

### 3 Characteristics We Need

Chuck Swindoll, pastor, author and educator, once told about a missionary who was sitting at her second-story window when she was handed a letter from home.

As she opened the letter, a crisp, new \$10-bill fell out. She was pleasantly surprised, but as she read the letter her eyes were distracted by the movement of a shabbily dressed stranger down below, leaning against a post in front of the building.

She couldn't get him off her mind. Thinking that he might be in greater financial distress than she was, she slipped the bill into an envelope on which she quickly penned the words, "Don't despair." She threw it out the window.

The stranger below picked it up, read it, looked up and smiled as he tipped his hat and went his way.

The next day, she was about to leave the house when a knock came at her door. She found the same shabbily dressed man smiling as he handed her a roll of bills. When she asked what they were for, he replied: "That's the \$60 bucks you won, lady. *Don't Despair* paid 5 to 1."



Wouldn't it be nice if life always worked like that? Every time we did something good for someone else that we would receive an instant reward? Then everyone would be doing good deeds continually. The problems of this world would be solved overnight. But that's not the way life works, is it? In fact, the shabbily dressed man could just as easily have harassed her for more money.

How many times have you heard the expression: "No good deed goes unpunished?" Sometimes it seems as if that's the way things turn out.

So why do good for others who may or may not reward you for your efforts? Why not be a skinflint like Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *Christmas Story* who cares only about himself? Where is the motivation to be a generous, caring person if life does not reward you for it? There obviously is only one motivation, and that is because you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

(more)

The associates of Life Care and Century Park have come to understand this truth, and that is why they give so unselfishly of themselves.

If we are to be like Christ, there are three characteristics Jesus had that you and I desperately need:

1. **Compassion.** More than anything else, Jesus was motivated by compassion for human beings. That is why He came to earth – to experience what it means to be human and to demonstrate God’s love for the least and the lost.
2. **Courage.** Life can take some strange twists and turns. We cannot choose the situations we will be thrown into. Sometimes we have to be very, very brave to follow Jesus.
3. **A calmness of spirit.** This is a calmness that comes because deep in your heart you know that the way of the cross is the only way to live. It is a calmness that comes when you know that ultimately, in God’s world, life conquers death, love conquers hate, courage conquers cowardice.

These, then, are the three characteristics of Christ that you and I desperately need because we believe Christ’s words ...

*Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me and for the gospel will save it (Mark 8:34-35 NIV).*

– Beecher Hunter