

Message 5 (9/16 Sunday Morning Section-1)

CHARACTER

Lesson Eight

STABLE--STEADY, NOT EASILY MOVED OR CHANGED AND NOT PANICKY

Burden to Impart:

In order to finish what we begin we must have a stable character. We must begin things based on a clear understanding, a proper decision, and a sure sense that we are doing what we should be doing, what God desires and wills. Then we will have the inner strength to not be moved or changed by difficulties or adversities in our environment. Sometimes circumstances are difficult; sometimes people may oppose or attempt to frustrate us; sometimes we feel downright discouraged. But we may develop stability in our character by continuing on to accomplish what we started. We have the examples of the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul before us to encourage us to "press on" (Phil. 3:14). Also, when we pray to the Lord and ask Him for His help, He will encourage us and strengthen us from within (Phil. 4:13).

Memory Verse: "...My beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Facts to Teach:

1. A person who lightly makes decisions, then quickly changes their mind afterward or drops their decisions, is fickle. (We should not be fickle, 2 Cor. 1:17). A person who suddenly becomes very upset and emotionally excited over unexpected adversity or problems is panicky. A person is stable if they make their decisions only after adequate consideration and with a sure sense of God's will.
2. Because a steady person makes clear decisions they are not easily moved or changed. They move straight ahead in their actions regardless of difficulties, adversities, problems, or changes in the environment. This is because their action and direction is determined by a clear understanding and a firm decision. Such a person will be able to reach his goal eventually.
3. An example in nature of instability is the reed (Matt. 11:7). In whatever direction the wind blows, the reed bends. It constantly changes its position. It has no inward fiber or strength of its own (it is hollow) so it bends quickly according to its environment. The mountains, or the Rock of Gibraltar, are positive examples of something stable and immovable.
4. Some people are unchangeable in the wrong kind of way. Such a person is simply stubborn, obstinate, bull-headed, or stiff-necked. Their decision is not based on clear understanding and sound judgment. Rather, it is based on emotional feelings and a stubborn will. Such a person is not stable in the least. Rather, they are temperamental.
5. The Lord Jesus was absolutely stable so He was able to fully carry out all the work His Father had prepared for Him to complete during the 3 1/2 years of His ministry. He never wasted time or veered off course. When the time had come for the Lord to go up to Jerusalem he "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). While the Lord journeyed toward Jerusalem some Pharisees threatened him, saying, "Get out and go from here, for Herod wants to kill you" (Luke 13:31). The Lord was not frightened or threatened. With unchanging stability He answered, "I must journey" (Luke 13:33).
6. The Apostle Paul was also an extremely stable and immovable person. Although many Jews persecuted him, beat him with rods, stoned him, and threatened to kill him, he

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Lesson Eight (continued)

would not be stopped from preaching about Christ. Neither could hunger, lack of food, nakedness, or even shipwrecks cause Paul to change his course. In chains and in prison Paul testified, "I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:16).

7. In all important matters of our life we must develop a stable, immovable character. Beginning while we are young we can build up this quality. Sometimes we may need help from our parents and others so we can make the proper decisions. Many times we need "help" from the Lord (His inward supply and strengthening) so we can carry out the decisions we make. In this way we can develop a stable character.
8. Completing what we begin helps develop stability, such as: household chores, projects, learning an instrument, and most of all, completing our education.