

Out Your Spout Julia Bettencourt

**"...Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation,
in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. "
I Timothy 4:12**

**"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you,
which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price:
therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
I Corinthians 6:19,20**

I never met a teapot I didn't like. There's just something about them that draws me to them. I don't collect teapots, although I'd love to; however, I do have two beautiful ones that I've had a very long time that I'd probably never part with. It gives me pleasure just to look at them.

Looking in china shops or flea markets, or any place that sells teapots is so much fun for me. I never invest in them, but I sure enjoy admiring them. Each teapot to me is filled with character by the unique designs that are painted or etched on them. Not only that, but there's something about the lines and curvatures of a teapot that makes a statement for each one. All of its design features combined molds its character.

Ever wonder how much character we as Christian women are molded with? What details are we painted or etched with that makes us stand out? What are the lines and shapes that form us? Not physical shape, but the form or person we've allowed ourselves to be molded into as a Christian.

I think the best way to take stock of that character is to compare our traits with those of Christ. Here are just some of the many characteristics that embodied Christ.

1. Christ was Holy.

He was free of any sin touching His life.

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35

Of course when we've accepted Christ as our Savior, we still have that sinful nature that creeps up, but we still need to strive to live holy lives. We need to try to do all we can to stay away from the sin that can harm us and tarnish our 'teapots'.

2. Christ was Obedient.

When Christ was a child, he was obedient to his earthly parents (Luke 2:51), but He was also obedient to God.

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." John 4:34

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8

Learning to become obedient can really help to shape our lives or our 'teapots'. We run into so much trouble when we are not obedient. Our teapots begin to pour out ugliness and sin, worldly desires, bad habits, and all that goes against Christ our Maker.

3. Christ was Meek.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29

Christ was meek, not in a weak way like we sometimes think as meek. We know from other portions of Scripture that Christ wasn't spineless. Think how He overthrew the money changers in the Temple. Christ was meek in that He was patient and gentle and allowed God to have His way and will in His life. I think the women that I've known that I've thought were meek have had the biggest impact on me. I guess because it was a trait that really made them stand out. They were so refreshing to be around. Their teapots flowed out with grace and love.

4. Christ was Zealous.

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." Luke 2:40

Just as Christ was meek, He was also a strong person in spirit. Those who don't know God's Word sometimes think the Bible implies that women should be put down, but that is not at all the case. Yes, we are to be obedient to our husbands and there are biblical guidelines we should follow, but Christ wants each of us to be strong. Look at the Proverbs 31 woman. She worked hard, had a business, cared for her family, and had a good reputation. She had to have been a strong woman. For us, I think building ourselves into a strong Christian woman, revolves around relying totally on Christ and His strength. If we start going in our own strength, drip...drip...out comes that bitter tea from our teapots.

5. Christ was Longsuffering.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

I think that this is something that doesn't flow out our pots so easily. In our world of fast food, microwaves, and high speed computers, we don't have much use for longsuffering. We can't be patient, let alone taking on patience with the endurance of suffering something. Some of us have high notions that we'd really suffer persecution for Christ, yet we want to be so short with people. How could we take real persecution when we can't even handle people that annoy us alone. We turn on a dime and out our spout comes things that are mean and nasty aimed at others just because we couldn't be a little longsuffering.

6. Christ was Compassionate.

"And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick." Matthew 14:14

This is one of the traits of Christ that I admire the most, because it shows He really cared for people, for their souls, and also for their well being in general. How much do we care? Do loving acts of kindness flow out our spouts because we genuinely care for people? Is witnessing to others something that pours out of us easily? If we don't start seeing the world as Christ did, out our teapots will flow things that hurt and damage others and out will flow things that will also be a hindrance to salvation to those who need Christ.

7. Christ was Humble.

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8

This is another one of those things that is hard for most people. It's so hard to be humble because our pride is ever looming. So many things pour out of us because of pride. Haughtiness, contention, and arrogance are just a few. So many verses in the Bible warn us about what pride can do to us.

8. Christ was Forgiving.

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots." Luke 23:34

How easily does this flow out of us? Our teapots seem to get a little clogged when it comes to forgiving others. Christ was the ultimate example of forgiveness. It is sad that we in turn can't be forgiving for the little things that come into our daily lives. We'd rather hurt, anger, and resentment build up in our teapot till it boils over and flows out in the form of rage, fits of anger, and total frustration. Forgiveness is something we all need to get a handle on and the only way to do that is to get our hearts right and in tune with Christ.

These things are just *some* of the characteristics that Christ had. His life entailed so much that we can look to for an example. He was also kind, loving, good, faithful, just, and many other things. His life poured out all goodness, kindness, love, and all the other things that reflected His character. What pours out of our lives is entangled in our character. Whatever traits we've allowed ourselves to be shaped into as a Christian will come out of us. Out our spout will come whatever's in our heart.

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:" Matthew 15:19

If we've painted little blossoms of worldliness into our lives, then that's what people will see. If we've etched ourselves with traits that are not becoming to us as a Christian, then it's going to reflect in our lives. We've got to start building up our character with Christ-likeness. His traits are what we should be portraying in our lives or we will be pouring out bitter tea in all the things we say and do. Our bodies are His. Looking back to 1 Corinthians 6:19,20, we see that our bodies are "the temple of the Holy Ghost" and we are admonished to "glorify God" through them.

I trust I've poured out some good cups of tea for people. I don't want to go through life dripping out bitter tea that can leave a bad taste on the world. I know it's so easy to do. We just pour out what we want, not thinking of the consequences of our words and actions. Tea stains, and we can stain so many lives with the bitter tea we bring to the world. We can melt people's spirits. We can hurt feelings. We can discourage people. We can hinder them from serving Christ. We can even hinder someone's salvation. All because of what flows from us. I trust I'll be a little more careful before I open my mouth, before I act without thinking, before I let things flow out of my life. When someone peers through the shop window and sees my teapot, I trust they will see Christ's character reflecting through me.

So, what's been pouring out your spout?