

CHARACTER

Lesson 19

BROAD--HAVING A WIDE PERSPECTIVE

Burden to Impart:

We need a broad heart that has a wide perspective. We need a heart that is as God's heart: broad, concerned for all people, regardless of their temperament, race, class, grade, or age. We should not respect some people and despise others. If the rich person "mocks the poor" he "reproaches his Maker" (Prov. 17:5). His heart is too narrow; he only appreciates those who are like himself, rich. As Christians, we should not "have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons" (James 2:1). We should see the whole picture concerning people and things, not only the small view that concerns or benefits ourselves. We should not be like a frog sitting in a well who only sees a small, tiny sky. We should be like the eagle upon a mountain that beholds the whole earth. We should have a large heart and we should have a broad character.

Memory Verse: "And God gave Solomon...largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore" (1 Kings 4:29).

Facts to Teach:

1. If we are to become vessels that are "useful to the master, prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21) we must be broad in our character. If we only know to be exact, strict, and diligent, we may possibly become a narrow person. We may become tight toward others, even selfish and stingy.

2. We need a wide perspective that can see the complete scenery, the whole situation around us. Then we can have largeness of heart like King Solomon had (1 Kings 4:29), who built the greatest temple for the Lord that has ever been built upon this earth. A narrow, petty person could never accomplish great works.

3. An example of a bird with a narrow view is the ostrich. The ostrich cannot fly at all. It always stays on the earth with its head toward the ground, looking for some berries or food. An example of a bird with a broad view is the eagle. The eagle soars high above the earth and makes its nest in the mountaintops so it can have a complete view of everything below.

4. Because God's heart is so broad His love is for ALL people. He sends His sunshine and rain on the good people as well as the evil. Man's heart and love are very narrow compared to God's. If we were in control, we would only send the sunshine and the rain to those people who treated us well and respected us. We would probably send darkness and drought to those who did not respect us, love us, and treat us well. Thank God for His broad heart!

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5. Because God's heart is so broad it is open to people of every type: kind and unkind, selfish and generous, educated and uneducated, smart and ignorant, cultured and barbarians, young and old. Because He is willing to save all, He is called the "Savior of all men" (1 Tim. 4:10).

6. Because God's heart is so broad, He is concerned with the whole earth, the whole world. The Lord Jesus not only died for the sins of those who would believe in Him, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Although the Lord Jesus was a man of the Jewish race, He was not concerned only for His own race. He came to be the Savior to Jews, Greeks, Chinese, Americans, Mexicans, etc. He truly is "the Savior of the world" (John 4:42).

7. Although the Apostle Paul was a Jew and loved his fellow kinsmen so much that he would have liked to use all of his energy and life to reach all of them with the gospel (he would even have gladly died for them, Rom. 9:2-3), he spent most of his energy and even gave up his life to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, those who were not Jews. Because of Paul's faithfulness to God and broadness of character, the gospel has reached us, the Gentiles, today (see 1 Cor. 9:19-22).

8. We should have the same kind of heart as our God, a broad heart. Do we only appreciate those who are like us and avoid those who are different? Do we only have room in our heart for a few but no concern for the rest? Do we only play with "our own kind" and coldly reject others? Do we only like the strong and despise the weaker ones? Do we like the "smart" and have no respect for someone else who is not so smart?

9. If our heart is large, if our view and perspective is broad, we will have a loving concern and genuine interest for all, not just for a select few who please us and fit our taste. We will not just look at a part of the picture (that narrow part which our small, selfish eye can see), but at the whole picture. God's desire is that "all men should be saved and come to the full knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). To cooperate with Him in His great plan we need to be very broad in our character. Our heart needs to be enlarged to embrace the entire earth and all men.

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