



Abigail
Van Buren

"The best index
to a person's character is
(a) how he treats people
who can't do him any
good, and
(b) how he treats people
who can't fight back."

challenge #1

Managing vision

Godly character is
directed by a kingdom
centered hope.



challenge #2

Managing fear

Godly character
has the courage
to take risks.



challenge #3

Managing Relationships

Godly character builds
a loving community.



1 John 1:3

"what we have seen and heard we
proclaim to you also, so that you too
may have **fellowship with us**; and
indeed our fellowship is with the Father,
and with His Son Jesus Christ."

KOINONIA

Christianity is a community of
people in **fellowship** with God
through faith in Christ.

1 John 4:21

"And this commandment we have from
Him, that the one who loves God should
love his brother also."

AGAPE

Christianity is a community of
people bound by **love** to God
and one another.

**Christianity
that does not begin
with the individual
does not begin.**



**Christianity
that ends
with the individual,
ends.**



***Character is revealed
in relationships
with respect to:***

**how we
see
others.**

**how we
talk to
others.**

**how we
care for
others.**



**How do we
see
others?**



**1. Evaluating people
according to the flesh
or the Spirit.**

2. Two forgotten virtues.

***Reverence
Tolerance***

2 Corinthians 5:16

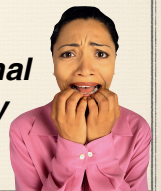
***“Therefore from now on we recognize
no one according to the flesh;”***

***Viewing people according to the flesh
has more to do with us than others.***



***Our short
sightedness***

***Our personal
insecurity***



2 Corinthians 5:16

***“Therefore from now on we recognize
no one according to the flesh;”***

- ✓ ***Initial impressions*** may expose my prejudices (*short sighted fears*).
- ✓ ***The Spirit of Christ prompts me to be slow to judge***
- ✓ ***and move lovingly toward others with a deep respect for God’s image in them.***

Mary Anne Evans
(pen name - George Eliot)



***“The
responsibility of
tolerance lies with
those who have
the wider vision.”***

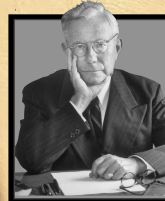
James 3

“9 With it (*the tongue*) we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse **men, who have been made in the likeness of God**; 10 . . . Things ought not to be this way.”

1. People with Godly character

view people with a sense of
reverence.

Paul Tillich



“I have never denied the deity of Christ nor of any human.”

Matthew 25:40

“The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’”

2. People with Godly character

see God’s image
where others do not.

Mother Teresa



“My ministry is not social work, it is worship.”

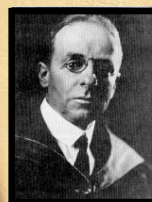
James 1:19

“Be quick to hear,
slow to speak,
and slow to wrath.”

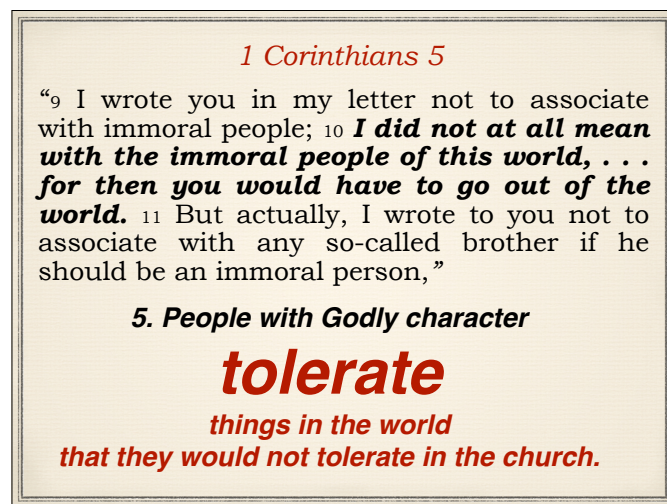
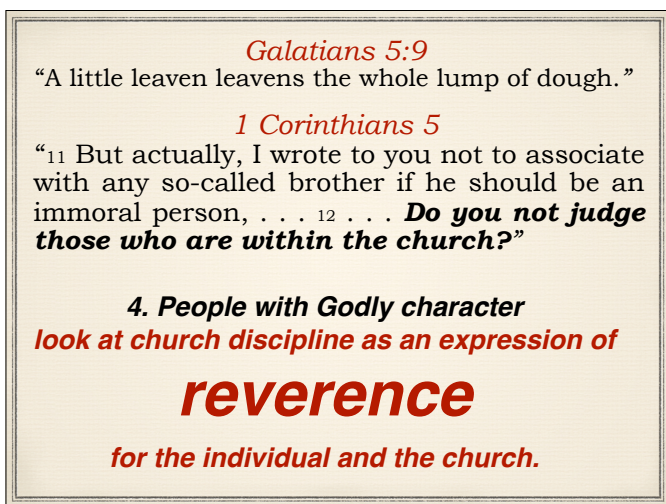
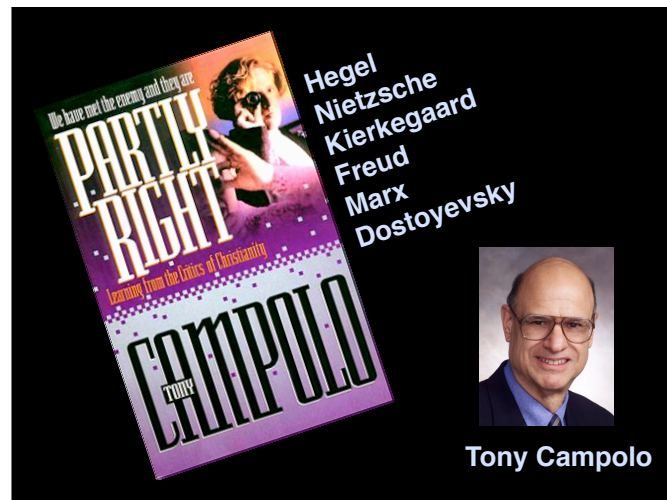
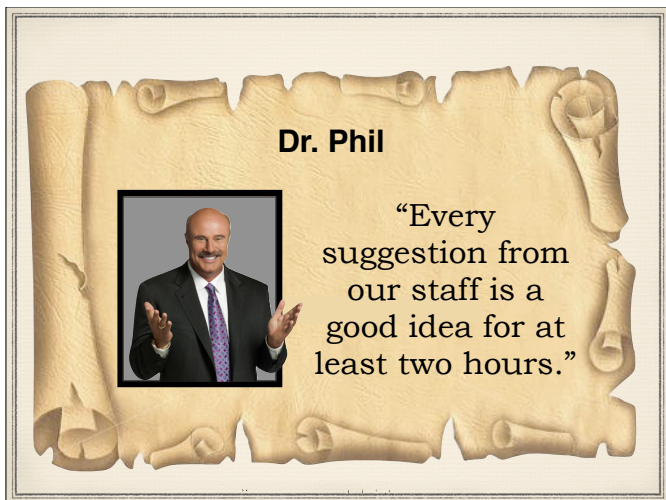
3. People with Godly character

don’t rush to judgment.

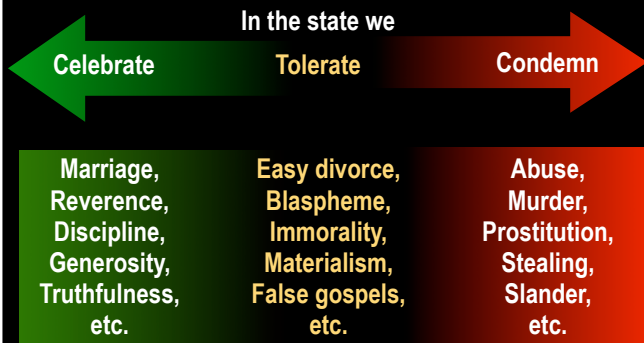
Dr. James R. Angell
(President of Yale University)



What is the key to success?
“Grow antennae,
not horns.”



Christians must tolerate behavior in a pluralistic state that they should not tolerate in the Christian church.



Gay marriage

Is it possible to be personally anti- and legislatively pro-?

- In what sense is this a "general welfare" issue?

- In what sense is this a religious doctrine issue?

- In what sense is this a civil rights issue?

Abortion

Is it possible to be personally prolife and legislatively prochoice?

- In what sense is this a civil rights issue?

- In what sense is this a religious doctrine issue?

- In what sense is this a women's health issue?

- In what sense is this a women's choice issue?

Ephesians 4

"1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk . . . 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, **showing forbearance to one another in love,**"

6. People with Godly character are humble, gentle, and patient in

forbearing

with other believers.

The faulty character of the church in Corinth

Culture Wars?

Civil Wars!



(Intolerant of Christian diversity)

Tolerance assumes an ultimate standard.

Tolerance is a moral virtue between two vices.



Two toxic church cultures

Permissive

Tolerates (celebrates) too much
in the name of Grace

Condemn

Rigid

Celebrate

Tolerate

Tolerates too little
in the name of Holiness

1 Corinthians 12

“4 Now there are **varieties of gifts**, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are **varieties of ministries**, and the same Lord. 6 And there are **varieties of effects**, but the same God who works all things in all persons. 7 But to each one is given the **manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.**”

Some areas where tolerance is needed



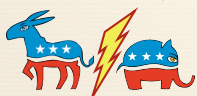
✓ Spiritual gifts



✓ Church polity and ceremony



✓ Ethnic culture



✓ Political preferences



✓ Diet, recreation, dress, taste, etc.

*We sometimes tolerate in ourselves
what we condemn in others.*



Others are:
worriers
narrow minded
hot tempered
wishy-washy
stuck up



I am:
concerned
principled
intense
flexible
discerning

Take home
**Cultivate appropriate
reverence and tolerance
as virtues.**

- ✓ Be slow to judge others. **Learn from them and guard their civil rights.** (James 1:19)
- ✓ Tolerate **civil moral standards** that you **might not tolerate in the church.** (1 Corinthians 5:9-11)
- ✓ Celebrate **God given differences in the Body of Christ.** (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

James 1:19

“Be quick to hear,
slow to speak,
and slow to wrath.”