

Building Character into Your Disciple

Dr. Howard Hendricks, Thursday, 7 p.m. Xenos Summer Institute 03

You need another conference like you need another hole in the head. God's method is always to take a clean man and a clean woman and drop them into a dirty society. God is into character, not credentials. People will not follow people they cannot trust. Giftedness without character is useless. Leading from character provides the only foundation for Ctn leadership.

Character is more than a college of occasional....

It is who we are through and through. Character determines behavior and behavior demonstrates character.

Character is Christlikeness. Same crucial domains as character.

I want to turn you loose on a process that could change your life.

5 passages of scripture:

You cannot develop character if you don't know God's definition of character.

Weave 5 passages into your thinking.

Exodus 20 (includes the 10 commandments)

I am amazed how few believers can recite the 10 commandments.

The only absolutes in our society are that there are no absolutes.

Before you can do with your disciples you must figure out what you will do!

God does not studder.

There is a lot of false teaching about grace.

Titus 2: the grace of God teaches us to say "no".

Christian character is all about none negotiables.

They don't depend on your opinion or mine.

They come from Devine revelation.

This is the place to begin!

We need a couple of hours to study them.

Matthew 5-7 The Sermon on the Mount

The manifesto of the King.

What Christ wants His disciples to be and to do.

The beatitudes are followed by two metaphors:

You are the salt of the earth

You are the light of the world.

With all of your hang-ups.

With all your addictions.

With all your talents.

You are the salt of the earth because you are to penetrate this culture.
You are the light of the world because this society doesn't know the difference between
Chanel #5 and Sewer Gas #9

The wise man is the man who heard the Word of God and put it into practice.
To "hear" and not to do is not to hear at all.

Jesus said, "Stop calling me Lord or start doing what I tell you."

The foolish man does the same thing as the wise. He "hears" the word of God.
But he doesn't put it into practice.

All he wants is to understand it and he goes out the door and does not do it.

The Upper Room Discourse – John 13-17

The last words of Jesus.

Last words are lasting words.

Galatians 5:19-26 = the fruit of the Spirit.

The ministry of the HS is indispensable for anyone who wants to live the Christian life.

The Christian life is not difficult. It is impossible.

Works is something you do.

Fruit is something that grows.

The fruit of the Spirit is the shortest life of Christ ever written.

He, the HS, shall glorify me.

Everything that begins with the HS ends with Jesus Christ.

Is Christ becoming more important to you every day?

The Ladder of Growth – 2 Peter 1:3-9

The most revolutionary passage in the NT.

1. What God can do for you.

Divine resources

And the promises.

2. What you can do for God.

If you were my disciple I would get you into the most intensive Bible study and Bible memory you could think of.

The most difficult addiction to solve is pornography. Very difficult.

Let's suppose that's yours? Are you tired of it.

Have you studied enough about the HS and His ability to help?

Once I get people involved in *Scripture memory* we begin to see supernatural things happen. Your mind can only focus on one thing at a time. That's where the battle is.

God provides everything we need for life and godliness. Don't give me that jazz that you don't have the power to overcome addictions! It's His promises. It's His Word. He doesn't lie.

2. Human responsibility

He will not do for you what He expects you to do.

What I want to know is what are you going to do about it?
You never wanted to be a man or woman of God. You just couldn't help it.

Characteristics that as you allow God to do one in your life then God works on another. It doesn't take place in a moment. It's a process.

Are you growing up or are you growing old?
"Daddy, why do big people stop growing?"
Nice dresser but their middle drawer is sticking out.

How come you aren't growing anymore?

God gave you life, the very purpose for life is growth and you aren't growing.

There are many more passages but these 5 are crucial!

Study these 5 for yourself! Then start sharing them with your disciples.

II. 8 Biblical Patterns for Growth – Listen up and I want you to think.

The influence of your family!

There is no second competitive force in the life of a child.

What may be your problem.

A lot of you came from broken homes, dysfunctional homes, abusive homes.

A lot of young people spend all their time dumping on their parents.

Proposition: There are no perfect parents. Live with it!

If you spend all your time on dumping on your parents you will never spend time saying, "What did my parents give me?"

I started thinking, "What did my father give me?"

He was a military man. He laid down stripes and I saw stars.

He gave me discipline.

He better prepared me for ministry than most people who come to seminary.

I got my discipline from my father.

My father gave me nothing spiritually because he had none to give.

He gave me a passion for excellence.

If you are going to serve Jesus don't play around with that!
If your life is mediocre or shoddy then change it.

I am amazed at the disappearance of the Christian home. Not homes where Christians live but Christian homes.

Do whatever you can to strengthen the home.
It is worth everything to serve Him well.

Modeling

The pedestals are empty.
Haircut "Mister, I ain't found nobody I want to be like."
Think about the numbers of kids who are dying to find someone worth following.

The pedestals are full but with celebrities not saints.
They can sing or throw, or dunk, or...but they have no character!

I am meeting people into their senior years who are emptying themselves and want to serve others.

I am largely the product of the models who loved me more than my parents did.

Mentoring

Every Christian needs 3 people in his or her life.

- a. Paul or an Elizabeth – someone older than you. Not smarter or more gifted.
Just farther down the road.
- b. Barnabas or Martha
Someone who loves you but is not impressed by you.
- c. Timothy or Mary
Someone who is younger. Someone on their team, not their back.

Coaching

Individuals who can coach you in a specific area.

The average training program of every major corporation fails because there is no one to mentor. Most don't have it.

My Scout Master A guy who loved me, who prayed for me.

You are living in a generation that has heard every rhetoric possible.

People are tired of words.

Accountability

Soul-keepers. Hebrews 12

The key is honesty. What do you want me to hold you accountable for? What good is it if you are not honest. If you can't be honest enough in accountability then you don't have character.

Suffering

Hebrews 5:8; James 1 Although he was a son, yet he learned obedience through the things he suffered.

I'd like to say, "Lord, let's make that an elective!"

Romans 8:28: He is a sovereign God or a first class liar. He never makes mistakes.

Spiritual disciplines

Bible study

Prayer

Meditation and memory

Faith

Stewardship

Solitude

God uses all of these in a sovereign grace to shape and mold you.

Evaluated Experience

Someone might say, "I don't need this. I've been teaching for 26 years." That proves nothing but the grace of God. One year's experience multiplied 26 times. You only get better by evaluated experience. I wasted the first 10 years of my marriage. You have baggage carried with you into marriage. I was afraid that if my wife really know who I was she would reject me. She already knows. My wife and I spend a week out of every year evaluating our marriage, our children, our ministry. You don't get by experience but by evaluated experience.

Conclusion:

Your character and the character of your disciples will be the result of 4 things:

1. The choices you make
2. The values you embrace
3. The crises you experience and how you cope with them.
Your age is no guarantee how long you will live.
4. The mentors you seek!

I'm here because I love you. I don't need another airplane ride!

I'm pushing 80 and I won't tell you from which direction.

God will make a permanent difference in your life!

Q and A:

Difference between mentoring and coaching

I found that mentoring in groups – more productive

Out of that group I will find a personal with a specific problem and will coach them one on one. In the group I am a facilitator. And I bring others into the group. You need to know your resources.

I've been reading *Iron Sharpens Iron*

Are you going to write one for women?

I wrote the book for Promise Keepers.
My wife read it and said we need to change the pronouns.

Different definitions of Excellence

I'm created by God.

I'm a different person by the HS.

Carnality is comparing yourself with others in society.

Excellence is living up to the way God has wired and called you.

What has God wired you to do? Do it to the best of the ability God gave you.

Don't settle for second rate stuff.