Becoming a Woman of excellence

CHAPTER TWO

GOD’S CHARACTER

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

Psalm 27:1

If we are going to pursue a goal for our lives that reflects our desire to understand and live up to the highest and best, then we need to know God intimately – for He is our source and model of excellence. Having a proper view of God is necessary if we are to live a life pleasing to Him.

We must realize that a life with the goal of excellence cannot be lived on our own merit or in our own strength. We know that we are not perfect, and that we will fail over and over again. How does God respond to our imperfections and weaknesses?

First, we need to know and be reminded of God’s unfailing and unconditional love, that His “power is perfected in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9) because of His tender and loving mercy toward us. Second, even though God is the Creator and all-powerful, He cares about each of us personally – and He has plans for us that will give us a future and a hope. And third, we can trust our lives to a God who we know wants to meet our deepest needs, and desires only what is good for us.

As we study God’s character, may we continue to be challenged to live a life of reflecting His excellence.

We must practice the art of long and loving meditation upon the majesty of God. This will take some effort, for the concept of majesty has all but disappeared from the human race.

A. W. Tozer

God’s Loving Kindness

How excellent is thy loving kindness. Psalm 36:7

1. When asked to describe God’s attributes, what comes to your mind?

2. Read the rich descriptions of God’s character in the following passages. Which aspects of God’s personhood are you most thankful for?

   Psalm 103:1-18
   Psalm 145:8-21

3. Sometimes our view of God is determined by our relationship with our father or some other authority figure. If we have been brought up in a very strict, harsh home, for example, then we are likely to see God primarily as a judge. Truly believing that God is love is key to any response we have to Him.
Which characteristics of God, if any, do you find most difficult to accept because of your past experiences?

Pray over these characteristics that may be difficult for you to accept, and ask God to give you a fuller understanding of who He really is.

4. How would you describe the kind of love God has for us? Use Isaiah 49:15-16, Romans 5:8, 1 John 3:1, and other verses of your own choosing as the basis for your answer.

5. How does knowing that God loves you unconditionally and that you are His child affect your response to Him?

    Beloved, let us love. Lord, what is love? Love is that which inspired My life, and led Me to My Cross, and held Me on My cross. Love is that which will make it thy joy to lay down thy life for thy brethren. Lord, evermore give me this love. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after love, for they shall be filled.

    
    Amy Carmichael

God’s Sovereignty

Sovereignty means supreme power. A.W. Tozer writes, “God’s sovereignty is the attribute by which He rules His entire creation, and to be sovereign God must be all-knowing, all-powerful, and absolutely free. . . . Free to do whatever He wills to do anywhere at anytime to carry out His eternal purpose in every single detail without interference.”

6. What do the following verses teach about God’s sovereignty?

    1 Chronicles 29:11-12

    Isaiah 46:9-10

    Colossians 1:15-17

7. What do the following verses tell us about God’s sovereign care for His people?

    Jeremiah 29:11

    John 16:33

    Romans 8:28
What assurance and comfort do these verses give you as you encounter the trials and sorrows of life?

8. Whether we are Christians or not, there are trials to face in life. The difference in the Christian’s life is that God’s grace is sufficient to triumph through them and bear up under them. Study the following passages, and then write a paragraph giving a scriptural view of suffering. Psalm 119:71, 75, 76; John 9:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:7-10; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

No literature is more realistic and honest in facing the harsh facts of life than the Bible. At no time is there the faintest suggestion that the life of faith exempts us from difficulties. What it promises is preservation from all the evil in them. . . . All the water in all the oceans cannot sink a ship unless it gets inside. Nor can all the trouble in the world harm us unless it gets within us. That is the promise of [Psalm 121]: The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. (v.7)

Eugene Peterson

9. Also essential to having some insight into hard times is recognizing the willfulness of our own sinful nature. Someone has said that God is a gentleman and He will not force His will on us; we must give Him permission to rule in our lives.

What do the following Scriptures teach about man’s role in bringing trials on himself?

Psalm 81:8-14

Isaiah 48:17-19

Jeremiah 7:23-24

To believe actively that our Heavenly Father constantly spreads around us providential circumstances that work for our present good and our everlasting well-being brings to the soul veritable benediction. Most of us go through life praying a little, planning a little, jockeying for position, hoping but never being quite certain of anything, and always secretly afraid that we will miss the way. This is a tragic waste of truth and never gives rest to the heart.

There is a better way. It is to repudiate our own wisdom and take instead the infinite wisdom of God. Our insistence upon seeing ahead is natural enough, but it is a real hindrance to our spiritual progress. God has charged Himself with full responsibility for our eternal happiness and stands ready to take over the management of our lives the moment we turn in faith to Him.

A.W. Tozer
10. What other examples from Scripture or your own life show a relationship between our actions and God’s allowing our choices to affect the circumstances of our lives?

**God’s Provision**  Praise the Lord in song, for He has done excellent things.  
*Isaiah 12:5*

11. Read Psalm 23.

   a. David used his own experience of being a shepherd to write the beautiful twenty-third psalm. How does a shepherd care for and provide for his sheep?

   b. Since the Lord is our Shepherd, how does God provide for us?

   c. What does this provision mean to you personally?

   When the Lord is my Shepherd he is able to supply my needs, and he is certainly willing to do so, for his heart is full of love, and there “I shall not want.” I shall not lack for *temporal things*. Does he not feed the ravens, and cause the lilies to grow? How, then, can he leave his children to starve? I shall not want *for spirituals*, I know that his grace will be sufficient for me. Resting in him he will say to me, “As thy day, so shall thy strength be.”

   *C.H. Spurgeon*

12. What do the following verses teach about who meets our needs for security and protection?

   Psalm 27:1

   Psalm 91:4, 14-16

   Romans 8:31-32

   2 Peter 1:3-4

   Be assured, if you walk with Him and look to Him and expect help from Him, He will never fail you. As an older brother who has known the Lord for forty-four years, who writes this, says to you for your encouragement that He has never failed him. In the greatest difficulties, in the heaviest trials, in the deepest poverty and necessities, He has never failed me; but because I was *enabled by His grace to trust Him* He has always appeared for my help. I delight in speaking well of His name.

   *George Mueller*
AUTHOR’S REFLECTION – Early in my life I responded to God’s love for me. Knowing that God loves me unconditionally has freed me from trying to live the Christian life by being perfect and trying to earn His love by performing. My understanding of God’s constancy in His love encourages me to return His love by living a life which would bring honor to Him. I want to become a woman of excellence not because I have to perform, but because I choose to please God.

Because of my security and worth in Jesus Christ, I do not have to look to people or things to feel of value or loved. I am now free to love and serve because I can trust my needs to be met by my heavenly Father.

Your Response

13. Is there a new thought about God that has challenged or encouraged you? How can it make a difference in your life?

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE MEMORY: Psalm 27:1. (You might want to write it on a 3” x 5” card, put it over the sink or wherever you will see it regularly, and memorize it. Thank God for who He is and for what He is doing in your life.”

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