

1-1 Why Should I Develop Christlikeness?

Ephesians 4:14–19

- *riches of His glory*—God’s store of power and perfect character
- *fullness of God*—character qualities God possesses that we may develop

I. It’s a biblical priority—we are created in His image, to glorify Him!

With creation, God announced boldly what He has always planned for the human race. We were created in God’s image, which means we are like God in character—in our spirit, our inner being. We can make choices like God can, and we can commune with Him. We are unlike all the rest of God’s creation. The psalmist asks, “What is man, that you are mindful of him? And the son of man, that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands.” (Psalm 8:4-6) God made us superior to all the rest of His handiwork!

But then Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and plunged the human race into sin. Human character, intended to reflect the character of God, became a shattered mirror, offering a distorted image. God had given us everything, and we threw it away—God owed us nothing. But He didn’t want us to remain in our sin, because that brought glory to Satan instead of to God.

God’s grace made a way for His image to be recreated in man. Christ’s death satisfied the wrath of God against sin and provided a way of salvation. When we place our faith in Christ, we are born again, and the image of God begins to be restored in us.

II. Christlikeness is an evidence that I possess true saving faith. (Romans 8:28)

III. Character is the most important part of me. (Proverbs 4:23)

Our hearts determine our conduct. The heart is like a fountain from which flow words and actions. When people “bump” into me, what comes out of me? Anger? Retaliation? Understanding? Forgiveness? If anger spills out when you bump me, then you didn’t cause the anger—it was already there in my heart, because I haven’t purged it out of my heart.

IV. Becoming Christlike is the only way to achieve our goal of loving God and loving other people. (Matthew 22:37, 39)

It’s not natural to love other people more than we love ourselves—but that’s what Christ did and does, so if we’re becoming like Him, we’ll learn to do that. Amy Carmichael said, “Love is the answer to all things: love ends all questions.”

V. Becoming Christlike is the only **solution to overcoming sin** in my life.

- A. **Regeneration** (Titus 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17)—the new birth
 1. The beginning
 2. Instantaneous
 3. A renewal

4. A change in appetite
- B. **Sanctification** (2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3)
 1. The continuation—more and more I cease from sinning and am set apart to God for His glory
 2. Gradual process—it isn't completed until I reach heaven! I have to “take off” my old, comfortable clothes and put on the new clothes of Christ's righteousness.

Communicable Attributes of God

Can be “communicated” from God to man

- *Holiness*.....separation from sin and dedication to spiritual purposes
- *Love*.....ardent affection for others
- *Justice*fairness in dealing with others
- *Righteousness*..conformity to God's standard
- *Mercy*.....pity and aid given those in desperate spiritual or physical condition
- *Benevolence*.....kind words and acts
- *Truth*honesty and sincerity with God and others
- *Grace*.....unmerited favor and spiritual strength given to the humble