

# **“The Character of the Christian: The Call To Fruitful Living”**

September 17, 2006 \* John 15:1-17

## *I. What are the benefits of working through “Design For Discipleship”?*

- *have a new motivation for keeping a daily time with God.*
- *acquire a stronger command of Scripture.*
- *learn where the books of the Bible are at.*
- *develop the habit of Scripture memory.*
- *learn ways to defend your faith better.*
- *master Biblical principles for victorious living.*
- *experience greater intimacy of church fellowship.*

## *II. The Character of the Christian*

### *A. What is “character”?*

**Moral excellence or firmness**

*B. “Being” vs. “Doing” – which is more important?*

**From “Design For Discipleship”:**

*Many people measure the fruitfulness of their lives by the quantity of their activities. But this does not give a true picture. What you are is more important than what you do. The Bible emphasizes being and character.”*

**Rick Warren: “We are human beings, not human doings.”**

*C. Some say that one of God’s greatest desires for me is that I be prosperous, healthy and have ‘my best life now’.*

*What should we think about this idea?*

**A Chinese pastor sitting in a jail cell is not having his “best life now” A Pakistani Muslim convert is not going to be enjoying abundant prosperity any time soon. The parent who discover their child has cystic fibrosis has good reasons to question the idea that God wills perfect health**

**for everyone. Obviously, there’s something God wants for us more than just personal happiness. He wants us to grow in Christlike character.**

*D. Proverbs which emphasize the importance of character:*  
**Proverbs 16:8, 16:16, 16:19, 16:32, 17:1, etc.**

## *III. Of First Importance in Growing In Character Is To Know My Need For God*

*A. Examine the 7 Steps of “Your Best Life Now”*

- 1. Get the right mental attitude.**
- 2. Develop a healthy self-image.**
- 3. Discover the power of your thoughts and words**
- 4. Let go of the past.**
- 5. Stand strong against opposition and adversity.**
- 6. Live to give.**
- 7. Choose to be happy.**

*B. What’s missing? Or what can be easily cut out?*

**Where’s God? These 7 steps could be taken from any number of New Age self-help manuals. Though Osteen weaves God-talk into his teaching, it could easily be left out of his framework. In contrast to this, Rick Warren begins the “Purpose Driven Life” with the words: “It’s not about you.”**

*“Osteen never mentions the blood of Christ, atonement for sin, the cost of forgiveness, etc. We look in vain for any consideration of the cross. He also never mentions the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He has no need to, because these foundational points of the gospel don’t fit into his system. For Osteen, because God is only positive, he has created us with fully positive potential and we can reach this simply by understanding that this is who we are and by programming our unconscious mind accordingly. In this system there is no real Fall, and therefore no real judgment. Our problem is not rebellion but our negative self-image that comes from negative*

*conditioning. Redemption is not deliverance from sin, Satan and wrath, redemption is the recognition of all the exciting potential that God has built into us and our reprogramming ourselves with positive thoughts, daily affirmations, and the expectations of progress, promotion and special favor.” ~ Don Williams*

**For further evangelical analysis of the theology of the Word-Faith movement, visit the following web-links:**

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/004/33.103.html>

<http://www.kingdomrain.net/content/view/44/38/>

<http://www.worldviewweekend.com/secure/cwnetwork/article.php?&ArticleID=505>

<http://www.letusreason.org/Popteac29.htm>

[http://www.apprising.org/archives/2005/10/once\\_upon\\_a\\_tim.html](http://www.apprising.org/archives/2005/10/once_upon_a_tim.html)

*IV. Psalm 19:12-13 – “Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me.”*

*What things in my heart might God be putting his finger on this morning?*