

Purpose / Abstract

This class is intended as the second in a 3-part series on Christian Discipleship:

- 1) Convictions of a Disciple – Dealing with foundational beliefs; what we know
- 2) Character of a Disciple – Dealing with our Spiritual maturity; who we are
- 3) Competencies of a Disciple – Dealing with our actions; what we do

Our purpose in this class is to select some of the cardinal virtues of a Jesus-follower, and not only see and understand their importance, but to actually begin, by God's help, to put these virtues into practice. Our goal is not merely to know that these virtues are virtuous, or even commanded by Jesus, but to begin appropriating these virtues into our own character.

For example, we're not merely interested in knowing (or even memorizing!) that Jesus followers "love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them." (Mt. 5:44), but in actually becoming the kinds of people who do love our enemies, and do pray for those who curse / persecute us.

In other words, this class is about "how", just as much as "what".

Each week as we examine the Scriptures, we'll seek to provide tools, challenges, suggested practices, etc. all aimed at helping us to "work out our own salvation" (Phil. 2:12-13), developing Christ's character in us.

All three of the abovementioned aspects of discipleship will of course flow into each other. As we develop Christ-like character, that will necessarily play out in our actions. God forbid we become the kinds of people who know what to do, but don't do it! (James 1:22ff)

But we must start with character, because actions, while necessary, are not necessarily indicators of God's work in our lives, nor of our motivations. For example, people can give ludicrously generous amounts of money. But if this is done from the wrong motivations, it can hardly be done from a place of discipleship to Jesus, nor can it be done for the glory of God (Mt. 6:1-4). In fact, wouldn't we argue that this was the main problem with New Testament Pharisees?

"Character of a Disciple" is about the persons we are becoming; who we really are on the inside, and the process of conforming that person more and more into the image and character of Jesus himself.

Character of a Disciple
A Winter Class, 2022
Immanuel Baptist Church
Syllabus / Outline

Schedule

Jan. 23	Introduction / The task before us
Jan. 30	Loving God with everything you are
Feb. 06	Loving your neighbor as yourself
Feb. 13	No class
Feb. 20	Loving your enemy and praying for those who persecute you
Feb. 27	Sheep and Goats and Charity
Mar. 06	Chastity in the 21 st Century
Mar. 13	The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace
Mar. 20	The Fruit of the Spirit is Patience, Kindness, Goodness
Mar. 27	The Fruit of the Spirit is Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control