



Changing Lives – Building Character

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Changing Lives Ministry

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Ben Franklin Character Development Program

In 1726, at the age of 20, Benjamin Franklin created a system to develop his character.

Franklin listed his thirteen target virtues as:

1. Temperance. Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.
2. Silence. Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself.
3. Order. Let all your things have their places, let each part of your business have its time.
4. Resolution. Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
5. Frugality. Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.
6. Industry. Lose no time, be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.
7. Sincerity. Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.
8. Justice. Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
9. Moderation. Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.
10. Cleanliness. Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes or habitation.
11. Tranquility. Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents, common or unavoidable.
12. Chastity. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.
13. Humility. Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

Ben Franklin Quote - 1757

“Many people lead bad lives that would gladly lead good ones, but know not how to make the change. They have frequently resolved and endeavored it but in vain because their endeavors have not been properly conducted. To exhort people to be good, to be just and to be temperate without showing them how they shall become so seems like ineffectual charity.

“Becoming a person of character is as properly an art as painting, navigation or architecture. If a man would become a painter, navigator or architect, it is not enough that he be advised to be one, that he is convinced by the arguments of his advisor that it would be for his advantage to be one and that he resolves to be one: but he must also be taught the principles of the art, be shown properly all the instruments. And thus regularly and gradually he arrives by practice at some perfection in the art.

“Therefore to be a person of character, it is necessary to be taught the principles, shown a proper model, and to practice the habits of character.