

FAITHFULNESS

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FAITHFULNESS should be the chief mark and characteristic of a true Christian. Throughout the New Testament we find such phrases as: "faithful and wise servant" (Matt. 24:45), "good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21), "faithful and wise steward" (Luke 12:42), "faithful son in the Lord" (1 Cor. 4:17), "faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1), "faithful minister in the Lord" (Eph. 6:21), "faithful brethren in Christ" (Col. 1:2), "faithful and beloved brother" (Col. 4:9), and "faithful men" (2 Tim. 2:2). In Revelation 17:14, we read that those who are with Christ "are called, chosen, and faithful." One of the requirements to be a steward is faithfulness. Paul said in his Epistle to the Corinthians: "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).

A steward is someone who watches and manages the affairs of another. We are all stewards of God. God has entrusted much to us and He requires much from us. Jesus said: "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48) and "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10). Would you rather have Christ in the last day say to you: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matt. 25:23) or "You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where

I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.... And cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness" (Matt. 25:26-30). Jesus said: "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has" (Luke 12:42-44). There are at least eight areas of our lives with which we must be faithful. They are:

1. THE WORK OF THE LORD

*"And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that **you may fulfill it.**" (Col. 4:17)*

*"Not lagging in **diligence**, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." (Rom. 12:11)*

*"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be **steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord**, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58)*

2. SHARING THE GOSPEL

*"For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, **I have been entrusted with a stewardship.**" (1 Cor. 9:16-17)*

*"Now then, **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20)*

*"**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."
(Matt. 28:19-20)*

*"And He said to them, "**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.**"
(Mark 16:15)*

3. CHURCH ATTENDANCE

*"And **they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**" (Acts 2:42)*

*"**Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." (Heb. 10:25)*

4. USING OUR GIFTS

*"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and **gave gifts to men.**"'" (Eph. 4:7-8)*

*"**Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them:** if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."
(Rom. 12:6-8)*

5. MINISTERING TO ONE ANOTHER

"Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality." (Rom. 12:13)

*"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God **should be careful to maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable to men." (Titus 3:8)*

*"And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to **meet urgent needs**, that they may not be unfruitful." (Titus 3:14)*

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." (Rom. 12:15)

"And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. 12:26)

*"For God is not unjust to forget your **work and labor of love** which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister." (Heb. 6:10)*

6. GIVING TO THE LORD

*"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: **On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside**, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." (1 Cor. 16:1-2)*

*"But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; **for God loves a cheerful giver**. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." (2 Cor. 9:6-9)*

7. HOW WE USE OUR TIME

*"**Redeeming the time**, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:16)*

*"Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, **redeeming the time**." (Col. 4:5)*

*"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God**." (1 Cor. 10:31)*

8. WATCHFULNESS

*"And you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. **Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching.** Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."* (Luke 12:36-40)

*"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. **Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.**"* (Luke 21:34-36)

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