

We are Ambassadors for Christ

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Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

What is an Ambassador?

An ambassador is an emissary of a sovereign, an official representative in a foreign place. Ambassadors are people who have been appointed to represent a person, such as a king or ruler, or a group of people, such as a company or a nation, to another people group by living among them and being their principal or sole point of contact and relationship of the host group with the sender. If you are a Christian, you are an ambassador for Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ? It means that, while we are living in this world, we represent Jesus to the world. Not only do we represent Jesus, as in something that we do, but we officially represent Jesus to the world. That is, Jesus Christ Himself has appointed, commissioned, and sent us to be his official ambassadors to that part of the world that is still without him.

So then, being a Christian means being an ambassador for Jesus Christ. Now, when we are Christians, this means that we belong to Jesus Christ and that we live our lives for the purpose of being and becoming like Him as much as possible. There are three basic descriptors of what it means to be a true Christian, and consequently, what it means to be an ambassador for Christ because the two are synonymous. Coincidentally, all three begin with the letter "B." They are:

- You believe in Jesus Christ
- You belong to Jesus Christ
- You become like Jesus Christ

As Christians, we are to desire and strive to be like Jesus Christ.

What an Ambassador for Christ is Not

Since being an ambassador for Christ means that we are Christ's and that we are like Christ, being an ambassador to the world suggests that we are not of the world. Jesus said in John _____, "If you were of the world the world would love its own, but since I have chosen you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you." There are three things ambassadors are not:

1. You are not the same.
2. You are not your own.
3. You are not of this world.

We are not the same because we have been born again. When we came to Jesus for salvation, we experienced regeneration, old things passed away, and all things were made new (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). You are not your own because you have been bought with a price. You have been crucified with Christ; you are Christ's (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 2:20; 3:29). You are not of this world because your citizenship is in Heaven, where Christ is. Since out home and citizenship are in another place, not in this world, we are sent by our Lord, the King of Heaven, as His ambassadors, His representatives, who have been commissioned and given His mission and message, His mission to fulfill while dwelling in the world and His message to deliver to the world (Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

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Characteristics of an Ambassador

There are three characteristics or qualities of an ambassador. These three qualities represent three qualifications or responsibilities for how any ambassador is expected to be or how he is to behave. These three qualities, as presented by Greg Koukl's ministry Stand to Reason, are knowledge, wisdom, and character (Greg Koukl, STR, www.str.org). Let's look at each of these qualities.

Knowledge—Ambassadors have to have knowledge about who they are representing and to whom they are representing. An ambassador never represents someone or something to which they are not fully connected. Rather, any ambassadorship is predicated on representation by means of relation. That is, the ambassador can only be an ambassador for someone or something to which he is related. A Canadian citizen cannot serve as the U.S. ambassador to Japan, for example. One needs to be an American citizen to represent the United States of America as an ambassador to a foreign nation.

Ambassadors need more than a relational standing and knowledge, however. To qualify as ambassadors, the knowledge that they have must first be accurate. Koukl describes this ambassador qualification as “an accurately informed mind.” If a person's information about its sending group or about the host group is not accurate, that person will not be seriously considered for service as an ambassador, and indeed should not be. Such a person is not qualified. Secondly, in addition to accurate knowledge, a citizen needs to have knowledge that is thorough and intimate. A shallow level of information will not qualify someone to be a representative nor will it equip a person to be effective in serving as an ambassador. An ambassador must know a lot of truth, and his accurate knowledge has to be vast. It must be deep, and it must be wide. The knowledge of an ambassador must be accurate, thorough, and intimate.

Wisdom—the ability and awareness to use and seek after knowledge (an artful method)

1. ability to use the knowledge you have
2. ability to seek knowledge when the need arises

C. Character—being a mature, steady, consistently godly person from the inside out (an attractive manner); from Greek *charakter* which means a mark or distinctive quality, such as the stamp from a seal, particularly from the signet ring of a ruler

These characteristics build on each other. Accurate knowledge blossoms into the art of wisdom, and wisdom develops into good, attractive character.

Knowledge for knowledge's sake “puffs up.” The accurate use of accurate knowledge is useful for

1. Forming and growing yourself (developing your character)
2. Weighing and measuring other things (discerning good or bad, right or wrong, whether something is neutral/ how neutral is it?)
3. Helping others grow and develop their character as well (influence, impact, and eventually mentorship and leadership).

The Work of Ambassadors

“And those of the people who understand will instruct many” (Daniel 11:33).

Having and exhibiting good, godly character makes you attractive to other people. People, although sinful, are still by nature attracted to what is good. If you serve God and display righteous character, you will catch the eye of everyone because most people are not righteous and either don't even try to be or only try to a small extent and then stop. Still, all people intrinsically know deep in the core of their being that the Holy God requires absolute, perfect righteousness, and so all people have a tremendous respect for righteousness when they see it. However, although all people will notice godly character, they will not all react the same. Some will love you because they love God, but others will hate you and even war against you because you represent Jesus Christ (John 15:18-27).

Godly character—being strong, kind, trustworthy, faithful, etc.—makes you attractive to others. This is the real Law of Attraction. Not that fufu, get-everything-you-want-just-by-imagining-it idea being propagated by Oprah and her gurus and in the book *The Secret*. Don't fall for that. It doesn't work, but the real Law of Attraction works wonders.