

Preface

At its heart, this material is a study of the character of a godly individual. This should come as no surprise, since nearly *all* Bible study, at least in some respect, is a character study of the godly individual.

One of the more fascinating qualities about the study of godliness, though, is its adaptability to a variety of study approaches. Only the base subjects of this life can be exhausted through a simple study that stems from one perspective. The more robust a subject is, the more times it can be studied and the more perspectives it can be looked at from...all without exhausting the subject.

Take, for example, the kingdom of Heaven. In Matthew 13 alone, Jesus tells 6 parables, all of which start with, "The kingdom of Heaven is like...". The kingdom of Heaven is not a topic that can be described adequately with one analogy, one approach. In fact, were Jesus to have told a *thousand* parables about the kingdom of Heaven, He would not have said all there was to say about the topic, because its very essence surpasses our human comprehension.

Godliness is similar in that it can withstand scrutiny from multiple perspectives. One can spend a lifetime--and indeed many have--studying what a Godly character looks like and still not learn every detail.

Thus, the value of approaching the topic from various perspectives.

In this material, we'll focus our study on seven pairs of character traits. Seven are traits that must *never* be found in the character of a Christian, and seven are traits that must *always* be found in the character of a Christian.

Our group of seven ungodly traits, or "vices," characterizes what the Catholic church has termed the "seven deadly sins." This group has also been called the seven "capital vices" and the seven "cardinal sins." Though Catholics recognize that this is not an all-encompassing list of "deadly" character traits, they argue that these seven lie at the root of most, if not all, other sins.

To which I suggest there is considerable merit.

The seven counterbalancing traits, or "virtues," are traits that we should strive to integrate into our character if we are to be godly individuals.

I pray that this study is fruitful for you. It has caused me to look deeper inside myself, and I suspect it will do the same for you.

