

Developing Character

There are many ways to study scripture. Some people simply read to look for the “Do’s & Don’ts” of living – not a bad idea, but woefully short of a balanced approach. Others seek doctrinal truths to make sure their beliefs and worship align with truth – likewise, not a bad study, but again this falls far short of a comprehensive study. Yet others read to find how to create community and get along as a mature, productive adult in society. Yet again, a great exercise in learning to love and treat others equitably – but still this approach fails to deliver everything God has planned for our lives.

As we incorporate all the above into our regimen, we must also seek those things that create in us a clean heart (Psalm 51:10) and draw us closer to God as we keep His commandments (John 14:15) and as we seek to literally be like Jesus (as much as a human can).

As we read, study, learn, we must also emulate proper behavior, as we are called to do in Philippians 4:9,

The things you have learned and received and
heard and seen in me, practice these things,
and the God of peace will be with you.

The key here is to literally imitate Paul as He imitates Jesus, see (I Corinthians 11:1). As we imitate godly behavior, we personally develop character traits that become part of our very existence.

King David is a prime example. As he faithfully discharged the duties he was given in each stage of life, he developed the very character traits that gave him strength to fight lions and bears that threatened the sheep, and the courage to face and fight Goliath on the battlefield. Those character traits even served him well after he sinned in the incident with Bathsheba – he confessed sin before God and man.

As you read God’s biographies of His faithful followers, watch for the character traits that created a person after God’s own heart. It starts with faith and leads to faithfulness.

-Ray Wallace