



"Our character is but the stamp on our souls of the free choices of good and evil we have made through life."

—John Cunningham Geikie

12-Apr-02

The Solution? Character

Every so often, I get a mild case of depression. Maybe it is just dejection. It is certainly not anything so serious as despair. I just get down and mildly pessimistic when I look at [the world](#) and all the shenanigans, perversions, and plain dumb things that are happening in it.

David Grabbe and I read a fair amount of news every day (David does all the hard work of gathering it). We loudly guffaw at all the wacky stories he dredges up from various news services around the world. People are certainly funny and some are just certifiably stupid, like the two Alaskan burglars who wrestled a 500-pound safe out to their getaway bikes—yes, bikes! That just barely tops the two Massachusetts thieves who filled out job applications, complete with their real names and addresses, before they held up a distribution company manager!

Most of the time, though, the news is far more serious: disease, war, terrorism, crime, famine, and moral/cultural decline. These ills surround us on all sides. We hear of AIDS cases in the thousands and outbreaks of various other killer diseases; terrorist bombings and suicide—really, homicide—bombings in Israel; murders, rapes, burglaries, and home

invasions in our cities; women and children starving in Africa and parts of Asia; and long laundry lists of moral failures from presidential perjury to child-molestation by clergy. It is more than enough to make a person lose all [faith](#) in humanity.

One of the failings of modern education is that it fails to teach children to look for and predict cause-and-effect relationships. This receives short shrift in our schools because values and moral judgments have been eliminated from curricula and classroom discussions. Modern—or rather, postmodern—educators strive for valueless teaching and what they call moral equivalency, that is, no idea, no person, no belief, no religion, no government, or no fact is better than anything else—everything has its own intrinsic value, neither more nor less than any other thing does. For those of us who have learned differently, this is a strange concept.

However, it is the basis of liberal intellectual humanism, the guiding beacon of most major colleges and universities, think tanks, advocacy organizations, political parties, governments, and corporations in America and in many other parts of the world, particularly Europe. In simple terms, it means that solutions to the world's problems will not be solved by eradicating the cause. Instead, they will be treated by assuaging the symptoms, because to acknowledge the cause would be to make a moral judgment.

For instance, the fight against AIDS is a classic case of postmodern, valueless thinking. The major cause of AIDS is clearly perverted homosexual behavior, but rather than enforcing anti-sodomy laws (which have their basis in biblical morality), the powers-that-be decided to caution against "unprotected sex" and handed out free condoms and free needles to intravenous drug users. They also threw billions of dollars at finding a cure for the disease and drugs that will dampen or delay the onset of full-blown AIDS. The cure, however, is simple: stop the behavior (biblically termed "[repentance](#)") and quarantine the diseased. But that is not politically correct.

This example points out the ultimate solution for every problem of behavior: character. If people had the character not to lie and steal, billions of dollars of fraud and the trauma of countless victims would disappear. If people had the character to be faithful to their spouses, divorce and the heartache and compounded problems it brings would cease. If people had the character to

forgive and work out disputes fairly, war would soon become a distant memory.

While carnal human beings walk this earth, this is a pipe dream. Even under the government of [Jesus Christ](#) in the Millennium, there will still be [sin](#) and the evils it causes, though they will be far less frequent than happens today. Then, however, most of the world will understand the need to develop holy and righteous character and will be working on building it in their lives.

When I read the words in [Deuteronomy 5:29](#), I think [God](#) must on occasion experience the same disappointment I do: "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" Thank God that we know the solution and can put it into practice in our own lives!

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Character Matters](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

In God's Kingdom, only those who have God's approval, those who have developed iron-clad character, will be qualified to rule. Americans unfortunately have separated legality and competence from morality and character. There is a direct correlation between the character of the leader and the morality of the people (having a deadly ripple effect to the entire population). In selection of leaders, whether king or elder, God has emphasized that character has to be at the core. A leader has to practice what he preaches. We have been called to a process of character building, qualifying to rule in God's Kingdom.

From the Archives: Featured Article

What Do You Do in the Dark?

by Mike Ford

Character has been defined as "what you do in the dark." It is what you are when no one else can see you. Mike Ford uses the story of Joseph in Potiphar's house to extract some lessons about character.

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).
