

CHARACTER

Lesson 20

FINE--NOT CARELESS OR NEGLIGENT

Burden to Impart:

We should practice in everything to build up a fine and careful character. A sloppy, careless, or negligent character will cause us to lose some benefit in everything we do. Although the Lord Jesus was broad in His character and generous to feed over 5,000 people, He was also fine and careful to afterward pick up the scraps and leftovers in 12 baskets (Matt. 14:14-21). He did not litter or waste. He was fine in everything He did. The Lord Jesus was fine in His care of people, even caring for the little children and babies (Matt. 19:13; Luke 18:15). Even after the greatest event that ever happened on this earth, His resurrection and victory over death, He carefully folded His grave clothes and placed them neatly in the tomb before leaving (John 20:7)! As the Lord's children and followers we must build up a fine and careful character so that we can be useful to Him.

Memory Verse: "That the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, Of those whom You have given Me, I have not lost one" (John 18:9).

Facts to Teach:

1. Although we should be broad in our character and see things with a wide perspective we must not be careless, negligent, or sloppy concerning any details. We must see the whole picture, yet we must not overlook any part of the picture. We must be broad and at the same time fine.

2. An example of this in nature is the eagle. The eagle flies high above the earth and makes its nest in the mountains. The eagle can see a very great view of all the earth beneath, yet it will not miss a tiny mouse running through a field far below. It has a broad view, yet a fine sight, at the same time.

3. By reading the Gospels we can see that the Lord Jesus was broad as well as fine. In everything the Lord Jesus handled, whether people or things, He handled them finely, not sloppily, carelessly, or negligently.

a. His feeding the hungry multitudes that followed Him showed His broadness and generosity. His gathering up of the scraps and leftovers into baskets shows His fineness (Matt. 14:14-21).

b. The disciples only paid attention to the adults and had no consideration for the young children. They were rough in their dealing with the Lord's followers. The Lord Jesus, however, cared not only for the adults, but for the little children (Matt. 19:13-15), and even for the babies (Luke 18:15)! The Lord Jesus is very fine and careful about all of His followers, not overlooking even the smallest ones.

c. After three long days in the tomb and a mighty, victorious resurrection, the Lord Jesus did not leave a sloppy pile

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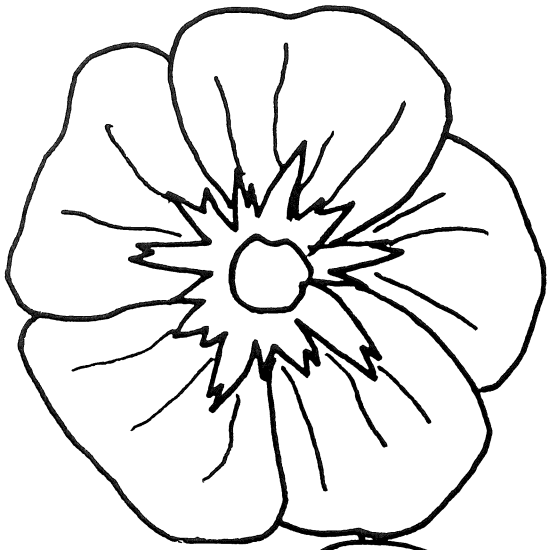
of grave clothes in the cave in order to get out faster. The Scriptures record that: "the handkerchief which was on His head" was found "folded up in a place apart" (John 20:7).

4. When we clean things it is easy to do a general cleaning. To clean finely requires a careful character. When most children clean their room they don't clean under the bed. Rather, they sometimes hide things under the bed. When most people clean a floor they don't carefully clean the corners. The following story is a good illustration.

An elderly man had a very messy, dirty basement which needed cleaning. There was very little light in the basement. He hid a \$50 gold coin in the dirtiest corner under some junk. He then asked one young grandson to clean the basement and promised to pay him \$5. He told him that if he found anything particularly interesting or valuable to let him know. The grandson finished his job, though he did not do a very careful or fine job, and came for the promised \$5. When his grandfather asked him if he had found anything especially interesting or valuable he replied that he hadn't.

A short while later the grandfather offered \$5 to another grandson to clean the basement and gave him the same instructions as the first. This grandson did a very careful job of cleaning and straightening the basement. He even got a lamp so he could clean the dirty corners well. While he was cleaning he found the \$50 gold coin! When he completed his work he came to his grandfather and showed him the \$50 gold coin he had found in the corner. His grandfather smiled, for he knew that this grandson had truly done a careful and fine job. He gave him the \$5 he had promised and then told him, "You may keep the gold coin also. It is your reward for doing such a fine and careful job."

Fine



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