

P507

Grace Notes Radio Program

SERIES: Why trials?

SET 07: Character Construction underway – Part 2

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. On our last program Barbara Sandbek showed us that trials are necessary in building our character. She read a list of qualities in 2 Peter 1:5-7 that God desires to incorporate into our personality. Let's hear it again. It says...

Make every effort to add to your faith, goodness, and to goodness, knowledge, and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, perseverance(or patience), and to perseverance, Godliness, and to Godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love.

We learned that none of these can exist without faith, because faith is the foundation. Faith comes by hearing the truth of the Word of God, and believing in Christ. Today, Barbara will explain how these qualities work together in the character building process.

I spent a lot of time as a kid helping my mom cook. We used to make cakes from that crazy stuff called 'scratch'. It's just a fancy word for doing it the long, hard way...but somehow, when the cake was done, and it turned out, I felt a great sense of achievement. The rest of the family didn't know how much effort went into this delectable treat, they just enjoyed the end-product.

I see God as making a delicious cake out of us, using all the right ingredients (or qualities) in all the right proportions. Let's see how it's done...

Start with FAITH:

that's the FLOUR – no cake is made without it

Stir in GOODNESS:

the WATER from Christ's living streams

Blend in KNOWLEDGE:

the OIL symbolizing the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth

Season with SELF-CONTROL:

the SALT - a little goes a long way

Mix in PATIENCE:

the BAKING POWDER that makes us rise up at the right time

Beat in BROTHERLY KINDNESS:

the EGGS that hold together and unify all the ingredients

Flavor it with LOVE:

you guessed it...VANILLA, the aroma of the fragrance of life within us.

Oops, I almost left out my favorite ingredient – CHOCOLATE – that's GODLINESS - it's the nearest thing to HEAVEN we can find on earth. (Couldn't resist that one.)

If I served you this, you'd probably turn your head. It's not finished yet. Just throwing all the ingredients in a bowl does not a cake make. You have to mix it thoroughly, pour it into a greased container, and subject it to heat for a specific amount of time. It sure looks different when it's done, doesn't it?

That's how trials play their part in our life – they change our make up.

God mixes the qualities with trials to enhance their effectiveness.

How can we show patience, for example, without a reason to show it, or self-control without a situation in which to exercise it.

God confines (or contains) us as necessary to mold and shape us. He shields (or greases) us to protect us from the excessive heat of the tests.

He allows the heat (or the Refiner's fire) to bring out the best in us. He permits trials only for a specific time, as 1 Peter 5:10 so perfectly states...

And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a LITTLE WHILE, will HIMSELF restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

I always liked the emphasis on 'will HIMSELF' restore you.

I mixed my cakes by hand because I felt it showed my love more - 800 strokes. God does not delegate any of His work. He does it by hand. When He allows the trial mixing to take place, you can be assured He has his hand in it to show us how much He loves us.

I checked the oven often to make sure my cake didn't burn, but God NEVER leaves.

God does all this work in us for our good. Others can't see what's going on, and often we can't even understand it – but what He produces in our character is sure to please us, others, and most of all, Him. We just need to trust His heart in the process.

***** TRUST HIS HEART *****

Let's take a look at how God uses the qualities to enhance each other.

The first four attributes - faith, goodness, knowledge and self-control affect us personally. Patience, Godliness, brotherly kindness and love, on the other hand, affect not only us, but those around us. It isn't until we've allowed God to deal with our own deficient, self-centered nature, that we really become concerned for others. To get to love, which is the AGAPE kind, we have to see people the same way God sees them. Now that takes some doing! Or should I say some MIXING.

Many Believers never make it past the faith level. What a shame! While the qualities are progressive, they are somewhat dependent on each other. Look at faith and goodness...

**Our faith increases
as our goodness increases...
as our faith increases.**

Let's add in knowledge...

**Knowledge increases our goodness
which increases our faith.**

We need to know what God expects from us so we can obey Him. As we diligently study the Bible and pray, His Word purifies us and makes us want to obey. It when we're obedient, that we see His promises come true in our life and our faith increases.

We need to be careful though that we don't learn just for knowledge sake. Knowledge without application is useless.

I memorized a lot of Scripture when I was growing up – even won contests, but they were only words to me. It wasn't until I made a commitment to the Lord to study for the sake of building our relationship that it made a difference.

There is a difference between obeying because you have to and obeying because you want to. What's the key? Let me share an illustration.

Let's say, you meet someone and they become a casual acquaintance. You get into a situation where you're tempted to do something against them. The temptation is great...but you don't know them very well, so you give in. On the other hand, let's say you spend some time getting to know this person, you find out what makes them tick, you feel their heart, you know they'd do anything for you. Now the temptation comes to wrong them, and it's great, so great - but you know them really well, so well that you've grown to truly love them, and the love you have for them is far greater than the desire to give in to the temptation...so you don't.

That's how it is with our relationship with God. When you just know about Him, it's easy to say 'yes' to temptation, but after spending time with Him, feeling His heart, and understanding what He went through for you, you obey because you truly love and want to please Him. That's where the knowledge fits in.

I want to close now with a old secular song that I changed the words to because it's title says it all - To know Him is to love Him.

***** TO KNOW HIM *****

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If God leads you, please send along a gift to help us stay on this station.

Don't miss our next program – Barbara will continue with “The Benefits of our suffering?”

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