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IS HE FAITHFUL?

by Mike Pace

Occasionally within the church, a member will inquire about the spiritual welfare of a brother or sister in Christ by asking a question such as, "Well, is he/she faithful?" And it's not too uncommon to receive an answer similar to, "Oh yes, they're quite faithful, every time the doors are open, you can count on them to be at the services of the church." The implication is that you can determine a Christian's faithfulness by their frequency at the worship services of the church.

Each child of God should be concerned about his/her "faithfulness" to God. Our reward of an eternity in heaven with God Almighty is contingent upon our being "faithful" in His estimation. This is precisely why Jesus exhorted us to "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life", Revelation 2:10.

We are doing ourselves and others a grave injustice when we measure one's faithfulness solely on attendance to worship services. God most assuredly demands our presence and participation at the worship services of the church as Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . .". But nowhere within the boundaries of God's Word can we find justification to determine one's faithfulness solely upon regularity to worship services. If that be true, then the question arises, "Faithful in what?"

We want to notice several things in which God expects us to be faithful. These stand like signposts on the narrow road leading us to life everlasting.

BE FAITHFUL IN STUDY

Peter tells us in II Peter 1:5, "And besides all this, giving all diligence, add to your faith . . . knowledge". Food is necessary for growth, and the Word of God is FOOD for our spiritual body—the soul. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6). The Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy encouraged us to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly divi-

ding the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). So the kind of study that meets God's approval is DAILY. Our physical bodies cannot live on one or two meals a week and neither can our souls live on only a couple of study periods a week.

BE FAITHFUL IN PRAYER

Prayer is one of the most blessed privileges we have as a Christian. One who is not a Christian cannot expect to have his prayers answered. For I Peter 3:12 tells us, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." We should realize that their is great power in prayer, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much", James 5:16. We should "pray without ceasing", II Thess. 5:17. Paul is saying, "Be always in an attitude of prayer". And so the idea being that we are to include God in our every decision, thank God for every blessing, and beseech God for every wrong we do.

BE FAITHFUL IN ATTENDANCE

We've already mentioned Hebrews 10:25, which emphasizes our participation in the worship services of the church. And to impress upon our minds the seriousness of this matter, the writer went on to say in verse 26 of the same chapter, "For if we sin WILLFULLY after that we have received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for our sins". He was not talking about serious illness or providential hindrance, but WILLFULLY forsaking the assembly. There are blessings that come through faithful attendance of every service that can come no other way. By singing, giving, studying, fellowship, praying, and partaking of the Lord's Supper—we are strengthened and built up.

BE FAITHFUL IN WORK

While faithful attendance is important, we need to realize that going to services of the church will not make one a Chris-

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Gospel News Reaches out

Intended at first for local distribution, the Fulton County Gospel News now reaches into most of the fifty states. The paper is now mailed into well over four thousand homes with the majority of those receiving the paper living in other states. Many live in the northern part of the nation where the church is not as well established as in the south.

Each year the elders of the Mammoth Spring church meet and evaluate the work of the paper. Because the paper furnishes unsaved as well as many members of the church who do not receive any gospel papers, the decision has been made each year to carry on. It furnishes one more way of preaching the gospel that is so badly needed by so many in our time. It is difficult to drop a good work when

it has the chance of saving just one soul.

With the increase in circulation, the cost of mailing and printing continues to rise. The amount of clerical work has increased until it has become necessary to pay a secretary to have this work done. The editing, business managing, machine upkeep, etc., is donated by the Mammoth Spring church.

There is a constant need for finance. We want to thank the many who have contributed in the past and urge the continuation of your support. Without your continued support the work could not go on.

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FOUR CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

by Erwin Cowen

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation where with ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love. The apostle refers to himself as a "Prisoner in the Lord." Paul was not appealing for sympathy in his mention of imprisonment. Paul's life was not controlled by the chains, but his life was truly controlled by the Lord. The power of his appeal to the Ephesians was greatly intensified by his imprisonment.

Paul had set before the Ephesians God's eternal plan which he was working through the Church in Christ. Now he addresses them and the whole manner of their lives beseeching them to walk worthy of the calling where with ye are called. Paul is speaking of Christian conduct involving morals and whatever pertains to Christian behavior.

Paul enumerates four Christian virtues which merit a life worthy of the calling of God. The virtues are far more than exemplary Christian virtues; they are essential to the quality of spiritual fellowship in the Church. The virtue is called "all lowliness", something new is added. In the Greek world of that age humility was not

a virtue, but was regarded as a weakness. Such a trait was usually associated with a slave or an unlearned person. In Christ lowliness was a hallmark of character. He lived an unselfish life. He thought nothing of worldly reputation as people were inclined to do. He humbled himself, "becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8)

The virtue of meekness was associated in that age with gentleness of character and a kind disposition who is proud with a high opinion of his individual worth. The man who possesses the spirit of meekness does not display his power and authority. Moses is described as such a man, "Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men who were on the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3)

The third aspect of the Christian life is "long suffering". The Christian is engaged in a marathon of endurance regardless of the suffering or obstacles that impede his progress. Also present is the quality of character which does not seek to avenge wrongs suffered or to retaliate when mistreated. God is long suffering toward the sinner (Rom. 2:4) or, "despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering; not knowing that the

goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." A Christian act of corresponding disposition toward an offender (I Cor. 13:4) "and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity it profiteth me nothing." (Gal. 5:22).

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law. Christians are to love one another. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. (Rom. 12:10) WE should always be careful never to offend our Brother or Sister in Christ, if at sometime that has been done by any Christian the offender should go to the one hurt and in "love" make it right, as it is a serious matter. It could lose souls.

Forebearance is the fourth characteristic of Christian behavior, this virtue is a part patience and endures long the ill behavior of others. A Christian continues to love his neighbor when he is unlovable in his behavior. Paul offers no logic, because logic is no substitute for love. Love is the spiritual cement which binds the ties of Christian fellowship which cannot be broken. Therefore "let us walk in love". (Eph. 5:2) That we might be found worthy and acceptable in his sight.

The Battle Lines Must Be Maintained

by Ordell Heavin

Paul told Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith" and assured him the purpose in writing this was "that thou mightest war a good warfare" (I Tim. 1:18). Christian soldiers know there is a

conflict within the and without the church. Thus we are instructed to "put on the whole armor of God". Why Paul? To stand against every false doctrine and false prophet. The battle line was fully drawn and they could not surrender a single truth. Neither can we in the year of 1982. That army of Christian soldiers made war against every false way. Up held the banner of our Lord, and their faith was the victory that over came the world. "The battle line drawn again."

The spectacular growth and development was due to the battle lines being drawn on the only "authority", "God's Word." "All authority was given Christ." (Matt. 28:18).

False religions, false teaching in the church was openly challenged with the word and no compromise was accepted. It had to be a thus saith the Lord. "In vain they do worship me teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9). The same thing is repeated in Mark 7:7. It must be a "Thus saith the

Lord". The plea was simple and direct, fervent and sincere. God's word was final authority in all religious matters. "If you add to or take away you're last." (Rev. 22:18-19). In becoming a Christian it must be thus saith the Lord.

The truth if you please. Faith Hearing (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11-6). Repentance (Acts 2:38; II Cor. 7:10). Confession (Rom. 10:10). Baptism (Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21). "Worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24). The world needs the challenge of the truth the only thing that will make you free. (John 8:32). No book but the Bible, no creed but Christ. No way but His way. No church but His. Speak where the Bible speaks. Keep silent where it is silent are to teach and preach only "Sound Doctrine". Doctrine in the Greek means teaching, instructions as in (Rom. 12:7). The kind of doctrine taught as in Matt. 15:9. Sound doctrine is the opposite of false. False doctrine is "rotten" doctrine, seed with no germ and no power to bring about the New Birth,

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EDITOR Mike Pace

Publication No. 211780

THE GREAT COMMISSION

MATTHEW 28:18-20

MARK 16:15-20

LUKE 24:44-49

BACKGROUND	ANALYZED	CARRIED OUT	RESULTS
Entrance of Sin	GIVEN BY — Christ	TO CITIES AND PERSONS -	Men brought to Christ
Promise of Gen. 3:15	GIVEN TO — Disciples - Originally	Jerusalem - Acts 2	Church Established
Call of Abraham	The Church - Eventually	Samaria - Acts 8	Ministration of the Holy Spirit —
Deliverence of Israel	COMMISSIONED TO — Go	Eunuch - Acts 8	1. Upon the World
Giving of the Law	Preach the Gospel	Saul - Acts 9, 22, 26	2. In the Church
O.T. System of Sacrifices and Worship	Baptize	Cornelius - Acts 10, 11	Salvation brought
O. T. Predictions	Teach all things Christ commanded them	Ephesus — Acts 19	Ancient World Evangelized
John the Baptist	CONDITIONS OF SALVATION — Faith	Lydia - Acts 16	Influence of Christianity felt
Former Commissions	Repentance	Jailor - Acts 16	New Testament Formed and Confirmed
Promises of the Holy Spirit	Baptism	Corinth - Acts 18	1. Inspiration of the writers
Crucifixion	GEORGRAPHICAL SCOPE — All Nations	Ancient World Evangelized	2. Miraculous signs that followed
Burial	All the World	N.T. DIVISION OF LABOR — Evangelists:	Looking forward to the Consummation of all things
Resurrection	Every Creature	Evangelized men & towns	
40 Days with the Apostles	BEGINNING PLACE & PEOPLE Jerusalem	Set churches in order	
	Jews - Romans 1:16	Returned to Strengthen, Confirm, and Purify	
	DURATION OF COMMISSION — Till the End	Elders:	
		Oversaw the Church	
		Fed with Spiritual Food	
		Protected from Wolves	
		All Saints:	
		Taught Others	
		Supported Financially	
		C Continued in Prayer	

Donald G. Hunt

as has the word of God, the true doctrine. You purify your souls by obeying the truth. You are born again not of incorruptable but by the word of God.

The word of the Lord endureth forever. (I Peter 1:22, 23, 25). In Christ we are begotten by the gospel (I Cor. 4:15). Of His own will begat He us, with the word of truth (James 1:18). Sound doctrine and unity must be based on the truth. If the truth is sown obeyed it will make only Christians. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. (Gal. 6:7). "Christ is all authority." He gave the great commission. All power was given Him. (Matt. 28:18). Christ became the author of eternal salvation unto all who obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9).

Jesus, in His sermon on the Mount warned false prophets would lead many astray (Matt. 7:13-27). Some would depart from the faith (I Tim. 4:1-3). They would be carried about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:8-16). Follow the commandments and doctrines of men (Col. 2:22). Time would come when they would not endure sound doctrine (II Tim. 2:4). Saints were to follow sound doctrine (I Tim. 4:6). Adorn or put on sound doctrine (Titus 2:15). Give attendance to sound doctrine (I Tim. 4:16). Labor in word and sound doctrine (I Tim. 5:17). Name of God and doctrine be not blasphemed (I Tim. 6:1). Don't be deceived with false doctrines many are (Heb. 13:9). Sound doctrine puts down false teachers (Titus 1:9). The sound doctrine is as much adapted to our needs as in the first century.

Sin is the same our greatest need in the church today is for congregations, elders, preachers, whole membership to stand together for pure, primitive Christianity. The only church, the only gospel, should be our doctrine and practice today.

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One Solitary Life

Here is a young man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village, He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home, He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While he was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, and that was his coat. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth, as has that One Solitary Life.

IS HE FAITHFUL?

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tian anymore than going to the henhouse will make one a chicken. To be a "faithful" child of God, we must WORK for Him. Our Lord provided the example for us when he said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work", John 9:4. Paul told us to "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord . . .", I Cor. 15:58. It sometimes appears that some Christians are familiar with the first part of that verse, "Be ye steadfast and unmoveable". They can't be motivated to do anything for the Lord, they're truly steadfast and unmoveable!! But the latter part of that same verse says, "Always abounding in the work of the Lord". To be faithful then, includes working in His service.

BE FAITHFUL IN GROWTH

It is unnatural when a baby fails to grow physically, and similarly it is unnatural when we as Christians do not grow spiritually. Peter said, "But GROW in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ", II Peter 3:18. It seems as if Peter is not only telling us to GROW, but that he is attempting to instill in us the desire to do so. My son just recently turned 13 years old. He is at the age now that he is desiring to grow physically as quickly as he can. He measures himself often, he exercises regularly, and he's eating all the right things to help him grow big and strong. He has the DESIRE. And for us to grow "big and strong" spiritually, we've got to have the DESIRE so strongly that we'll measure ourselves often, "Examine yourselves", II Cor. 13:5. We'll exercise our souls by daily study of God's Word and working in the kingdom. And we'll "eat" all the right things that will cause us to grow spiritually. Jesus said, "That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God", (Luke 4:4).

"AM I FAITHFUL?"

From time to time we need to ask ourselves, "Am I faithful in the study of God's Word?"; "Am I faithful in my prayer life?"; "Am I faithful in my attendance to worship services?"; "Am I a faithful worker for the Lord?"; "Am I faithful in my growth? Can I realize and see my spiritual growth? Can God see that I'm growing spiritually?" We need to be faithful to God in ALL things; we MUST be faithful for Jesus said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life", Revelation 2:10.

Paul's prayer for the Christians at Thessalonica was this, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ", I Thess. 5:23. May we all be faithful in ALL things until Jesus comes back for us.

Sons of Adoption

by Terry Frizzell

Once there was a young woman with a baby son. Because of circumstances they were without the care of a husband and father.

Then the woman met a man that she loved and he in turn loved her. After they were married he provided for both her and her son, even to the adopting of the young boy.

As the years passed the young boy, even though knowing of the adoption, thought of himself as a son by birth to this man he called DAD. The father also seemed to feel the same as he taught the young boy as a godly father should teach his son.

Often, as the years passed, people would comment about the likeness of the father and son, even though their physical stature was quite different. In fact many people did not know that he was only a son of adoption.

The likeness people saw was the result of the love the son had toward the father. Every time someone would mention a likeness of the two, the son would stand tall with much pride that people thought he was like his father.

In II Cor. 6:17-18 we read, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Just as the young boy was adopted, so are we that are Christians. Just as he loved his father so must we love God. As this boy became like his father because of his love for him, so the Christian will become in the image of God and have characteristics of godliness by the love that he has for God.

By obedience to Jesus Christ we become the Sons of God. (Gal. 4:4-5). In fact he has chosen those that obey Christ to be the adoption by Jesus. (Eph. 1:4-5).

Christians should become more godly as they grow older because of the influence of the Father upon their lives.

What about you? When people see you do they know who your Father is by your actions, or must they ask?

They should be able to see God by the life you live as His child.

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BATTLE LINES MUST BE MAINTAINED

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