

The Character Study

INTRODUCTION:

A. MY EXP. WITH KEN B.

I met him in church he leaned over...that's my wife about to sing special music. He said yep the first time I heard her lovely voice I knew I had to marry that woman...as she began to sing the stained glass in the church began to crack

Then they moved in next door to us. Would stay up all night long having preaching sessions.

One time their 5 year old came to our door asking to borrow a picture of water...just then we saw her two brothers and sister exit the house via the window...even though the door was only 2 feet away...we went over and discovered that the kids had tried to boil marshmallow on the stove and caused a fire

One winter Ken installed a wood burning stove and had a couple of cords of cottonwood delivered to his house. Next thing I know I see him standing at the back door of his trailer in his boxers and t-shirt sweating...with the air-conditioning on in January in North Dakota when its 20 below outside.

My relationship with Ken came to a head one day when he was going around campus telling the funniest joke He ever heard

Spell stop...what do you do when you come to a green light....stop..

Spell stop....what do you do when you come to a red lightGO!

B. The best stories are real life stories about people.

We all love to listen to and talk about what is happening in the lives of people no matter who they are.

The Bible is full of stories about people

Even though they lived several thousand years ago we find that they are very much like us.

The problems they faced are similar to the problems we face.

The mistakes they made are similar to the mistakes we make

The character flaws and, struggles with faith are like our own

Tonight we are going to talk about the Benefits and approach to Character studies

I. The Benefits of Character studies

A. THEY ARE EASY TO IDENTIFY WITH

There are over 2900 different persons mentioned in the scriptures.

Many of them are only briefly mentioned. (Prayer of Jabez)

Others take up quite a bit of scripture

Each of them is an opportunity for study.

In a character study we look at a persons life history, we see who he was, what he did , and what he was like

Can you recall a bible story you heard when you were a child? Tell me what the story was and why it made a lasting impression on you.

The Bible story can create a memory that will last a lifetime...

They can be especially effective for Kid's

Young Minds are impressionable – some times there exposure to the gospel is brief...like vbs or Sunday school.

They need to be taught in such a way that they will remember.

When they hear about baby Moses in a basket

Young David fighting Goliath
 Joseph and his coat of many colors
 Jesus in a manger

They will remember

It may not cause life changing results right then but it may later in life when the Holy Spirit will bring a simple story to mind and use it to lead a person to Christ

So the first benefit of Character study...

They are easy to identify with

B. WE LEARN THAT THEY WERE REAL PEOPLE JUST LIKE US

Adults identify with Bible characters also

Why do adults identify with Bible Characters?

Bible characters struggle with the same things we struggle with

James 5:17

Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

There is NO OT saint that is portrayed as being perfect

They had a special calling

They were gifted by God in special ways

But they were just like you and me otherwise

Consider David

The Bible calls him "A man after God's own heart"

He was guilty of lying, adultery and murder

This doesn't mean that God was pleased with His sin ...

Why was David a man after God's own heart?

Because he repented

Found forgiveness

Learned from his mistakes

And submitted to God

What can we learn from David's Life?

Don't make the same mistakes he did

1 Cor. 10:11

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

So the second Benefit of Character study is that *we learn that they were real people just like us.*

C. GOD WANT US TO SEE HIS REDEMPTIVE LOVE IN DEALING WITH THE OT SAINTS.

Why do you think God wants us to see these people as something other than perfect?

God blessed them

Met their needs

Loved them

And answered their prayers

Not because they were good, but because he chose to love them.

God love us too

With the selfless costly love of redemption

He seeks after us

If he did not ...none of us would come to Him

John 6:65

He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

So, through Character studies *We see God's redemptive LOVE in dealing with the OT saints*

D. GOD DEMONSTRATES THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

The Bible saints all shared one feature...No matter how flawed their character....they believed God.

In believing God they were justified and declared righteous

Genesis 15:6

Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Through Character studies *God demonstrates the necessity of faith*

E. GOD'S PATTERN OF DEALING WITH HIS PEOPLE IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY.

Why is it important to see God's dealing with men and women of faith?

When we are new in the Lord and face our first test or trial, we have no personal history of God dealing with us on such matters

I think we find strength from reading about persons who faced similar circumstances and experienced God's deliverance

If God met their needs though they were flawed and weak in faith

He will certainly meet our needs...

So Character studies show us *God's pattern of dealing with His people in times of difficulty.*

F. YOU CAN LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS NOT TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES

What value is there in learning of Bible characters mistakes?

Parents warn their children if they do a certain thing they will be hurt. How do kids respond?

Sometimes, sadly, they do it anyway...and suffer the consequences

God who is a perfect heavenly father has given us warnings through His Word concerning How to Live.

He has done so directly by exhortation and command – for example in the sermon on the mount

He has also done so indirectly

By allowing us to examine the lives of Bible characters that made mistakes

You can learn from the mistakes of others not to make the same mistakes.

II. How do you approach a character study – what do you do?

1. Select a person you want to study.

How do you make that decision?

Generally we select a character based on our circumstances or the experiences we are having in our lives.

- If a loved one has just died – Naomi and Ruth
- If you are in a position of leadership or having problems with employees – Nehemiah
- If you have gotten side tracked in your walk with God – Abraham

2. List all the scriptures you can find about this person

You will probably find that there are references to persons in the NT as well.

It is important to read these also.

Abraham...

In Genesis 22 we read about the trial of Abrahams faith in sacrificing his son Isaac.

Hebrews 11:17-19

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, [18] even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." [19] Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

Enoch...

Genesis 4:17-18

Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch. [18] To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Methujael, and Methujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

Genesis 5:22

And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.

Jude 1:14-15

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones [15] to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Enoch's prophecy pointed to the glorious return of Christ to the earth with **thousands upon thousands of His angels (holy ones)** (Matt. 24:30; 2 Thes. 1:10), when **His purpose will be to judge everyone** (2 Thes. 1:7-10) **and to convict all the ungodly** with unanswerable evidence that their actions, manners, and words have been **ungodly** (asebeis, "irreverent"; cf. Jude 4).

3. Read the references about the person and then keep notes about the persons life, work, and traits

Characters name

Meaning of Name

Place of Birth

Where did they live?

Names of relatives and friends

What is their place in History?

What special traits did they have?

What weaknesses did they exhibit?

What were their strengths?

What important events took place in their life?

What important actions are they noted for

What lessons have I learned from this person?

4. Develop a summary of the main lesson you learn from the persons life

Jacob

He was born after his twin brother Esau, holding on to Esau's heel on the way out.

The meaning of the name Jacob is Deceiver

Jacobs Parents were Isaac and Rebecca

His grandfather was Abraham

He was a direct descendent of Noah through Shem

Jacob grew up

He was a quite man

Genesis 25:27-28

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. [28] Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebecca loved Jacob.

But he was also deceitful

He stole his brother's birthright and his brothers blessing

After this Jacob fled for His life...He went to Haran and lived with his uncle Laben

During this time Laban cheated him. Jacob wanted to marry Rachel but Laben gave him Leah

He had to work 14 years for Rachel.

Then he worked 6 more years to build up his own flock

To make matters worse Laben changed Jacobs's wages 10 times

- What is the great lesson one learns from this part of Jacobs Life?
- You will reap what you sow.