Who do you look up to as an example of faithful living?**
- > **Why can we have hope that those we love who have died will rise again?**

## Day Two

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:30-31



The apostle Paul pursued Jesus in a way that he continually faced danger (2 Cor. 11:21-33). Further, the Corinthian church existed within a culture that wasn't friendly to Christianity, and there was certainly risk associated with their commitment to Jesus. To live this way makes no sense whatsoever from an earthly perspective. So Paul asked rhetorically, "Why do we live in a way that's so risky and invites such danger?" The implied answer is very clear: Because, even if we die for our faith, we know that we share in the resurrection of Jesus. In Matthew 16:25-26, Jesus asked what benefit it would be if someone gained the whole world but lost his soul eternally. If we want to gain eternal life in Christ, we must lay down our earthly lives. If we seek to save our lives, living selfishly and in ways that align with the world's values, we'll ultimately lose it. But if we give up our lives to Jesus, we'll receive eternal life in Him.

- **Why was Paul willing to take such risks for the gospel?**
- **How do the ways you live show that you've laid down your life for Jesus?**

## Day Three

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:32

It's possible that Paul had been forced into the arena to fight wild animals. However, this isn't likely because as a Roman citizen, he would have been protected against such a fate. Further, there's no mention of this kind of event in Acts. The "wild beasts" Paul fought against were likely the fierce crowds who had risen against him. Paul continually faced opposition because of his commitment to the gospel; the danger he faced was very real, and his body bore the scars for his choices. The ways Paul lived provided little here-and-now benefit, and from an earthly perspective, it would have been better to indulge in the pleasures of the world. However, the earthly reality is not the ultimate reality. Because Jesus rose from the grave, and because we know that those who trust and follow Him will one day be raised too, we give up earthly pleasures for eternal ones. Paul wanted the church to know that the risks associated with following Jesus are worth it!

- **What earthly pleasures is God calling you to give up in following Jesus?**
- **If there's no guarantee of earthly benefit associated with following Jesus, why is it worth the sacrifice?**

## Day Four

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:33

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Paul wrote to the Corinthian church because they were struggling with unhealthy patterns of living. Instead of being set apart, the church had aligned with the values and practices of the larger culture with all its sin. The church had believed the gospel, and they knew they were called to take up their cross daily in following Jesus. They knew they were to risk their own personal safety in following God's call (see the previous verses). However, instead of pursuing this daily-sacrifice reality, they'd started living in many ways like their non-believing neighbors. We are certainly called to love and serve the people around us. However, there's a difference between on-mission living and being friends with the world. The Corinthian church hadn't found this balance, and they had allowed the company they kept to influence them for evil rather than the church being an influence for good. It takes a great deal of humility and wisdom to engage the lost without being corrupted ourselves. To do it well, we must remain continually devoted to and engaged with Jesus, His Word, and His church.

- **How can we engage the lost without being influenced in unhealthy ways?**
- **How is God calling you to live more set-apart for the sake of the gospel?**

## Day Five

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:34

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Paul used strong words in this verse. The Corinthian Christians were not only living sinfully, but they were also likely seeking to justify their choices. There are some people who live in unhealthy ways because they don't know any better. However, this wasn't the case with the Corinthian church. They certainly knew better! Paul knew this because he had been the one to teach them. And there was simply no excuse for the church to be living as the world. Paul said, in essence, that it was foolish (even stupid!) for the church to continue living sinfully. As followers of Jesus, we are to reflect Jesus in all the ways we live. This requires high character—not living shamefully, but instead pursuing the good of others and the glory of Jesus at all times.

- **Why did Paul characterize sinful living as “senseless”?**
- **When have you been tempted to justify sinful living?**