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# Because Jesus Died For Me



*A Five Lesson Series of Sermons Emphasizing How Our Lives Are to Honor Christ*

Gene Taylor

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# Preface

This series, **“Because Jesus Died for Me,”** focuses on Jesus and our responsibilities to Him. Since He made the supreme sacrifice for us by leaving heaven, coming to earth, living a sinless life, then dying a sacrificial death on the cross, we should live our lives for Him and His glory. Hopefully, these sermons will help us do that. We will look to five different areas in which we should give Jesus His due.

Because Jesus died for me, I want to “Learn His Word,” “Stand Up for Him,” “Respect His Authority,” “Be Forgiving,” and “Be a Worker for Jesus.”

These sermons may be presented as a series or independently for each lesson is complete in and of itself and does not build on previous lessons.

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# I Want to Learn His Word

**Text: 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17**

## **I. The Word of Jesus: The Authoritative Word of God**

- A. Jesus is God's exclusive spokesman today. (Hebrews 1:1-2)
  - 1. Such is fitting for He has all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matt. 28:18-20)
  - 2. His word will endure until time is no more and then will judge mankind in the last day. (Matt. 24:35; 1 Peter 1:24-25; John 12:48)
  - 3. Therefore, everything done in religion must be in accordance with the word of Christ. (Col. 3:17)
- B. The word of Jesus is expressed in the gospel. (Romans 1:16-17)
  - 1. Since the Christian is to hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6), he must hunger to fill himself with a knowledge of the word of Christ. (Col. 3:16)
  - 2. In relation to that word, Christians are, according to James 1:19-25, to:
    - a. Be swift to hear it. (18)
    - b. Be slow to speak against it. (18)
    - c. Not become angry at it. (18)
    - d. Receive it with meekness. (21)
    - e. Be doers of it and not just hearers. (22)

## **II. The Word of Jesus Meets the Spiritual Needs of the Christian**

- A. The gospel contains all the Christian needs to live as God would have him to live. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Titus 2:11)
- B. An analysis of 2 Peter 1:3.
  - 1. "All" leaves out nothing.
  - 2. "Life" includes things pertaining to physical life.
  - 3. "Godliness" pertains to one's spiritual life and needs.
- C. The gospel:
  - 1. Reveals man's purpose in being. (Rev. 4:11)
  - 2. Provides forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
  - 3. Clears the conscience. (1 Peter 3:21)
  - 4. Provides food to grow on. (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14)
  - 5. Stabilizes one's life and faith. (1 Thess. 3:2-3; 2 Pet. 1:12; Rom. 16:25)
  - 6. Gives joy in living. (1 Pet. 1:8-9)
  - 7. Gives comfort in sorrow. (1 Thess. 4:18; 2 Cor. 1:3-4)
  - 8. Gives hope in death. (Titus 1:2)

### **III. The Practical Nature of the Word to the Social Issues and Problems of Today**

- A. Aids. (Rom. 1:26-27; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:1-5; Gen. 2:24)
- B. Race relations. (Mark 16:15; Acts 10:34-35; Col. 3:11)
- C. Rights. Solved by the golden rule and love. (Matt. 7:12; 5:44; 22:39; Rom. 13:10)
- D. Freedom. Equality of all in Christ. (1 Cor. 7:22; 9:19)
- E. Security—a constant concern for all.
  - 1. Civil security. Afforded by the state. (Rom. 13:1-4)
  - 2. Social security. A security in society afforded by the home from the cradle to the grave. (Eph. 5:25, 28, 33; 6:1-4; 1 Tim. 5:4, 8, 16)
  - 3. Material security. Promised to the faithful. (Matt. 6:33; Heb. 13:5)
  - 4. Spiritual security. In Christ. (Eph. 1:3; John 10:27-28; 2 Tim. 1:12)
- F. Labor and management. (Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22 - 4:1; 1 Tim. 6:1-2)
- G. Jobs and housing: resolved by combining previous points.
- H. Crime. (Rom. 13:3-4; Gen. 9:6; Eccl. 8:11). When rulers are a terror to evil works, crime diminishes.
- I. Broken homes. (Rom. 7:1-3; Matt. 19:5-9)
- J. Abuse and alcohol and drugs. (Eph. 5:18; Rom. 14:21; 1 Thess. 5:22)
- K. Morals. (1 Cor. 6:18-20; 3:16-17; 1 Thess. 4:3-7)

# I Want to Stand Up for Jesus

**Text: Ephesians 6:10-20**

## **I. The Example of Gen. Thomas J. Jackson**

- A. Confederate Gen. Thomas J. Jackson was one of the commanders at the first battle of Bull Run.
  - 1. When both the right and left flanks of the confederate army fell back, Jackson's troops held firm.
  - 2. Gen. Barnard S. Bee rallied his disorganized men by instructing them to, "Look at Gen. Jackson: he stands like a stone wall."
    - a. It did not mean that Jackson stood there like a useless statue.
    - b. It meant he and his men stood firm. They were neither running away nor running around, flittering around like birds.
    - c. They simply stood and would not allow the enemy to advance.
- B. Christians are engaged in a great spiritual warfare.
  - 1. The enemies of the Christian are real. (2 Cor. 10:3-5; 1 Pet. 5:8)
  - 2. Sometimes we think we are waging war when all we are doing is flittering about, running up and down, to and fro, making a lot of noise thinking that activity is all that is necessary.
  - 3. We must take a firm stand against the enemies of truth and righteousness (1 Pet. 5:9; 1 Tim. 6:12) with:
    - a. Unblemished characters.
    - b. Zeal that is tempered with wisdom.
    - c. Significant knowledge of God's word.

## **II. The Means to Stand: The Whole Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18)**

- A. Near the end of his life, the apostle Paul was constantly surrounded by Roman soldiers. It is said that on occasion he had even been chained to his guards.
  - 1. He lived in the presence of the greatest military power ever known, therefore, he knew a great deal about the Roman legion and the distinctive armor they used to subdue the world.
  - 2. Thus, in Ephesians 6:10-18, he drew upon his knowledge of the physical armor of the Roman soldier to demonstrate the spiritual armor God has provided for those waging the fight of faith.
    - a. The armor God has provided enables the Christian to stand.

- b. Since Christians are not fighting a fleshly battle but a spiritual one, the weaponry is not carnal.
  - c. Six distinct pieces of armor which every Christian ought to be wearing are described.
- B. The Christian's armor. (*Panoply*: the whole armor of a heavily armed soldier)
1. **The Girdle of Truth.**
    - a. The girdle was not an ornament, rather it was used to bind all other pieces of the armor together thus giving the soldier freedom of movement.
    - b. The center of the Christian's armor is *truth* (John 17:17).
    - c. The *New English Bible* renders this clause as "Buckle on the belt with truth."
  2. **The Breastplate of Righteousness.**
    - a. The breastplate of the Roman spearman was made of chain-link in order to protect the heart and other vital organs.
    - b. The Christian's heart is protected by righteousness.
    - c. Someone has said, "Words are no defense against accusations, but a righteous life is."
  3. **Feet Shod With the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.**
    - a. The sandals of the Roman foot soldier were composed of thick leather soles studded with cleats of iron.
      - 1) They were designed to make it difficult for the soldier to walk backwards.
      - 2) The soldier had no armor on his back so if he decided to flee from the enemy he would have to discard his honor and protection.
    - b. The Christian's footing must be supplied by the gospel of peace. (Rom. 10:15)
  4. **The Shield of Faith.**
    - a. Roman shields were composed of leather or wicker and usually measured four feet long by two and a half feet wide.
    - b. Their enemies often fired long arrows covered with burning pitch.
      - 1) If an arrow were to strike the soldier, his breastplate would stop it from piercing him.
      - 2) The pitch, though, could fly off the arrow and set the soldier on fire.
    - c. The spiritual enemy does not always attack directly, thus the shield can protect from indirect hits.
  5. **The Helmet of Salvation.**
    - a. The Roman helmet was made of leather reinforced with bronze. The head needed great protection because a head blow is usually fatal.
    - b. The Christian is to take, receive, his salvation from God. (Eph. 2:8-9) and continue to wear it so that he will not receive a fatal blow. (cf. John 10:28-29)

6. **The Sword of the Spirit.**
  - a. This is the only offensive weapon the Christian has. (Heb. 4:12)
  - b. It must always be sharp.
    - 1) It must never be allowed to get “rusty.”
    - 2) “Sharpening” ones sword is not a waste of time. (I Tim. 4:13)
- C. The armor is to be donned with prayer. (Eph. 6:18)
  1. Christians are mere foot soldiers. God is in control.
  2. Christians must pray always (1 Thess. 5:17), intensely and for others.

### III. A Lesson From Rome

- A. Flavius Josephus, a Jewish priest and general, lived during the zenith of Rome’s military glory, wrote of the Roman army, “Every soldier is every day exercised, and that with great diligence, as if it were in time of war, which is the reason why they bear the fatigues of battle so easily.” (*The Jewish War*, Book III, Chapter 5, p. 17)
- B. What, then, could have caused Rome’s military downfall and the ultimate downfall of Rome?
  1. Nearly all historians agree that Rome brought about her own demise.
  2. Edward Gibbon in *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Volume III said of the Roman army: “The relaxation of discipline, and the disuse of exercise, rendered the soldiers less able, and less willing, to support the fatigues of the service; they complained of the weight of the armour, which they seldom wore: and they successively obtained the permission of laying aside both their cuirasses and their helmets. The heavy weapons of their ancestors, the short sword, and the formidable pilum, which had subdued the world, insensibly dropped from their feeble hands. As the use of the shield is incompatible with that of the bow, they reluctantly marched into the field; condemned to suffer either the pain of wounds, or the ignominy of flight, and always disposed to prefer the more shameful alternative. The calvary of the Goths, the Huns, and the Alani, had felt the benefits, and adopted the use, of defensive armour; and, as they excelled in the management of missile weapons, they easily overwhelmed the naked and trembling legions, whose heads and breasts were exposed, without defence, to the arrows of the barbarians. The loss of armies, the destruction of cities, and the dishonour of the Roman name, ineffectually solicited the successors of Gratian to restore the helmets and cuirasses of the infantry. The enervated soldiers abandoned their own, and public defence; and the pusillanimous indolence may be considered as the immediate cause of the downfall of the empire.” (pp. 271,272)
  3. Soldiers were able to convince their officers that the weapons were too heavy even though they had conquered the world using them.
- C. Is the armor of God too heavy for you?
  1. Instead of earnestly contending for it (Jude 3), would you rather apologize for it?
  2. Is it too much of an incumbrance for you?

# I Want to Respect His Authority

**Text: Matthew 28:18-20**

## **I. The Necessity of Authority**

- A. The consequences of the concept of “no authority” are both serious and frightening in any realm. Consider the ramifications of a lack of authority in:
  - 1. The civil state.
    - a. Chaos and anarchy would abound.
    - b. Evil would prevail.
    - c. Nothing worthwhile would be accomplished.
    - d. Society, as we know it, would break down.
  - 2. The spiritual realm.
- B. There is a definite need for authority in the spiritual realm.
  - 1. The nature of man demands it. Created as a free moral agent capable of determining good from evil and of choosing between the two, the authority to make the distinction between good and evil is not within him but must come from without. (Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12)
  - 2. The history of man when he is left to the vanity of his own reason displays his desperate need for divine authority.
    - a. Romans 1:21-28. Without God man became foolish (22), unclean (24), vile in his passions (26) and debased in his mind (28).
    - b. 1 Corinthians 1:18-21. The “wisdom” of man is foolishness in comparison to the wisdom of God. (cf. Isaiah 55:8-9)
    - c. Ephesians 4:17-19. The world apart from God lives in futility with their understanding darkened because of their ignorance.
  - 3. Without authority, religion would be completely meaningless.
  - 4. The ultimate end of a lack of authority in the spiritual realm would be moral and spiritual bankruptcy.

## **II. The Expression of God’s Authority to Man**

- A. God is the ultimate authority. This is established by:
  - 1. His divine being. He is God. (1 Cor. 15:24-28)
  - 2. His inherent nature and character. Consider His:
    - a. Eternal self-existence. (Deut. 33:27)
    - b. Omniscience—limitless wisdom and knowledge. (1 Sam. 2:3; 1 John 3:20)

- c. Omnipotence—matchless power and strength. (Rev. 19:6; Heb. 11:3)
    - d. Perfect holiness and righteousness. (1 Pet. 1:16; Titus 1:2)
  - 3. The fact that He is both Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. (Gen. 1:1; Acts 17:24-29; Col. 1:16-17)
- B. God has always expressed that which He authorizes for man through His speaking, His word.
  - 1. His word is a manifestation of His moral character. His laws, statutes, commands, etc., are:
    - a. Holy because He is holy. (1 Pet. 1:15-16)
    - b. True because He is truth. (John 17:17; Heb. 6:18)
  - 2. In previous times He spoke through prophets.
    - a. Holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak the things of God. (2 Pet. 1:20-21)
    - b. God, in times past, spoke to the fathers through the prophets. (Heb. 1:1)
  - 3. In this present age, God speaks exclusively through His Son. (Heb. 1:1-2)
    - a. Jesus is the “prophet” of whom Moses spoke. (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22)
    - b. The Father has delegated all authority to the Son. (Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 1:22-23)
    - c. The New Testament is the revelation of Jesus and His teaching. (Heb. 1:1-2; 9:16-17; 10:9; 1 Cor. 14:37)
    - d. Since Jesus is God’s only spokesman and since He has all authority, all teaching must be “of Christ” if it is to have proper authority behind it. (2 John 9-11; 1 Tim. 6:3-5)

### III. The Expression of Jesus’ Authority

- A. Jesus expressed His authority by what He claimed for Himself.
  - 1. The supreme basis for His authority is that He is the Son of God who was sent into the world. (John 3:16-17; Rom. 5:8)
    - a. Jesus is from above, He is not a product of the world. (John 8:23)
    - b. Jesus came down from heaven to do the will of the Father. (John 6:38)
    - c. The teaching of Jesus came from the Father. (John 7:16-17)
      - 1) It had the Father’s approval. (Matt. 17:1-5)
      - 2) To be authoritative, His teaching had to originate in heaven. (Matt. 21:23-27)
      - 3) If one rejects Jesus and His teaching, he rejects the Father who sent Him. (John 12:48-50)
  - 2. His word is authoritative because of His position, rank and excellence of His person as the Son of God.
    - a. Position.
      - 1) Jesus is greater than John the Baptist (though the teaching of both was of the Father).

- 2) John felt unworthy to perform the slave's task of unlacing His sandals. (Luke 3:15-16)
    - b. Rank ("King of kings"): As a teacher of wisdom He is greater than Solomon. (Matt. 12:42)
    - c. Excellence of His person: As a prophet He is greater than Jonah. (Matt. 12:38-41)
  3. His word is authoritative because He is the Word of God and because He revealed Truth to men. (John 1:1-2, 14)
    - a. *Logos* (Gk.): "Logos implies the intelligence behind the idea, the idea itself, and the transmissible expression of it ... LOGOS was one of the purest and most general concepts of that ultimate Intelligence, Reason, or Will that is called God." (Merrill Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, p. 62)
    - b. He is the Truth. (John 14:6)
    - c. His authority is not that He is a religious genius, neither that He is the most perceptive of the prophets, nor that He is the most sensitive of religious souls but that He is the Son of God.
    - d. He is the Son. This is His authority and the ground of His demand for absolute obedience. (Matt. 21:33-42)
- B. Jesus expressed His authority by the unusual manner in which He taught.
1. The scribes appealed to the authorities because they were concerned with the opinions of the rabbis. Jesus bypassed the rabbis and their teaching and made His appeal directly to the Old Testament.
  2. He affirmed that His own testimony was true for He spoke the words of God. (John 3:34)
  3. Even the people could see how His teaching differed. He taught as one having authority. (Matt. 7:28-29; Luke 4:31-32)
    - a. Because He is the Son, He dared to bypass the scribes and to place Himself in the position of the new Moses who reveals and establishes His own covenant. (Acts 3:22)
    - b. Such was the case with the "Sermon on the Mount." ("You have heard ... but I say")
- C. Jesus expressed His authority by His works.
1. The works that He performed gave witness that the Father sent Him. (John 5:36)
    - a. With a word He cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead and brought sanity to the unbalanced. (Matt. 8:16)
    - b. His works should cause all to believe His claims and submit to His authority. (John 14:7-11)
  2. He demonstrated His authority to forgive sins by healing a lame man. (Matt. 9:1-8)
    - a. He forgave the man's sins and the crowd murmured in their hearts.
    - b. Jesus read their thoughts back to them and performed the miracle to underwrite His authority on earth to forgive sins.

#### **IV. Jesus Underwrote His Authority by an Appeal to the Old Testament**

- A. His work is the fulfillment of the prophetic word. (Luke 4:16-21)
  - 1. He read this Scripture in the synagogue in Nazareth where He grew up.
  - 2. He showed that He had fulfilled it.
- B. More than this, however, the supreme witness of the Old Testament is to His person. (John 5:39-47)
  - 1. The Jews searched the Scriptures but they (Scriptures) bore witness of Jesus.
  - 2. He is the fulfillment of the prophetic word.

#### **V. Jesus Appealed to His Moral Perfection as the Seal of His Authority**

- A. He always spoke the truth and the seal of His truthfulness is His own moral perfection.
- B. He was able to challenge His enemies to convict Him of sin. (John 8:46)
- C. By His perfection, He became author of eternal salvation, able to assume all authority. (Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 1:22-23)

#### **Conclusion: The Confirmation of Jesus' Authority**

- 1. The authority of Jesus is confirmed by His resurrection. (Rom. 1:1-4)
- 2. He is God's Son, the exalted Lord and Savior. (Acts 2:36)
- 3. His testament is the revelation of His authority.
- 4. We must submit to the authority of Jesus in all things. (Col. 3:17)

# I Want to Be Forgiving

**Text: Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26**

## **I. The Need to Be Forgiving**

- A. There is no more important or desirable characteristic found in the human heart than forgiveness. Its importance is seen in the home, church, community and nation.
- B. Someone has said there are “three kindred spirits in the heart—giving, thanksgiving, forgiving. Usually where one is found, all are found.”
- C. Having a forgiving heart is an essential quality every child of God should have. (Eph. 4:32)

## **II. Four Fundamental Reasons to Be Forgiving**

- A. God commands it. (Mark 11:25)
  - 1. In reality, this should be sufficient reason for any right-thinking person to be forgiving because God’s promises rest upon obedience to His word.
  - 2. But, forgiveness on mere obedience to command usually falls short of what it should be.
    - a. Anything done out of a sense of duty or necessity is usually not from the heart. (See 2 Cor. 9:5-7)
    - b. Consider the example of the parent who makes the child say “I’m sorry” when, in reality, he is not sorry at all. He does it but only to appease his parent.
- B. The example of Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:21; Phil. 2:3-5; Luke 23:34)
  - 1. As our example in all things, He would not require of us that which He would not/could not do Himself.
  - 2. Even when His life was taken from Him, He had a forgiving attitude.
    - a. “He gave all, then forgave.”
    - b. How un-Christ-like of us to say, when our pride is hurt, “I’ll never forgive!”
- C. We have been forgiven.
  - 1. God, in Christ, has forgiven the Christian of his sins. (Eph. 4:32)
  - 2. As Christ has forgiven the Christian, he must forgive others. (Col. 3:13)
  - 3. One who is unwilling to forgive after he has been forgiven, is disdainfully viewed by heaven. (Matt. 18:21-35)
- D. In order to have future forgiveness. (Matt. 6:14-15)

### III. What It Means to Forgive

- A. Forgiveness is more than just speaking the words. It must be sincere, from the heart.
  - 1. It must be patterned after the forgiveness God has granted to us.
  - 2. It must be accompanied by actions which befit true forgiveness.
- B. Forgiveness involves a kind attitude—abandoning all animosity and hatred.
  - 1. All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor (loud quarreling) and evil speaking should be put away. (Eph. 4:31)
  - 2. The child of God should hold no grudges.
  - 3. Deny the impulse to get even. Seek to do the forgiven one good.
- C. Forgiveness involves forgetting (Heb. 8:12) but what does it mean to forget?
  - 1. It is impossible for a person to completely obliterate the wrong from their mind.
  - 2. Rather it means to not hold the person accountable for it anymore.
    - a. When forgiveness is granted, that should end the matter.
    - b. It should never again be dredged up or held against the one who has been forgiven .
- D. Forgiveness should be given by “the golden rule.” (Matt. 7:12)
- E. One should always be willing to forgive.
  - 1. Even at repeated offenses. (Matt. 18:21-22)
  - 2. Yet, actual forgiveness is different from the willingness to forgive.
    - a. Jesus was willing to forgive those who had crucified Him but they were not forgiven until they acknowledged their wrong and repented of it. (Luke 23:34; Acts 2:36-39)
    - b. The brother who has wronged you must be willing to “hear” you and seek to right that wrong. If not, he is to be like a “heathen and a tax collector” to you. (Matt. 18:15-17)

### IV. Biblical Examples of Forgiveness

- A. Joseph. (Genesis 50)
  - 1. His brothers had sold him into slavery yet were now looking to him to help him ease their hunger because of the famine in their land.
  - 2. In his position in Egypt, he had the upper hand over his brothers.
    - a. He could have really gotten even.
    - b. Instead, he forgave them and lived a life of joy instead of bitterness.
- B. David. (I Samuel 24)
  - 1. He fled for his life from King Saul. He later had the opportunity to kill Saul.
  - 2. Instead, he spared Saul’s life.
    - a. He had a forgiving heart.
    - b. It is no wonder he was called a man after God’s own heart. (Acts 13:22)
- C. Stephen, the first martyr for Christ. (Acts 7)
  - 1. He preached a courageous sermon which caused him to be stoned by the Jews.
  - 2. He asked God to forgive the ones who were stoning him. (Acts 7:59-60)

D. Jesus Christ.

1. His life was a life of forgiveness. (cf. John 8:1-11; Luke 7:36-50; etc.)
2. He died with a forgiving spirit. (Luke 23:34)

E. In all of these examples, serious offenses were committed yet forgiveness was extended.

1. A spirit of forgiveness was manifested that should characterize all Christians.
2. We are seldom called upon to demonstrate such a spirit for most offenses against us are minor and, therefore, ought not to be difficult to forgive.

# I Want to Be a Worker for Jesus

**Text: Matthew 25:34-46; John 9:4; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:22**

## **I. Jesus Expects His Disciples to Work**

- A. New Testament principles which relate to the work the Christian ought to be doing.
  - 1. The Christian is created in Christ for good works. (Eph. 2:10)
  - 2. The people who are Christ's own possession are to be zealous of good works. (Titus 2:14)
  - 3. Christians are to be doers of the word and not just hearers of it. (Jas. 1:22; cf. Matt. 7:21-23; Jas. 2:14-16; Matt. 25:31-46)
  - 4. Those who are not bearing fruit for the Savior are only worthy to be cut off and cast into the fire. (John 15:1-8)
  - 5. A failure to do the work that one knows Jesus wants done is sin. (Jas. 4:17)
- B. Areas of responsibilities in which work must be done by the individual Christian.
  - 1. Evangelism. (Matt. 28:18-20)
  - 2. Edification. (Heb. 10:23-25)
  - 3. Benevolence. (Eph. 4:28; 2 Cor. 8:1-15)

## **II. Why Some "Christians" Do Not Work**

- A. A lack of conversion.
  - 1. The basic idea of conversion is change. One who follows Jesus must have a change of:
    - a. Heart—intellect, will, emotions.
    - b. Conduct. (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 6:1-4)
    - c. Relationship. As servants (Rom. 6:17-18), citizens (Col. 1:13) and children. (Gal. 3:26-27)
  - 2. If one has not made these changes, he is not really converted, therefore, he is still living his life for self and not for Christ.
- B. A wrong view of the local church.
  - 1. Some view the church as an agency that will have an impact on the world simply because of numerical strength, size of building, wealth, etc.
  - 2. By joining up and being a member of such an "agency," one allows the agency to hire another to be doing the work the individual ought to be doing.
    - a. The agency exists for the sole purpose of serving its members—catering to them, visiting and calling on them, patting them on the back constantly, etc.

- b. The agency exists only when it assembles.
  - 1) This makes collective responsibilities only such things as ushering, leading singing, making announcements, etc.
  - 2) Agency members complain when they are not used enough, meaning not used in a public way at least every week.
- C. A lack of understanding of individual responsibility.
  - 1. A common expression often heard is, "I don't want to get involved."
    - a. Being a Christian means you are already involved. (Josh. 24:15; Rom. 6:16-18)
    - b. Involvement in the local body is a must. (1 Cor. 12:12-27)
  - 2. One cannot avoid individual involvement by being part of a group.
    - a. Judgment is based on individual accountability. (Rom. 14:11-12; 2 Cor. 5:10)
    - b. Each Christian must shoulder the responsibility the Lord has given him.
- D. A failure to understand that the success of the local church demands individual involvement.
  - 1. Consider the collective expressions of worship: Individual involvement is demanded for success.
  - 2. Church discipline, though a collective action, involves each individual.
  - 3. If the local church is to fulfill its three-fold mission, it needs money and individuals willing to do what they are able to do.
- E. A lack of sincere dedication and commitment.
  - 1. Dedicated people have changed sacred history: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc.
  - 2. The history of the first century church is a record of dedicated people.

### III. Five Essentials of the Lord's Work

- A. A powerful faith.
  - 1. If one believes nothing, he will do nothing.
    - a. If one does not think he can do something, he will not try it—the example of the ten spies. (Num. 13:17ff; 14:11-12)
    - b. With faith "all things are possible." (Matt. 17:14-21)
  - 2. No works = no faith. (Jas. 2:14ff) Conversely, no faith = no works.
- B. A joyful heart. (Phil. 4:4)
  - 1. As workers, Christians should never be despondent and down-hearted for their reward is sure. (1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 14:13)
  - 2. One must never grow weary in doing good. (2 Thess. 3:13)
- C. A continual reliance on prayer.
  - 1. The prayer of the righteous avails much. (Jas. 5:16ff; Matt. 21:18-22)
  - 2. Someone has said, "People who are interested enough to pray are interested enough to work."
- D. A personal love.
  - 1. A love for the Lord. (John 14:23-24; cf. 1 John 5:3; 2:4)

2. A love for the brethren. (Heb. 13:1; 1 John 4:20-21; Heb. 10:24-25)
    - a. To function collectively there must be love and unity. (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:1-4)
    - b. Discord among brethren is destructive. (Gal. 5:15)
  3. A love for the lost. (Luke 19:10; 15:1-7)
  4. If you do not have love you will not care but then it really does not matter. (1 Cor. 13:1-3)
- E. A persistent effort.
1. Persistency is the secret of success. (Luke 18:1-8)
  2. Two examples.
    - a. Noah took a very long time to build the ark.
    - b. The apostle Paul. (Phil. 3:12-15)
  3. The Christian is to be living a life of service (Rom. 12:1-2) so he must not allow lack of results to discourage him.
    - a. The Lord judges, not on results, but on effort.
    - b. One will not be condemned for a lack of results but will be for a lack of effort.

#### **IV. "But What Can I Do?"**

- A. First of all, do not wait for someone to tell you what to do. Take the initiative to become active as an individual Christian.
- B. Some suggestions.
  1. Teach someone the gospel.
    - a. Give out a tract, invite to VBS or gospel meeting, invite to regular services, etc.
    - b. Remember to be persistent. Do not just do it once and stop.
  2. Clean the building, mow the lawn, attend workdays.
  3. Extend hospitality to visiting preachers, visitors and one another.
  4. Visit the sick and elderly.
  5. Show concern for the weak and/or erring.
  6. Help in the public responsibilities: Teach a Bible class, greet visitors, be willing to help in any way you can.
  7. Develop your skills, resources and knowledge so that you can become a bigger help as time goes on.



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