

Under Construction

A construction worker dies on in a fishing accident on his 40th birthday and finds himself greeted at the Pearly Gates by a brass band. Saint Peter runs over, shakes his hand and says "Congratulations!"

"Congratulations for what?" asks the construction worker.

"Congratulations for what?" says Saint Peter. "We are celebrating the fact that you lived to be 160 years old."

"But that's not true," says the construction worker. "I only lived to be forty."

"That's impossible," says Saint Peter, "we added up your time sheets."

He's still working on me to make me what I ought to be.
It took Him just a week to make the moon and stars,
The sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars.
How loving and patient He must be, He's still working on me.

***Title Page
Under Construction

This is something that God has been slowly giving me revelation on for the last few months.

Butch's Rehab facility was under construction

***Character: The will to do what's right as God defines right regardless of the cost

Everyone is for character, Parents, Spouses, Teenagers, Politicians, etc.

Prov 12:26 The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

The problem is that very few of us are willing to do the hard stuff in seeing Godly character formed in US! We're gonna talk about this and how we view this.

Under Construction

Many of us here that have been in the church for a long time still have some holes in our character with this big perpetual under construction sign hanging.

World and a lot of times the Church that values achievement over character. Fulfillment over character

Lack of it shows up in relationships

Character is the oil of a relationship that allows us to continue to be married to each other, work with each other, continue to hang out with each other without destroying each other.

And while we value character, we ultimately put it on a lower priority than achievement and success.

God, give me the wisdom to know what's right and the strength to do it even when it's hard.

Now Recently God gave me some revelation through a series of studies, messages and prayer that has radically changed the way that I view the development of Godly character in me.

How does God go about the process of developing character in us.

Have you ever looked through a photo album of someone's and seen pictures of places you've never been. Then as you look you come across a place you HAVE been to and you realize that this picture just doesn't do it justice.

Niagara Falls. I had seen pictures, even seen movies.

OT was the 2 dimensional representation of character. The NT provided a 3 dimensional representation of character through the person of Jesus Christ.

***Romans 8:29

Under Construction

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren

God has a wonderful plan for your life..that you would be like Jesus.
Not look, dress, or interact with the same people, but rather internally be like Him.
That's the model!!

And this is where we get off track.

We live our lives and function like God's plan is to make the best and most improved me or you He can make
If I can just have enough time and I can just get committed enough, then I can become what God wants me to become.

But then we look at Christ, even with all the time and commitment in the world, I'll never get there!

This would be like me handing the plans to a house to my wife, give her the tools and the materials and say, "Honey, build me a house."

It doesn't matter how much time or commitment she has, that house isn't going to get built because she just plain doesn't know how.

In the words of Shrek, what she lacks is the capacity.

The character of Christ is not something that is manufactured by us, but rather it is something produced through us.

You can manufacture a better you, but you cannot manufacture the character of Christ.

God has given us a radically different approach to character.

Under Construction

***John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

So how do I develop godly character? Abide. What else? Abide.

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

If you are going to bear fruit (that remains) Get in on my son's life by abiding.

Life of the vine flowing into the branch and the life of the vine causes the branch to bear fruit.

Live, be patient, love, exercise self control, overcome temptation, to bear up under loneliness through YOU!!

I'm going to make my life available through you. I'm not asking you to imitate me, you can't! I'm not going to make you capable, I'm going to be capable through you.

Abide...remain...very common Greek word. Remain, Stay, Live with, hang out with,

Stay close!

If you stay close long enough, you will see God produce through you character that reflects the life of Jesus as He lives through you.

This is a completely different approach.

It's LIFE Changing

Under Construction

All of us know about our own character. We all have strengths and weaknesses. We all play to our strengths and we hope NOBODY finds out about our weaknesses.

And we come here on Sunday and we worship and we mean it, and we read our bibles, and we mean it, and we rededicate, and we get some accountability, but we just can't seem to get complete victory in some areas and there continues to be huge holes in our character.

Many of us after 1,2,3,5,10,20 years come to the realization that this is it and I can't do it.

God says, "I can!" but I'm not going to teach you how, I'm going to do it through you. You focus on staying close, staying grafted in, abiding in me.

***3 practical things on how to abide vs doing
Remaining and staying close instead of going out and trying to become.

***1. Think and act relationally, not religiously.

I'm just going to stay close

Christianity is so formal, the separation and quiet. And you hope that Heaven is not like this.

***2. Focus on association not imitation.

I'm gonna try to figure out and do it just like Jesus did it. The branch doesn't imitate the vine, it stays connected to it. That is where the life is.

***3. I can't but HE can through me.

I can't deal with another time of him coming home late.

I can't deal with the temptation at work

I can't deal with the temptation of the internet.

I can't deal with the temptation of drugs or alcohol.

Tomorrow you can anticipate 90% of your trouble. There really aren't any new temptations.

Under Construction

We can look through the week and know ahead of time most of what will bring us trouble.

I can't deal with that. Deal with it through me.

I can't control my tongue when I'm in that situation. Control it through me.

Get up a little earlier..

You know where we see this and it's so exciting?

They become a Christian and all they know is that Jesus died for me, forgave me of my sin, and He loves me and they haven't been given the Christian "don't" list.

People that have been in the church forever. You knew what passage I was going to preach on before I even said it. But you've got a huge hole in your character. You've got some things in your life that if your wife, or your husband, or your parents ever found out about, you're afraid it would ruin everything.

The problem is you've lost the concept of abiding in Him and you've decided to go it on your own.

Teenagers, especially you guys that went to camp. You know why that closeness with God that you felt and all that fruit that you experienced is fading away? You've lost the concept of abiding and you've returned to your old way of life.

Sometimes we have to go back to our first love.