

WBNP #22 - Buying Character

Good Evening. A Puritan's Mind brings you the old time radio program *The Wild Boar News Podcast* from Sunny South Florida. Welcome, I'm Dr. Matthew McMahon.

Where does character come from? Well, many Christians today believe character is expressed by the color of your bible, or the kind of dress you wear to church. It's often esteemed as part of the repertoire of the physical characteristics of a given person in their larger and extended self in the things they buy or own. Some think their character shines forth in their tattoos. Others believe their character is seen in the kind of jewelry that their belly button demonstrates. Others find their character bound up in the hairstyle, or lack thereof, clothes, cars, houses and other material things.

Oftentimes churches have character, which demonstrates the kind of people that attend. Large churches with in-house cafes attract a certain character or person. Whitewashed churches with little décor and wooden pews attract other kinds of characters.

People often go to the store to buy clothes with "character". One friend of mine, Mr. Alex Berry, said something quite profound today. "People are out at the stores trying to buy character." What he meant was that people are out at Macy's or Nordstrom's or Wal-Mart buying clothes that have, what they think, character to them. Their wardrobe, in their minds, have character in them, so that character will be seen on them. In the old days, one would buy a pair of denim jeans that were as blue as blue could be, and you would have to wash them, beat them, work in them, wear them out to demonstrate the kind of character they would have as a result of your work and wear in them. Now one can go to the store and buy character in ripped jeans, worn jeans, faded jeans, colored jeans, and the like.

But really, I ask again, where does character come from? Can it really come in tattoos, earrings, or the kind of jeans that someone would buy? Are pink foot high Mohawks really something that demonstrate a person's character?

Better yet, to distinguish a true character from a pseudo character, we would simply need to look to God. What makes God's character, His Character? He does not wear fancy clothes, or jewelry, or even get haircuts. He does not, in any manner of materialism, confer His own divine character in such things. Rather, God's character is found in the revelation of Himself to us, in the Bible, in the propositions that demonstrate His being. Character, then, comes from the being of a person, not something they can buy on rack, or have tattooed on their arm.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, "What is God?" It answers, "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."

The Bible says in Philippians 2:22, "But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel." Romans 5:3-4 says, "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope." Character is the internal disposition of the soul, and the manner of its outworking in the demonstration of that soul, as it exercises its intellect throughout life - for good or ill. Yet, one can never, ever, buy character in a store.

This is Dr. Matthew McMahon signing off.