

“CHARACTER COUNTS”

There is a proverb that says, “Children should be seen and NOT heard.” This proverb does not apply to Children of God. They are to be seen AND heard. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” His ambassador, Paul, said in Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” If a Christian is unable to do these things, he has not developed the character needed in a servant of God.

What is character? It is as versatile as personality, and just as variable. Dictionaries define it as “1. All qualities or features of anything, kind or sort. 2. Moral nature; moral strength or weakness. The special ways in which any person feels, thinks, and acts, considered as good or bad, make up his character.” Therefore, personality and character are closely combined, showing either good or bad qualities.

We become familiar enough with the characteristics of people we know, so that we are surprised (and maybe a little suspicious) when they do something that is “out of character.” Character is determined, then, on how consistent one is in showing the traits of his personality. If we perceive a growing inconsistency, it is a sign that the person is changing character, whether from good to bad, or bad to good.

A Christian friend recently loaned me a book entitled “Character Counts,” by Os Guinness. The author writes his own essay, then presents four examples of men of great good character: George Washington, William Wilberforce, Abraham Lincoln, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Two of these men we know well, and are well aware of the good qualities of their character—Washington and Lincoln. Washington, by steadfast devotion to principles he imposed on himself, led our feuding colonists in a joint endeavor to gain independence from England. Upon these same principles, he served as the first President