



# Church of Christ

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204 Dix Road Jefferson City, MO 65109

## Heart to Heart...

**“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope.”** (Rom. 5:3-4) Character is what God is trying to grow us in. Character is tried integrity. It is being sound in upright behavior with honesty and sincerity. In other words, it's doing the right thing no matter what! Character is what produces more hope in an individual.

Sometimes brethren are rude and harsh. That's not good character. Sometimes brethren are not thoughtful. I've seen, over the years, unloving and harsh men become shepherds in the Lord's body. Servants of the Lord are to be gentle and respectable in their behavior (I Tim. 3). That's godly character. Jesus doesn't make people mean and nasty!

The danger that exists is many times we can't distinguish a person of godly character from a person's charm. Dale Carnegie made loads of money with charm. Absalom stole the hearts of Israel over David because of his charisma (II Sam. 16). Brethren follow someone who is smooth and charming, and it blinds them to an honest evaluation of character. We seem to have great difficulty distinguishing true, godly character and a person who has an outgoing personality!

Paul warned the Roman brethren to watch out for those with **“...smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.”** (Rom. 16:18) He warned the Corinthian brethren, **“For we are not like many, peddling the word of God...”** (II Cor. 2:17). Paul made absolutely certain that he was **“...not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God...”** (II Cor. 4:2) Charming ways can be very deceptive and harmful to the body.

Many time people have charm about them, but no godly character. Preachers are some of the worst. Brethren like certain preachers because they are exciting and have a great personality. Some preachers are so likeable, but have little godly character. Some brethren base things on charming personality, to hold people's attention, and not the teaching from God's word. We need to always be careful, not paranoid. Salesmen, comen have to be charming and loveable! They are trying to sell goods. Christians should be people of godly character. Character is discipline. Character has a purpose. Character is what makes one do right in the most difficult situation. Character is what makes one follow through with commitments. A person with character can have charm, but don't get the two confused. Sometimes brethren have no godly character to stand for what is right, but rather compromise with charm so they won't be disliked. (It keeps preachers hired!) Godly character will not be rude, hateful and mean. It will be “tough” when there is a need to be tough, but it will be tempered with love. It takes godly character to preach the word in purity. Christianity is about character. Character is gained by persevering in our tribulations. God uses difficulties to bring about proven godly character. Think about it!!!

Brent