

**Proverbs 1:7-9;**

**7-**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. **8-**My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: **9-**For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.



"Essential Elements of Character."

1-Two kinds of character:

1-Good moral character.

a-Man cannot run away from himself. Wherever he goes he takes his character with him.

2-Bad moral character.

a-Life determines character, and character determines destiny and the same is true throughout the whole catalogue of human action.

2-The two most precious things we have on this side of the grave are:

a-Our character and life itself and as death finds us so will be our eternal abode.

3-We build our character, and in the word of the unknown poet:

We are building every day,  
In a good or evil way,  
And the structure as it grows,  
Will our inmost soul disclose.

Till in every arch and line  
All our faults and failings shine-  
It may grow a castle grand,  
Or a wreck upon the sand.

Do you ask what building this,  
That can show both pain and bliss,  
That can be both dark and fair?  
Lo, its name is character.

Build it well whate'er you do,  
Build it straight and strong and true  
Build it clean and high and broad;  
Build it for the eye of God.

4-Character built of poor material.

a-There lived at Lockport, New York, a member of congress, who had in his home a servant girl, who by her industry and integrity won the esteem of the entire family.

b-This girl married a shiftless, drunken carpenter and had to support him.

c-He was to construct a house for the Senator. He cheated and used poor material. He and his wife were given the house. Here is the tragedy of it-to put unsound materials and poor work into our character-house is to cheat ourselves



"Essential Elements of Character."

5-Nothing worth while is ever obtained by any scheme or method which does not require the possession of solid character.

1-You cannot carve rotten wood-and neither can decrepit and decayed character be carved into anything that will work real happiness for men.

6-It is my purpose now to speak of some things which I regard as essential elements of great character and successful life. I shall not speak of all such elements, but I shall submit a few which are indispensable, the first of which is the

1-The ability to put first things first.

a-There probably has never been a time when it was easier to dissipate time and energy than now.

1-The currents of life move swiftly--there are more things to do than we ever shall get done.

2-There are more books to read than we ever can look at, and more avenues to enjoyment than we ever shall find time to travel.

b-Life appeals to us from innumerable directions, and we are continually tempted to dabble, to let first come be first served, forgetting that the best things in life never crowd. This may have caused David to say, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

c-What does it mean "to number our days"?

1-He numbers his days well who:

1-Mourns the time past which has been misspent.

2-Diligently uses present time, and trusts the future time entirely to God

d-To insure happiness here and hereafter we must be governed by the word of Christ,

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33. It is pathetic to see the finest of human

relationships-our friends, our families, even God-searching around our lives for the scraps and left-overs of our attention.



## "Essential Elements of Character."

- 2-The second of these essential elements of character is, "MORAL STABILITY."

The Prophet Isaiah, brooding over the estate of his people and knowing their need advised them to, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations: spare not, lengthen they cords, and strengthen thy stakes." Tents example.

a-Present day life offers many examples of expansion and overextension calling for greater moral stability.

1-Business men need moral stability. He may make progress at the expense of his moral staunchness, and like a tipsy tent, he has long cords and weak stakes.

2-Moral stability is also needed among modern youth.

1-Our young people are the freemen of history.

2-They are the most unsuppressed, and unsuperintended youth of all time, enjoying a degree of liberty never before accorded.

3-But to balance this freedom:

1-Many have not developed a corresponding moral foundation to stabilize them. Their lengthened ropes have revealed their weak stakes and their tents are flapping in the wind.

3-The third essential element of character that I shall mention tonight is:

### SELF RESPECT.

1-When properly understood, self-respect, means holding a high regard for the sacred obligations of life. Every admirable character in history can be interpreted in terms of lofty self-respect.

1-Joseph resisted the impure solicitation of Potiphar's wife, because he thought his honor was sacred.

2-Martyrs have gone to the stake and, up in smoke, rather than speak a lie, because they thought their truth was sacred.



"Essential Elements of Character."

2-A place where self-respect is sorely needed today is in the relationship between the sexes.

1-The modern age is obsessed with the idea that the panacea for all moral and social ills is to be found in the spread of biological information.

3-I am not doing so now, nor shall I at any other time advocate a policy of biological ignorance, because ignorance is no cure for anything.

1-With the imparting of wholesome information there must also be inculcated "the positive ideal of a clean life that will cause young folks to hold a high opinion of themselves."

4-Now, I wish to mention, briefly, the fourth essential element of character:

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

a-Solomon said, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

b-D. L. Moody once said, "That he had had more trouble with himself than with any other man he had ever met." I think most of us might say that.

5-Another essential element of character is: COURAGE, COURAGE TO LIVE ABOVE THE AVERAGE.

1-The prisons of history have been filled with two kind of people: the worst and the best.

a-The death cell of Athens had in it the scum of Attica, but it also had in it Socrates, the greatest soul of Greece.

b-The Philippian jail had in it the thugs of the countryside, but it also contained Paul, the apostle of Christ.

2-Jesus of Nazareth is the world's best example of one who had the courage to live above the average

6-The last of which I shall speak tonight is STAYING POWER. Many people are equipped with good self-starters and are quick on the get away, but soon bog in the sand dune of life or their clutch slips as they under take the hills of life.

