

THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN, Part 2 October 18, 2015

A few weeks ago, we noticed the relationships that each Christian should have as they continually work to be a “whole Christian.” This week, we will turn our attention to the work that faithful Christians are to fulfill in their lives as they live for Christ. The Christian will be diligent in his desire to preach and teach only the Word of God even if some want to hear something else. If Christians do not fulfill that duty, they will be held accountable before the Lord.

Christians have specific duties that must be carried out concerning the lost. Men are lost, not because they have not heard the Gospel, but because of personal sins in their lives; and it is the duty of all Christians to give people the opportunity to hear the Gospel and to obey it (Mk. 16:15-16). One must keep in mind that the duty of spreading the Gospel has within its very tenets the responsibility to uncover sin and to let others know when they are being disobedient to the heavenly commandments. Many ministers do not want to preach on subjects that are “pet sins” in the lives of people, and some elders want to overlook sins that are taking place in the congregations where they serve; but if that preaching, teaching, and leading is neglected, then God’s message has not been delivered properly. Paul asked the Galatians, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth” (Gal. 4:16)? Yes, it is the work of all Christians to teach the truth whether it is popular or not (2 Tim. 4:2)! Jesus never insinuated that the Christian lifestyle would be the easiest one to live, especially when it comes to proclaiming the soul-saving message that makes one a Christian. In fact, He said, “Ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt. 10:22).

The Christian life is a very rewarding and demanding work, but it can also be very discouraging at times. There is nothing that Satan wants more than for a faithful Christian to fall by the wayside and stop being faithful! When one deals with broken marriages, unfaithful children, the ungodly direction of the nation, and a multitude of other problem areas, it becomes extremely easy to become discouraged. It has often been said that the most used tool in Satan’s toolbox is discouragement, and that must be true!

How can the faithful overcome the feelings of loneliness, heartache, and discouragement? We shouldn’t feel too sorry for ourselves, because God’s people have always had to bear the burden of discouragement. After all, Elijah went from the highs of Mt. Carmel to the lows of despair and back again, but it is still a problem that must be addressed. A Christian can surround himself with other Christians, he can take vacations, he can lock himself in the office and devote long hours to Bible study, but that isn’t the only answer.

If a Christian is going to properly combat the enemy of discouragement, he must devote himself to long periods of time in prayer. There will come times in the lives of all people, and especially Christians, when they simply can no longer carry the burdens of the faith upon their shoulders alone. It is at that point in life when one must look even more to Christ and to the dedication He has for His people. When those times arise, Peter admonished, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:6-7). It is easy to feel like Elijah, but the Christian is never alone in this life, and he can always count on Jesus to be there to help and guide him through the rough times of life. Paul acknowledged that Jesus never left him and said, “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me” (2 Tim. 4:17); and Jesus promised all of us that He would never leave or forsake the Christian, but would be with him or her until the end of the world (Mt. 28:20).

There are many aspects of a Christian’s life that combine together to make a whole Christian. It is the case that the greatest, most honorable, and fulfilling life in the world is that of the Christian. However, those who choose Christ must understand that, though rewarding, it also brings with it great burdens that must be shouldered. We must endeavor to maintain relationships with family, congregation, and the lost of the world. We must be prayerful, motivate others, preach and teach the Gospel, and help others to overcome heartaches and

discouragement, all while guarding against those very things. Success means we must learn to lean upon other Christians, elders, preachers, family, and, most importantly, on the God of heaven who desires that we remain faithful and receive the crown of life (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 2:1).