

The Theology and Design of the

*CHRISTIAN  
CHARACTER  
INDEX*

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## **The Theology and Design of the CHRISTIAN CHARACTER INDEX**

The scriptures call us to take inventory regularly. To search ourselves. To evaluate who we are and what we do in the light of God's standards. The psalmist, for instance, counsels us to look deeply within – to “search [our] hearts” (Psalm 4:4), and Solomon offers the proverbial guidance: “the wisdom of the prudent is to give careful thought to their ways” (Proverbs 14:8). The New Testament speaks even more plainly to the issue in passages like 1 Corinthians 11:28 (“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup”), 2 Corinthians 13:5 (“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.”) or Galatians 6:4 (“Each one should test his own actions”). Indeed, self-examination is a Biblical mandate.

It's for this reason that we developed the Christian Character Index (CCI), the cornerstone instrument in the suite of self-examination tools we make available. The two goals of this CCI project have always been (1) to provide Christians with user-friendly approach to self-examination and (2) to provide churches and Christian schools with a tool for estimating the character strengths and weaknesses of their members / students.

We began by determining what, specifically, such a tool should measure. One could surely identify a myriad of Christian virtues that would be interesting to assess, but for practical purposes, we could not design one instrument to measure all of these virtues. The instrument would simply be too long to be usable by the average person. So we chose to limit the number of virtues measured in Version 1 of the CCI to about a dozen.

To select the critical virtues to measure, we chose Paul's "fruit of the Spirit" list in Galatians 5 as a starting point. We also looked to the list in Colossians 3 as a supplement. We then performed an exegesis to generate definitions for each virtue we wanted to measure, refined these definitions with the assistance of a pool of experts at Regent University, wrote survey items that appeared to measure the constructs, and then had another pool of experts critique the item pool.

From their recommendations, we created the initial CCI, collected data with it and analyzed those data to evaluate its validity, and refined the survey based on our validity study. This process of data collection, analysis and refinement continued twice more until we converged on an instrument that

defensibly measures Christian character. The current version of the CCI now measures the following character qualities:

- **Love:** This score is the average of the seven scores below, and as such, it provides a summary overview of character. *How is your overall spiritual health?*
- **Joy:** “Enjoyment of life. A consistently spirit of rejoicing regardless of circumstances.” *Are you enjoying your life?*
- **Patience:** “A composed tolerance of delay, conflict, or unmet expectations.” *How well do you handle difficult circumstances?*
- **Kindness:** “Acting benevolently and charitably toward others.” *How much do you love your neighbor?*
- **Faithfulness:** “Consistent pursuit of God’s will for your life. Doing things God’s way rather than your own way.” *Are you really living your life for God?*
- **Gratitude:** “The habitual focus on what you have, rather than what you don’t have. Contentment with life as it is and a freedom from envy.” *How thankful are you for the blessings in your life?*
- **Forgiveness:** “The willingness to restore others to their original condition, giving up the right to be angry with them.” *Do you restore broken relationships and give people another chance?*
- **Compassion:** “Sympathy for the plight of others, especially for the poor.” *Do you have a heart for the poor and needy?*

Note that for survey users, in addition to estimates of individual virtues (joy, patience, kindness, etc.), the CCI also provides an overall average Christian character. We’ve labeled this average “love” because scripture indicates that “love” – the first of the “fruit of the Spirit” – is the root virtue from which others flow (see, e.g., Matthew 22:37-40, 1 Cor. 13, Col. 3:14).

### **CCI Self-Assessment Scores**

Based on the survey responses, CCI users receive a “score” for each virtue. We emphasize that these scores are *estimates* of virtue. No instrument will be a perfect measure, of course, but survey users often find these estimates to be useful indicators of where they are stronger or weaker in these critical areas – and indicators of what they might like to personally address and to pray about.

Also note that the maximum possible score for any category is **90 percent**. Why 90 percent and not 100 percent? Simply because 100 percent would imply perfect Christ-likeness. It would be the Christian character score for Jesus. So in recognition of the fact that we can never attain perfection in this lifetime in any of these areas – in recognition that there’s always room for improvement – the *CCI* is capped at 90 percent.

### **Accuracy of the CCI**

Stated in plain English, if a person provides accurate, honest information on the CCI, he or she will receive feedback that is a reasonably good estimate of his or her character. We have heard many reports to this effect from respondents around the world. But beyond that anecdotal evidence, the self-assessment portion of the CCI has been validated through the standard statistical procedures of factor and reliability analysis. For those who are interested in the psychometrics of the instrument, we offer on the next page the technical information regarding its validity, based on more than 11,000 survey respondents. For further information, please contact the designer of the CCI, Professor Michael Zigarelli, at [michzig@regent.edu](mailto:michzig@regent.edu)

### **360 Degree Feature of the CCI**

To enhance the accuracy of the feedback received by CCI users, we have added the capability to go beyond self-assessment. The “Assess Your Friend” feature of the CCI permits any survey user to ask those who know him or her best to offer their anonymous perspectives about his or her character. This process yields what is often called a “360 degree evaluation” of a person; that is, a view from all sides – from someone at home, from someone at work, from a best friend, and so on. And through this multifaceted assessment, we gain even greater clarity about our character.

All this culminates in a report that includes both the self-assessment and the average of the assessments completed by friends and family members, but in doing so, it also protects the confidentiality of responses from friends/family by aggregating their feedback (two or more “Assess Your Friend” surveys must be submitted before a 360 report can be generated). As a result, it encourages those completing the friend survey to be completely candid in their evaluation, since their actual responses will remain unseen by the person about whom they are answering the questions.

**Validity of the Seven Constructs of the Christian Character Index**  
Factor Loadings and Reliabilities (n = 11,697)

Item	Joy $\alpha = 0.85$	Patience $\alpha = 0.75$	Kindness $\alpha = 0.74$	Faithfulness $\alpha = 0.84$	Gratitude $\alpha = 0.73$	Forgiveness $\alpha = 0.78$	Compassion $\alpha = 0.78$
4	<b>.794</b>	.092	.089	.065	-.150	.031	.015
25	<b>.768</b>	.163	.074	.164	-.140	.100	.021
32	<b>.699</b>	.119	.094	.262	-.118	.067	.064
11	<b>.671</b>	.097	.104	.203	-.147	.200	.209
18	<b>.662</b>	.199	.130	.124	-.119	.282	.208
20	.009	<b>-.704</b>	.028	-.012	.240	.032	.014
27	.162	<b>.658</b>	.113	.074	-.098	.243	.109
6	.149	<b>.635</b>	.060	.248	-.097	.097	-.015
13	.164	<b>.618</b>	.160	.052	.087	.235	.241
34	.171	<b>.587</b>	.180	.177	-.073	.340	.003
15	.083	-.063	<b>.683</b>	.093	.012	.161	.212
29	.147	.087	<b>.673</b>	.174	-.176	-.035	-.006
22	.016	.164	<b>.620</b>	.117	-.073	.174	.273
8	.064	.141	<b>.535</b>	.183	-.263	.325	.219
1	.179	.217	<b>.523</b>	.139	-.012	.155	.367
9	.176	.100	.092	<b>.805</b>	-.082	.093	.144
2	.210	.163	.166	<b>.761</b>	-.061	.095	.103
16	.211	.171	.192	<b>.710</b>	-.116	.159	.060
23	.024	.100	.102	<b>.613</b>	-.192	.199	.196
30	.282	-.010	.121	<b>.557</b>	-.093	.146	.296
26	-.066	-.028	-.106	-.135	<b>.730</b>	-.115	-.088
5	-.252	-.059	-.091	-.104	<b>.648</b>	-.071	.116
19	-.276	-.030	-.118	-.102	<b>.638</b>	-.102	.002
12	.028	-.192	-.046	-.067	<b>.608</b>	-.172	-.129
33	-.174	-.423	.007	-.073	<b>.514</b>	-.104	-.013
7	.213	.259	.237	.191	-.094	<b>.713</b>	.122
35	.168	.155	.158	.317	-.148	<b>.692</b>	.116
28	-.105	-.078	.026	-.014	.302	<b>-.565</b>	.001
21	.211	.389	.150	.122	-.040	<b>.483</b>	.152
14	.032	.249	.136	.286	-.142	<b>.453</b>	.070
31	.057	.052	.171	.107	.061	.072	<b>.751</b>
24	.053	-.045	.140	.098	.035	.120	<b>.705</b>
3	.110	.104	.350	.117	-.016	.079	<b>.692</b>
17	.052	.082	-.001	.187	-.170	.035	<b>.677</b>
10	.191	.137	.436	.106	-.096	-.095	<b>.484</b>