

5 Ways to Win With Christlike Character

If you consider yourself a Christ-follower, then you belong to a body of believers called the church, or Team Jesus as I like to say. According to Romans 12, this “team” has multiple parts, roles, functions, gifts, talents, likes, dislikes, tastes, personalities, hobbies, upbringings, philosophies, convictions, and more ... but we all have the same common denominator – JESUS.

Because every single part (person) belongs to one body (the church)—and each person is significant—the question we need to ask is, “Am I helping the team or hurting the team?” Great players help their team. Great players make everyone around them better. Michael Jordan did. Steph Curry does. How about you?

You know what doesn’t help make a team better? Ripping into your own teammates. Players who berate others on their own team create a toxic culture that spreads through the locker room like cancer. This usually results in having a losing season (or getting traded) and even steals the very ‘joy of playing’ from others.

You don’t have to be a pastor (like me) to see the effects that judgmental “Christians” have on the church ... and the world. For example, I was overjoyed recently when I read an article about actress Jennifer Garner’s recent return to church after being cast in a new faith-based film about miracles.

Then I began reading comments from “Christians” (that included everything from “her faith isn’t genuine” to “I only wish she had chosen a different church to attend”) and I almost tossed my lunch. I also had to repent after asking God to place some

of His “players” on waivers.

Instead of focusing on who we need to get rid of, let’s focus on how we can help people win.

Here are five ways to portray Christlike character to others

1. Lose your critical lens. I think it’s interesting that Pharisees (judgmental religious leaders) were the only people Jesus was ever critical of. What about prostitutes? Nope. Tax collectors (crooked IRS agents)? Nope. Messy people? Nope. Why?

Because they are exactly who He came for. He said, “I have come for those who know they are sinners – not those who think they are righteous.” He was not pleased with those who spent their time pointing out specks in the eyes of others while they had giant logs in their own.

This reminds me of an NBA player who recently berated his teammates for not giving him the ball. Shortly thereafter, he went to the free-throw line and shot an air ball. File that under “stuff you can’t make up.”

Don’t be like the Pharisees who ignore their own sin while pointing out the sin of others. Instead, put on “Jesus goggles” and see sinners like Jesus does.

2. Expand your circle of love. In Mark 12, Jesus was asked by – you guessed it – a Pharisee to identify the greatest commandment. His answer was classic:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30–31, MEV).

Notice that the second commandment is equally important. This means that loving our neighbor is just as important as loving

God.

Ouch.

What if my neighbor isn't a believer? Yep.

What if my neighbor is a counterfeit Christian? Yep.

What if my neighbor is voting for Hillary? Yep.

What if my neighbor is voting for Trump? Yep.

What if my neighbor is Muslim? Yep.

What if my neighbor is a jerk? Yep.

What if my neighbor stinks? Yep.

What if my neighbor ... ? You get the idea.

And not only are we commanded to love our neighbor, we are called to love our teammates. It was Jesus who said the following in John 13:35 (MEV):

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Love all people, period.

3. Hurt with those who hurt. *"If one part (of Team Jesus) suffers, all the parts suffer with it" (1 Cor. 12:26a).*

When your teammate is going through a season of suffering or setback, sometimes they don't need a sermon or advice. They need your presence.

Sometimes the best thing you can do for someone is to just sit with them.

Find someone to sit with.

Have coffee.

Listen.

Cry.

Hug.

Pray.

Repeat.

4. Rejoice With Those Who Rejoice. *"... and if one part (of Team Jesus) is honored, all the parts rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26b, MEV).*

Celebrate each other's wins. Be genuinely happy when your teammate hits the winning basket. Make others the hero of your story.

5. Build each other up. So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing (1 Thess. 5:11, MEV).

Some people need to be reminded that Paul didn't say, "Tear each other down." In fact, he says in 1 Corinthians 13 that it really doesn't matter how gifted you are – if you're a jerk, your contributions to Team Jesus are useless. Boom!

By the way, Jesus said in Luke 15:10 (MEV), "... Likewise, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Hmm, sounds very familiar to how the father responded when his prodigal son returned home, doesn't it?

If the angels in heaven are throwing a party in Jennifer Garner's honor—then we should join them!

After all, we're on the same team. Everybody dance! {eoa}

Chuck Tate is the founder and lead pastor of RockChurch, a growing and thriving congregation in the heart of Illinois. Prior to planting RockChurch in 1998, Chuck worked for a national youth ministry in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In that role, he

managed and spoke at conventions across the United States and Canada, and co-produced a national television program that aired on Trinity Broadcasting Network. His first book is titled 41 Will Come. You can order it here.