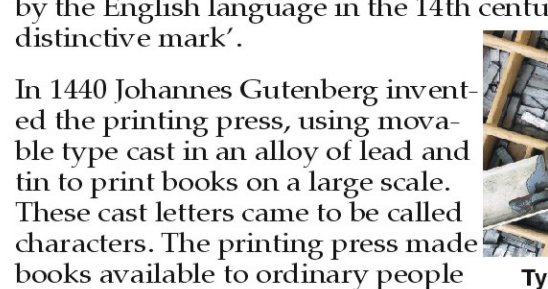


What **character traits** can we reasonably expect from a Christian?

First, what does the word *character* mean?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word *character* may refer to the qualities and features that distinguish a person, a group or a place. It could also be a symbol in a writing system, or a person or figure in a story.



- *Character* can also mean the personality or reputation of a person, especially their honesty and reliability.

This term, derived from the Greek word *charakter*, was adopted by the English language in the 14th century, with the meaning 'a distinctive mark'.

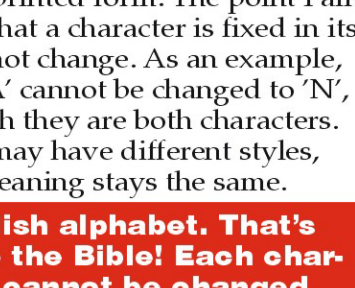
In 1440 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press, using movable type cast in an alloy of lead and tin to print books on a large scale. These cast letters came to be called characters. The printing press made books available to ordinary people all over the then civilised world.



Typical character stamps, similar to what Gutenberg would have used.

Before Gutenberg, Bibles were hand-written by scribes – a slow and costly process. Bibles were rare, expensive and primarily in Latin, accessible only to clergy, monasteries and wealthy individuals. The mass of believers had to rely on sermons in churches and synagogues, as few could afford a Bible or even read the Latin text.

- The printing press changed all of this, revolutionising religion.



A page from a hand-written Bible in beautiful calligraphy.



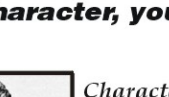
What I have written so far describes the use of the word 'character' in the written or printed form. The point I am making is that a character is fixed in its role, it cannot change. As an example, the letter 'A' cannot be changed to 'N', even though they are both characters. Character may have different styles, but their meaning stays the same.

26 letters in the English alphabet. That's sufficient to write the Bible! Each character is solid and cannot be changed.

A few quotes for perspective:

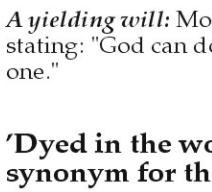
Behaviour reveals character!

WHEN PEOPLE FEEL THEY HAVE THE POWER TO DO WHATEVER THEY WANT... THEIR BEHAVIOUR WILL ELIMINATE ANY QUESTION OF WHO THEY ARE.



“A high character might be produced, I suppose, by continued prosperity, but it has very seldom been the case. Adversity, however, it may appear to be our foe, is our true friend; and, after a little acquaintance with it, we receive it as a precious thing – the prophecy of a coming joy. It should be no ambition of ours to traverse a path without a thorn or stone.”

Spurgeon also famously emphasised that if you take care of your character, your reputation will take care of itself!



Character is lived, not just professed: Moody famously stated, "A man ought to live so that everybody knows he is a Christian... and most of all, his family ought to know."

True character is private: He believed, "Character is what you are in the dark." If your reputation is taken care of, your character will be fine. He also believed that Christianity has no value if it does not "straighten out your character".

The Bible is crucial: Moody linked the Bible to a Christian's formation by saying, "The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible."

A yielding will: Moody encouraged surrendering one's will to God's will, stating: "God can do more with a surrendered life than with a self-confident one."

'Dyed in the wool' is an idiom which is a synonym for the word character.

The phrase comes from the practice of dyeing wool. When wool is dyed in its raw form before being spun into yarn or fabric, the colour is permanent. The idiom uses this concept to illustrate that the person's beliefs, once established and 'dyed', are deep-set and unlikely to change.

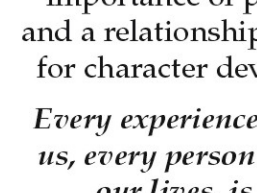
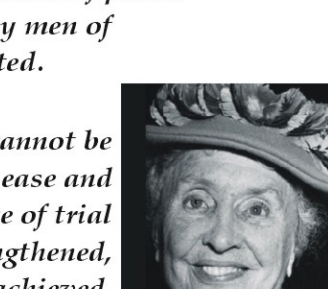
- These enduring qualities you develop in life, such as perseverance, hope, meekness, humility and love, are your only true 'treasures' that will endure and be carried into the eternal realm.



Some encouragement from CS Lewis!

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.

We are ... a divine work of art, something that God is making... something with which He will not be satisfied until it has a certain character.”



Men of genius are admired, men of wealth are envied, men of power are feared, but only men of character are trusted.

Alfred Adler

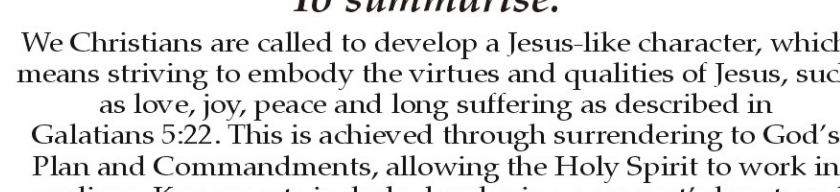
Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.

Helen Keller



A notable quote by **Corrie ten Boom** about the importance of preparation and a relationship with God for character development:

Every experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives, is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see.

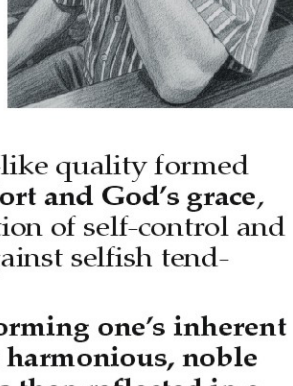


To summarise:

We Christians are called to develop a Jesus-like character, which means striving to embody the virtues and qualities of Jesus, such as love, joy, peace and long suffering as described in Galatians 5:22. This is achieved through surrendering to God's Plan and Commandments, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. Key aspects include developing a servant's heart, and consistently acting out of love for God and neighbour.

To the thinking person it must be patently obvious that forming a Christ-like character has to be done during *this* life. This involves overcoming sin, developing spiritual maturity and aligning one's heart and mind with God's law of love through faith in Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

- The physical body is shed, but who you are as an individual, your character, is what is transformed and carried into eternity.

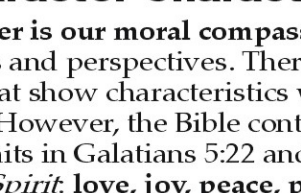


Character is a Christ-like quality formed through **personal effort** and **God's grace**, requiring the cultivation of self-control and an on-going battle against selfish tendencies.

- It involves transforming one's inherent disposition into a harmonious, noble character, which is then reflected in a life of blessing others and demonstrating the peace and joy of God.

NB! This transformation is a process that must occur **during this life!** Character is not changed at death or the resurrection.

Our heart determines what is most important to us.



And what is most important will eventually forge our character, which will always determine our conduct and leadership style.

What is important to you? I quote the following Bible verse to give some perspective:

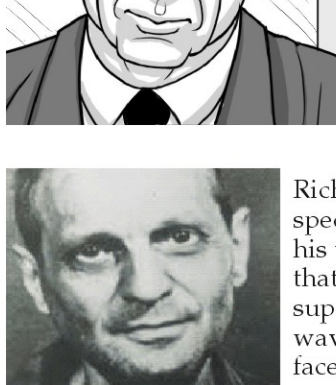
“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful. Mark 4:18

Character Characteristics

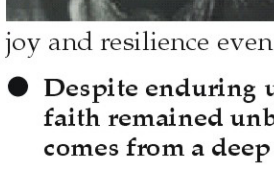
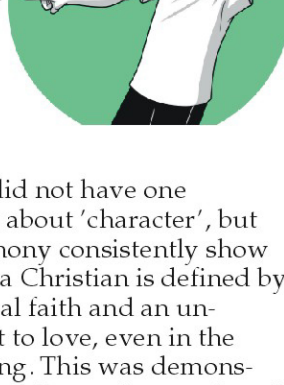
Our character is our moral compass; it is the source of our ethics and perspectives. There are many lists compiled that show characteristics we should aspire to develop. However, the Bible contains the best list of character traits in Galatians 5:22 and 23, known as the *fruit of the Spirit*: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

- These are the embodiment of the Holy Spirit and show that developing Godly character comes through co-operating with Him as we face trials and tribulations in life.

But let's get to the point of what I want to say in this tract. It's about the **character of the Christian**, because that's what we take with us when we are called to heaven.



Wow! I didn't think of that!



Richard Wurmbrand did not have one specific, famous quote about 'character', but his writings and testimony consistently show that true character for a Christian is defined by supernatural joy, radical faith and an unwavering commitment to love, even in the face of extreme suffering. This was demonstrated when he and his fellow prisoners found joy and resilience even in their harsh persecution.

- Despite enduring unbearable physical torment, his spirit and faith remained unbroken, show-casing the immense strength that comes from a deep connection with God.

The Bible says there's only one way to Heaven! Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. John 14:6

Nobody else can save you. Trust Jesus today!

- 1 Admit you are a sinner: Romans 3:10**
- 2 Be willing to turn from sin: Acts 17:30**
- 3 Believe that Jesus Christ died for you, was buried and rose from the dead: Romans 10:9-10**
- 4 Through prayer, invite Jesus into your life to become your personal Saviour: Romans 10:13**

So how do I do that?

- ★ Read your Bible every day to get to know Jesus Christ better.
- ★ Talk to God in prayer every day.
- ★ Be baptised, worship in fellowship and serve with other Bible believers where Bible Truth and Christ are preached and the Bible is the final authority.
- ★ Tell others about Jesus Christ.



In closing I ask... what areas of *your* character need to change to reflect the character of God better? Probably every area, right?

However, how can focusing on the Cross, and what it means, give you encouragement and assurance of salvation?

Think about it!

If you'd like to know more:
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