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CHARACTER : Growing in Christian Virtue

12 Week Study Guide

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During the Week (On Your Own)

- Watch or listen to the three CHARACTER episodes
- Read the assigned scripture passages
- Complete the journal questions
- Memorize the weekly verse
- Try the recommended practice for the week

When You Meet

- Open in prayer
- Recite the memory verse for each other
- The facilitator for that week leads the discussion using the journal prompts
- Share how the weekly practice went
- Close by praying for one another

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12 Week Study Guide

Welcome to the Become New Study Guide: CHARACTER.

This guide is designed to help you engage John Ortberg's teaching as you grow spiritually, reflect on Scripture, and explore key themes in spiritual formation.

Each week, you'll watch or listen to three episodes, work through journal questions, and practice memorizing Scripture. **You can use this guide in one of two ways:** participants may engage **all episodes on their own** and use gathering time to discuss what stood out from the teaching, Scripture, and journaling, then pray for one another. Or, you may choose one episode from the weekly teachings to **watch together as a group** during your gathering and have participants watch the other two on their own during the week. This packet is designed to work well for both approaches.

Please print a copy of this guide (2-sided) for each participant so everyone has space to reflect and write. You'll also find room to note meeting dates and who will facilitate discussion each week. We've found rotating leadership helpful, but it's optional. Please scan the provided QR codes to access the teaching links.

This format works well for individuals, pairs, or small groups who engage the teaching independently and come together for conversation and prayer. We hope this guide helps you grow in Christ, one day at a time.

If you have questions or need support, please reach out to us at connect@becomenew.com.

– The Become New Team

CHARACTER : Growing in Christian Virtue

Weekly Map

12 Week Study Guide

wk1 *date:* *leader:*

1. **Today You Will Change**
2. **Four Character Statements**
3. **Choose Your Mask Carefully**

wk2 *date:* *leader:*

4. **Signature Character Strengths**
5. **You At Your Best**
6. **Bringing Hope into the Equation**

wk3 *date:* *leader:*

7. **Pass the Zest**
8. **The Greatest of These**
9. **Love of Learning**

wk4 *date:* *leader:*

10. **Judgment Day**
11. **Thank You**
12. **Wise Up**

wk5 *date:* *leader:*

13. **Courage**
14. **How to Persevere**
15. **Present in the Presence**

wk6 *date:* *leader:*

16. **Compassion Can Change the World**
17. **Cultivate Social Intelligence**
18. **A Spirit of Creativity**

CHARACTER : Growing in Christian Virtue

Weekly Map
12 Week Study Guide

wk7 *date:* *leader:*

19. **The Love of Leadership**
20. **Become a Forgiving Person**
21. **The Morality of Character**

wk8 *date:* *leader:*

22. **Permission to be Prude**
23. **Curious Faith**
24. **The Secret to Self-Control**

wk9 *date:* *leader:*

25. **Teamwork Makes the Dream Work**
26. **What's Your To-Be List?**
27. **Have some Humble Pie**

wk10 *date:* *leader:*

28. **Wow**
29. **Hope Beyond Yourself**
30. **The Deathbed Test**

wk11 *date:* *leader:*

31. **Be Honest with Yourself**
32. **Finding Fairness**
33. **The Sound of the Universe Laughing**

wk12 *date:* *leader:*

34. **A Stone for a Pillow**
35. **Pursue Generosity**
36. **Don't Give Up on Change**

Week 1 : Change Starts Today

Reading: Matthew 6:19-34, Psalm 139

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

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3. Make a list of character qualities you've always admired and would like to see cultivated in your own life.

4. Which of the four statements (“I was wrong, I’m sorry, I don’t know, I need help”) is hardest for you to say and why?

5. How might you “seek the kingdom of God” in ordinary moments this very week?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week ONE:

Matthew 6:33 ***(NIV)***
But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Take the VIA survey and share your results with someone.
https://www.personality-quizzes.com/via-character-strengths

Week 2 : You at Your Best

Reading: 2 Timothy 1, Acts 4

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. Where in your life do you tend to over-focus on weaknesses rather than developing strengths?

4. Who in your life has been a "Barnabas" (encourager) to you and how can you become that for others?

5. Where have you seen evidence of God's work in your past that gives you hope for today?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week TWO:

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1 Timothy 1:6-7 (NIV)
For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

This week encourage someone quietly (Barnabas-style) Be a "low spotlight" encourager: text, pray, affirm, or support someone without seeking recognition.

Week 3 : Live, Love, Learn

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13, Daniel 1

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. Where has your "zest for life" diminished? What might be draining it?

4. List a few of your most important current relationships. Reflect on if you primarily take or give love in each one.

5. What is one area of your life where God is inviting you to re-engage with curiosity and growth?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week THREE:

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1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)
And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Focus on reigniting your "Zest" this week! Get outside, move your body, try something new. Share with the group what you did and how it went.

Week 4 : Think Clearly, Live Gratefully, Choose Wisely

Reading: Philippians 1, Psalm 90

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. Who is someone you struggle to agree with? Are you able to genuinely understand their perspective? Why or why not?

4. Where in your life right now do you most need wisdom for a decision?

5. What are you currently taking for granted that could become a source of gratitude? Why is it easy for you to take that for granted?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week FOUR:

Philippians 1:9-10 (NIV)
And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

Find every opportunity to say "Thank You" outloud to those around you this week. Watch what happens.

Week 5 : Face It, Stay With It, Find Him There

Reading: Romans 8, Psalm 16, Esther 4

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. What are one or two situations right now that require courage from you?

4. Where in your life might you need perseverance rather than a quick solution?

5. What most commonly pulls your attention away from being present to God moment by moment?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week FIVE:

Psalm 16:8 (NIV)
I keep my eyes always on the Lord.
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Practice pausing 3 times each day for 2 minutes this week to be present to God. Choose a word or prayer to repeat as an aid for your heart and mind.

Week 6 : Compassion, Connection, and Creativity

Reading: Ephesians 4, 2 Samuel 9

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. Who in your life right now could use some compassion? How might you "make space" for them?

4. How aware are you of your own emotions? How does that affect your relationships?

5. What is one small, creative way you could reflect God's image in your everyday life this week?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week SIX:

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)
Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Pay attention to people's faces this week. Attempt to use the phrase, "Tell me more…" at least one a day with someone.

Week 7 : The Inner Work of Leadership, Forgiveness, and Honest Character

Reading: Luke 6, Psalm 51

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. Where do you most struggle with insecurity or pride? How might this negatively impact how you lead others?

4. When have you experienced forgiveness that changed you and how can you extend that to others?

5. Do you feel comfortable telling the truth about yourself? Where might God be inviting you to be more honest and trust him with the outcomes?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week SEVEN:

Luke 6:37 (NIV)
"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

Work on closing the character gap. At the end of each day reflect on these questions:
→ "Where did I fall short today?"→ "Where did I respond well?"
Write down your answers (make them brief).

Week 8 : Wise Decisions, Open Hearts, Ordered Lives

Reading: Galatians 5, Proverbs 25

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. Who comes to mind as a model of prudence in your life? Why?

4. What areas of your faith might be built more on assumptions than on understanding, and where could you grow by exploring them more deeply?

5. What would it look like to surrender your will to God in real time throughout your day?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week EIGHT:

Galatians 5:22–23 (NIV)
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Practice micro-surrenders this week by pausing regularly to pray: "Your will be done"

Week 9 :

Reading: Psalm 27, Ecclesiastes 3

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. Where in your life are you functioning more as an individual than as a teammate?

4. Do you tend to focus more on your “to-do list” or your “to-be list”? What does focusing on your "to-be list" currently look like for you?

5. Describe a time someone intentionally served you without needing recognition. What inspiration can you draw from them?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week NINE:

James 4:6 (NIV)
But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

Make a "To-be" list this week and talk about it with someone close to you. Describe the kind of person you want to become and ask them for feedback.

Week 10 : Live in Awe, Hold Onto Hope, Make it Count

Reading: Psalm 27, Ecclesiastes 3

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. Describe a time you recently experienced true awe. What did it stir in you?

4. What tends to dull your sense of wonder in everyday life?

5. If you were on your deathbed, how would you finish the sentence: “I wish I had spent more time…”?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week TEN:

Psalm 27:4 (NIV)
One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

Practice reframing one discouraging area of your life with hope. Replace helpless thinking with: "What can I do?" and "Where might God be at work here?" Discuss this with a trusted friend.

Week 11 : True, Fair, and Free

Reading: Colossians 3, Micah 6

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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3. What impact has dishonesty (yours or someone else's) had on your relationships?

4. Are there subtle ways you show favoritism or treat people unequally?

5. When was the last time you laughed so hard you cried? What made that possible?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week ELEVEN:

Micah 6:8 (NIV)
He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Practice courageous honesty this week by sharing one truthcul, helpful thing with someone.

Week 12 : A Life of God's Presence, Generosity, and Growth

Reading: Genesis 28, Luke 12

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these word/phrase stand out to you?

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4. Where in your life are you tempted to rush past moments that could be sacred?

5. Are your hands more often closed (grasping) or open (generous)? Why?

6. Where are you most tempted to give up on change and what might be driving that?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week TWELVE:

Genesis 28:16 (NIV)
When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it."

Have an intentional conversation with someone to reflect on this journey through Character. Share your key learnings, challenges and how you plan to continue the work of character formation from what you've learned.

MEMORIZATION

Become New : WE SHOULD GET OUT MORE

Week 1

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)
But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Week 2

1 Timothy 1:6-7 (NIV)
For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Week 3

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)
And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Week 4

Philippians 1:9-10 (NIV)
And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

Week 5

Psalm 16:8 (NIV)
I keep my eyes always on the Lord.
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Week 6

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)
Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Week 7

Luke 6:37 (NIV)
"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

Week 8

Galatians 5:22–23 (NIV)
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Week 9

James 4:6 (NIV)
But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

Week 10

Psalm 27:4 (NIV)
One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

Week 11

Micah 6:8 (NIV)
He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Week 12

Genesis 28:16 (NIV)
When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it."

Practices

Week 1
Take the VIA survey and share your results with someone.

Week 2
This week encourage someone quietly (Barnabas-style) Be a "low spotlight" encourager: text, pray, affirm, or support someone without seeking recognition.

Week 3
Focus on reigniting your "Zest" this week! Get outside, move your body, try something new. Share with the group what you did and how it went.

Week 4
Find every opportunity to say "Thank You" outloud to those around you this week. Watch what happens.

Week 5
Practice pausing 3 times each day for 2 minutes this week to be present to God. Choose a word or prayer to repeat as an aid for your heart and mind.

Week 6
Pay attention to people's faces this week. Attempt to use the phrase, "Tell me more…" at least one a day with someone.

Week 7
Work on closing the character gap. At the end of each day reflect on these questions: → "Where did I fall short today?"→ "Where did I respond well?" Write down your answers (make them breif).

Week 8
Practice micro-surrenders this week by pausing regularly to pray: "Your will be done"

Week 9
Make a "To-be" list this week and talk about it with someone close to you. Describe the kind of person you want to become and ask them for feedback.

Week 10
Practice reframing one discouraging area of your life with hope. Replace helpless thinking with: "What can I do?" and "Where might God be at work here?" Discuss this with a trusted friend.

Week 11
Practice courageous honesty this week by sharing one truthcul, helpful thing with someone.

Week 12
Have an intentional conversation with someone to reflect on this journey through Character. Share your key learnings, challenges and how you plan to continue the work of character formation from what you've learned.

Books Referenced During this Series:

- Mere Christianity — C. S. Lewis
- The Abolition of Man — C. S. Lewis
- The Weight of Glory — C. S. Lewis
- The Cloud of Unknowing — Anonymous
- Leap Over a Wall — Eugene Peterson
- Telling the Truth — Frederick Buechner
- The Character Gap: How Good Are We? — Christian Miller
- Character Strengths and Virtues — Christopher Peterson & Martin Seligman
- The Strengths of a Christian — Robert C. Roberts
- Exuberance — Kay Redfield Jamison
- The Road to Character — David Brooks
- Forgiving and Reconciling — Everett Worthington
- Every Good Endeavor — Timothy Keller
- The Once and Future King — T. H. White
- Les Misérables — Victor Hugo
- The Name of the Rose — Umberto Eco
- Leaf by Niggle — J. R. R. Tolkien
- The Lord of the Rings — J. R. R. Tolkien
- The Divine Comedy — Dante Alighieri
- The Boys in the Boat — Daniel James Brown
- The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill — William Manchester
- If — Rudyard Kipling
- The Psychology of Money — Morgan Housel
- The Economics of Good and Evil — Tomáš Sedláček
- The Awakened Brain — Lisa Miller
- The Opposite of Depression — David Carreon
- Three Little Words — Anne Lamott
- The Denial of Death — Ernest Becker
- Holy Living and Dying — Jeremy Taylor