**What Is Character?**

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By Nascy Wood

What is character? According to the dictionary, character means

 1. a distinctive trait;
 2. behavior typical of a person or group;
 3. moral strength;
 4. reputation.

 Character is an evaluation of a particular individual's moral qualities. It can also imply a variety of attributes including the existence of lack of virtues such as integrity, courage, fortitude, honesty and loyalty, or of good behaviors or habits. When someone is of moral character, it is primarily referring to the assemblage of qualities that distinguish one individual from another.

 When we watch a movie or read a book we usually think of the characters. Even though sometimes the character is complex most of the time they tend to be usually good or bad. Even in the early days of the western, you could tell the characters by the color of their outfits and hats. Although we tend to support the good character and cheer them on as they go about their lives. We want to see them succeed. But in real life character is much more complicated. We are all an array of good and bad character traits. We need to make a conscience decision to do what is right. Depending on your choices, we are either rewarded or have to pay the consequences.

 The United States Air Force Academy definition is "We define character as the sum of those qualities of moral excellence that stimulate a person to do the right thing, which is manifested through right and proper actions despite internal or external pressures to the contrary."

 When we think of someone with good character or morals we can find many who fit the bill. One of the men I think about is Noah. Even if you are not biblical you have heard of Noah. Noah was a man who God chose as being a person of good character. Noah was a just man. He was righteous in conduct and character. He was a man vindicated by God. He was also able to maintain his integrity as he was being ridiculed by his peers. He was a role model for them and by being a man of good standing and did not waiver in his convictions God protected Noah and his family.

 Another quote by an author unknown says, "Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch

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your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny."

In looking at the negative side of character for a brief moment, the current situation on Wall Street shows the CEO's of these firms as greedy which shows a lack of integrity.

Once your character has been destroyed how long do you think it would take for others to trust you again? Would your character ever be totally repaired? Would there always be a hint of question surrounding you?

Remember when dealing with others, keep your character intact. Also, remember the true test of character is what you do when no one is watching you. Do you act the same way when you are alone as you do when you are with others. As Abraham Lincoln said, "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."
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*Nancy A. Wood*
*http://www.NancyAWood.com*
*I was born and raised in Oakland, CA. I am a Christian wife, mother and grandmother.*
*Currently I am writing and publishing articles on biblical character and virtues. You can see my*
*published articles on EzineArticles.com.*
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