

SYNOPSIS

What is the biggest indicator of your future? How can you change or alter your future? How can you make sure that you continue to progress positively? The answer is the same for all three questions: Your daily habits or actions. This is because your habits are the “Building blocks of character.”

“If we don’t like what we see when we look into the future through the telescope of character, we can change the future. How? By changing our habits. Our lives change when our habits change.”

Building character will help you deal with all the challenges in the future. Good character is made up of good habits called virtues. Some virtues include: honesty, patience, moderation, kindness, humility, courage, perseverance, compassion, hope, charity, generosity, wisdom, gentleness. Maturing in these virtues leads us to be the “best version of ourselves.” Matthew Kelly encourages us to “pick a virtue and ask God to show you ways to develop that virtue in yourself”. Focus on this virtue every day. Write it down. And when you notice that you are developing this virtue, celebrate your progress. Then pick a new virtue to focus on.

In today’s Old Testament reading Job complains during a very challenging time in his life that the days and nights drag on and are full of misery. The reading ends with, “I shall not see happiness again”, but as one continues to read the book of Job this statement is not realized as God blesses the latter days of Job more than his earlier days. Job exhibits many of the virtues listed above including patience, humility, wisdom and perseverance. These help him to not listen to his negative friends and abandon His faith in God. In the book of James, the perseverance of Job is remembered and Ch. 5 verse 11 states, “Indeed we call blessed those who have persevered.”

In the New Testament reading and in the Gospel reading both the Apostle Paul and Jesus speak on the purpose they are on earth. Paul states, “all this I do for the sake of the gospel”. And Jesus after spending time in the deserted place praying tells Simon and others, “Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this Purpose have I come.”

May we all ask this question of God during the Lenten season, “Why did God make me?” Lesson one is Baltimore Catechism. “God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and be happy with Him forever in heaven.” This book Perfectly Yourself is all about how to best serve God using the gifts He has given you. First though, we need to get to know God and to fall in Love with Him before we can share the gospel like Paul.

DISCUSSION

1. How can you find out more about Jesus during Lent? Where is your solitary place to pray?
2. What virtue effects the other virtues the most? Which one do you believe God would have you develop first? How can you develop this virtue?
3. Why is character the greatest investment anyone of us can make? How does this relate to investing a dollar a day for retirement?
4. How can we pursue rigorous honesty as individuals? In our relationships?

REFLECTION

Perfectly Yourself and today’s mass readings encourage us and those around us to not focus on appearance or talent but instead to center our concern on developing character, virtue, holiness, and love of God and neighbor.

For I know the plans I have for you,
declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and
not to harm you, plans to give you hope
and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

