**Bible Class Notes - Lesson 168 Revision**

***Considering the vital importance of Christian character***

**This week** we reminded ourselves about the **character** of Daniel, his friends, his enemies, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Nehemiah, his enemies and that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Let us learn today about Christian Character. VA**

The study of human character is a fascinating one.

It is largely overlooked in our society today.

People measure themselves in terms of material gain and intellectual success rather than by the kind of people they are.

**They are only interested in themselves, and ask: - VA**

“How rich?”, “How clever?”, “How successful?”, “How good-looking?”, How popular?”, “How happy?”

**Social Media** is used to present themselves in this way.

**Seldom do they ask,** “How kind?”, “How helpful?”, “How selfless?”, “How sincere?”, “How good?”, “How honest?”,

“How pleasing to God am I?” **VA**

**How silly and short-sighted this is!**

What use is it to live in a world of advanced technology, full of computers, mobile phones, jet-travel, space exploration, **if the majority are stressed**, overwhelmed with anxiety, fear and depression, unhappiness, frustration, and war?

A glance at any newspaper or the TV News will prove to us that our world is full of people who claim to be expert scientists, successful sports people, powerful politicians, wealthy business-people, famous entertainers, **VA**

**BUT** whose lives are often unhappy and engulfed in tragedy.

Ordinary families find their lives blighted by violence, hatred, broken relationships, and frustrated hopes. **VA**

**They do not seek the Lord for His guidance and help.**

**2**

They have built their lives **without the foundation** of God’s Word, and so cannot cope with the storms of life.

**Some mistakenly think that suicide is the solution.**

The way out. But where to?

Not Heaven but Judgement and Hell. **VA**

**Promise me you will never take your own life.**

This is definitely the time to pray to the Lord. He will save.

We are here if you want to talk in confidence about your problems.

**The Bible pays great attention to character building.**

Our lessons on Daniel and Nehemiah have shown us remarkable and wonderful examples of people who developed great character because they put God first in their lives and stood firm with integrity and truth.

We have also seen those whose apparent success was ruined by fatal flaws in their character.

**Good character includes these values: - VA**

1. Humility. Without pride.
2. Loyalty and faithfulness. No fickleness.
3. Honesty, integrity, and sincerity.
4. Kindness, showing unselfish love and concern for others.
5. Determination and courage in God’s Truth.
6. Cheerfulness, joy and gentleness. True happiness.

May I suggest to you that these characteristics can only be found in a Christian. Let’s examine our hearts.

**These are the characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Christian Character is to be Christ-like, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” VA Galatians 5v22,23**

**3**

Only the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, can help us overcome the opposite traits – pride, selfishness, contempt for God’s ways and for others, and fickleness – frequently changing views.

**Let us look at Daniel and Nehemiah** to see if they had these Christian traits in their characters.

**Daniel, a believer, was taken as a teenager to Babylon.**

How did he respond to this great challenge?

**Daniel showed great loyalty to God and great courage,** even when his life was in danger.

From a young age he showed sincere faith towards his God, **with integrity of character and prayer.**

He refused the food that had been offered to idols.

He refused to be lured into a sinful life in Babylon.

He stood firm for his God, even though his life was threatened by being thrown into the den of lions. **The Lord miraculously preserved him.**

For over 70 years his **Christian character** was trusted by the rulers of Babylon/Persia - Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and Cyrus. **The Lord honoured him for this. VA**

**Daniel’s friends** **– Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.**

They remained calm and refused to bow down to the image that Nebuchadnezzar had made, trusting God to save them, even though they were thrown by Nebuchadnezzar into the fiery furnace.

The Lord preserved them, reminding us that He is able to save all who call upon Him in repentance and faith.

**The Lord honoured them for their faithful stand. VA**

**4**

**Nehemiah was humble and trusted the Lord.**

**His character of trustworthiness was recognised by King Artaxerxes.**

He trusted Nehemiah with his life.

Nehemiah had a loving concern for the people of Jerusalem and sought God’s forgiveness for his, and the peoples’, sin.

He showed concern for the glory and honour of the Name of the one true God, risking his life and working hard to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, even against much opposition.

He re-established worship in the Temple, and challenged the fickle people, (who kept falling into their old sins of idolatry), that they repent and return to the Lord.

Nehemiah led by example.

**The Lord honoured him for this. VA**

***Only in Christ can we emulate the character of Daniel, his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and Nehemiah.***

**The Lord Jesus Christ is our great example** – He demonstrated humility, love, mercy and grace in coming to earth from Heaven to die for lost sinners on Calvary. **Hallelujah, what a Saviour!**

**5**

**Un-Christian Character. *Note the following: -***

**Nebuchadnezzar was a proud man** setting himself up as the one to be worshipped, too proud to worship God. **God humbled him.** In the end God converted him and gave him a **Christian character**.

**Belshazzar was also proud and defiant against God.** He saw the **‘Finger of God’s Judgement’** writing on the wall –

***“You are weighed in My balance of justice and are found wanting”***.

**Belshazzar’s pride stayed with him to the end.**

He died a proud man and came under the judgement of God for his life-long unbelief. **No repentance.**

**Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem - the enemies of God and Nehemiah**

were all wickedly set against God and Nehemiah by opposing the restoration of the walls and gates of Jerusalem.

But their scheming and lying was no match for Nehemiah who obeyed and trusted God to protect and guide him.

**These too, would be judged and punished for their rebellious attitude to God.**

**So, do we have Christian Character?**

**Daniel and Nehemiah exhibited Christian Character: -**

**Their sincere prayer life, honesty, trustworthiness, fidelity and desire to honour and obey the Lord, courage, concern for the Lord’s name and for others.**

**6**

**Have we come to the Lord in humble repentance and faith?**

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**The Lord Jesus Christ is our great example** – **VA**  He demonstrated humility, love, mercy and grace in coming to earth from Heaven to die for lost sinners on Calvary. **Hallelujah, what a Saviour!**

***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* John 3v16**

**Important Lesson for us today: What is Sanctification?** Sanctification is the life-long process of a Christian believer growing more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

We can only grow in sanctified Christian character if we know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and we daily seek to obey Him as Lord.

It is only when our sins are forgiven that we want to take Him as our supreme example of holiness, obedience, sincerity, humility, love, mercy, forgiveness, etc. being set apart from the evil world of sin around us. **Read Galatians 5v22,23 – The Fruit of The Spirit.**

**Where do you stand today?**

**Seek the Lord. Be like Daniel and Nehemiah.**

**Do not be like Belshazzar, Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem.**