



WOW: Word Of the Week

CHARACTER **February 19, 2025**

Recently I have been thinking about identity. The “Knowing Jesus” video series that was released late last year asks the question, “Who do YOU say that Jesus is?” The mirror of that question is “who does Jesus say I am?” Who am I in God’s sight?

Thinking about identity led me to another question. What is the difference between personality and character? Stories and plays have characters. To say “he’s a real character” means something different than “he’s a person of character.” Literary characters have personality. The words are sometimes used interchangeably, but there’s an important difference.

Personality is physical aspect, plus an overall psychological, emotional, and social orientation. Personality encompasses a broad range of traits. The overall personality (orientation) is seen in behavior and actions, usually described as desirable or undesirable. Character traits denote moral and ethical qualities, beliefs and moral principles, that guide choices and actions, usually considered good or bad.

Both personality and character influence behavior. The actions of people we read about in the Bible are more often the result of character than personality. We do not have well-developed personality profiles for most of the people we meet in Scripture.

Now, all of that background led me to my word studies—what you have likely come to expect from me. Character is a Bible word. The root means a graver (the tool or person—we are more familiar with the word engraver). Thus an engraving (the “character”) is a figure stamped or engraved, which results in an exact copy. Heb. 1:3, Jesus is the express image, the essence of God.

Change gears slightly. My Word of the Year in 2025 is glorify. The Sermon on the Mount summarized: be like God, bring him glory. Heb. 1:3 says, “The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command.” Phil. 1:11 says the fruit of salvation is righteous character produced by Jesus, bringing glory and praise to God. Jesus radiates God’s glory through us. We become like God.

You and I have personalities. Those will not change significantly. Here is the challenge. Develop character. Or perhaps better, let Jesus develop a godly, righteous character in us, bringing forth fruit. This is the process of becoming more and more like God. Others seeing the results will glorify God.

Back to the meaning of the Greek word character. God’s image in us, exact figure, same essence. When the world looks at us, they see God.

Character. God’s work through Jesus. Be open. Let it happen. Listen. Obey. Imitate. And that will be enough. Eph. 3:20-21, “to him who is able to do more than we ask or imagine, according to the power with which he himself energizes us—to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever.”