

MINTED OR MUNTED?

(The Carving of our Character)

Part 1

Ps Terry Calkin – 11 April 2010

NZ school boys have a great turn of phrase – sweet. A few years ago munted = ruined. One of the great truths of the Bible is that we are image bearers. The Bible teaches that we are made in God's image. **Genesis 1:26, 27 – Let us make man in our image according to our likeness. Verse 27 – So God created man in His own image.**

Essentially this means spiritually more than physically. God made man perfect – As we say “A Mint Copy”. He also created man with free will or choice. As a result of free choice our forefather Adam chose to rebel against God and rebellion has been a human trait, characteristic ever since. Rebellion – selfishness. The mint image became in vernacular – it became munted. Munted means a crumpled broken version of the mint original.

We know that God in His great love put in a plan for the redemption of His creation. He did it through sending Jesus His Son to pay the price of repairing our muntedness and restoring us to mint condition. And getting into the restoration process is immediate. It's called salvation. That's when I place my faith and trust in God's Son to be my Saviour. Now the process of restoration takes time. Like buying an old car to restore. When you first purchase it, it's yours, but then the process of restoration begins and that takes time. In our Christian walk we call it the development of character.

1. **What's the difference between personality and character?**

Proverb 4:23 – Keep your heart with all diligence for out of it spring the issues of life.

Personality has to do with the outward expression or conduct of your life.

You are born with personality and stuck with it through life. Don't attempt to change personality - appreciate the diversity, especially of others.

Touch personality - you touch God.

I'm a choleric/sanguine married to a melancholy choleric. That's interesting - every time I happily leave home, I get a list of things to do, which depresses me. You are born with personality – character is your choice.

You meet people with personality but no character. We call them rogues, vagabonds and con-men. People with no scruples. Nice people to say Hi to, but no character. On the other hand we have people with great character and little personality. We call them the salt of the earth. Personality is external – character is internal. Character is of the heart.

Personality is what I am born with- character is the result of choice.

Reputation is what people think of me, character is what I am when no one is looking.

As scripture says – ***watch the heart. Guard your heart, for this is the real seat of life.*** Character is the platform from which your life is launched. Be careful in judgment of another? ***Romans 2:1 “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things”.***

Jeremiah 17:9 – the heart is deceitful who can know it. I the Lord search the heart. Only He knows it. Many confuse personality with character.

- 2. What is Character?** Character is the image of God expressed in the life of a person. Turn to ***Colossians 1:15-17 - talking of Jesus – “He is the image of the Invisible God, the First Born over all creation.*** All that God is in character and being is seen in Christ. The Greek word used here is EIKON – which means more than a resemblance but a perfect expression of the original. Jesus said, ***John 14:9 – if you have seen me you have seen the father.*** ***Philippians 2:6*** equal to.

Also do not confuse the Fruit of the Spirit with character. Fruit is a by-product of character. The character of God in the life of the believer produces the Fruit of the Spirit. But isn't it the Fruit of the Spirit? YES. More of this in a minute.

3. What are the sources of Character?

Character for a Christian has **5 sources**.

(i) FAITH

Faith is the primary source because the essential ingredient of faith is obedience to God's Word both written and spoken. Faith is knowing, believing and acting. **James 1:22 – but be doers of the word not hearers.** Doing it is the key that separates the men from the boys. In faith at the heart of the Christian walk is obedience to God's Word. It's the seminal key to Christian living.

(ii) RELATIONSHIP

Remember last few weeks **2 Corinthians 3:18 – as we behold Him we are being changed from one degree of glory to another.** They say you become like the people you live with. Like to know what a man is like? Look at his dog!!! What this verse is saying is that as we relate with God we are slowly being transformed into His image. My wife says I will live to a great age because I've got a lot of changing yet. How do we relate with God? The best and only way I know how is to spend a daily quite time with Him – 10-15 minutes a day will transform your life. It will achieve more in 1 week than Coronation Street will do for you in 20 years. As we **behold Him** His character is instilled into our lives. **2Corinthinas 3:18; Exodus 34:29; Judges 16:20**

(iii) THE WORD

In a way all these **5 things** are related. The Word reveals to us the nature and character of God. **Hebrews 4:12 = for the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword. A discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

The Word of God brings correction into our heart which is the seat of character. Now the Word is energized by the Spirit. It is the Living Word. It's alive, its active and it brings change.

(iv) TRIALS

Romans 5:3,4 – and not only that but we also glory in tribulations knowing that tribulation produces perseverance and perseverance

character. Sometimes Christians are derailed in their walk with Christ when the tough times come.

But it is the tough times that prove and test our faith, and produce the character of God in our lives. The tests may or may not come from God.

Where they come from is not important. How we react is what is important. It is during the tough times that God has promised to be with us. ***Psalm 23 – though I walk through the valley of death you are with me, your rod and staff comfort me.***

Rod and staff = Word – spirit. They comfort me.

Which brings me to the number 5

(v) THE SPIRIT

In ***John 16:9-15 Jesus teaches His disciples about the role of the Spirit in a believers life.*** This is not the Baptism of the Holy Spirit – that’s for the power to witness. This is the role of the Spirit in developing God’s character in our lives. He says ***verse 8 convict of sin – verse 13 guide into all truth.*** Again this is why we need God’s Word every day to allow the Spirit to minister it to our hearts and develop the character of God into our souls, as we make the choice to follow God’s way.

HOW IS CHARACTER DEVELOPED? ANSWER – PAINFULLY!

It is interesting to study the origin of the Word character. It comes from the Greek word “Character” and it is translated in the New Testament as the ***“Express Image”*** – turn to ***Hebrews 1:3*** only place it is used in the Bible. Talking of Christ, ***“who being in the brightness of His (God’s) glory and the “express image” of His person ...***

Two words are translated “image” – EIKON – character. There is a small but very important difference in the meaning of both words. EIKON means the same representation. You may have a print of an oil painting that’s an “EIKON” character is different. It comes from the root word **CHARAGMA** – which means to carve, engrave or to stamp. The idea expressed is that the duplicate has all the properties of the original – in fact it is indistinguishable from the original. To mint = produce originals. Like mint coins – all have the same value, all the same properties. They all possess the same character. That’s what God wants to see produced in us.

So as Christians we are on a character development course. This is what Paul means in **Galatians 4:19** when he writes to the Galatian Christians – ***“My little children, for whom I labour in birth again, until Christ is formed in you.***

We are being turned into mint condition – from munted to minted. ***Paul goes on in Philippians 1:6 – being confident of this very thing that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it; until the day of Jesus Christ.***

2 Corinthians 3:18 - But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Exodus 34:29 - when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony [were] in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.

Judges 16:20 - "The Philistines [are] upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

So don't despise the hard times, the disappointments, the failures, they are part of the process.

Dare to dream.

Share the dream

Wear the dream

Repair the dream

And know that God is going to bring forth our dream in all its glory and beauty in His good time.

It will be in mint condition.

I am aware that some this morning – lost sight of the dream, the carving of character has been too painful. God comes this morning and says ‘my son, my daughter, let me walk with you. Let me bind up your wounds. Let me minister my healing and my love into your very Character’.