

# The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,*

*holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



Volume 3

January 3, 2016

Number. 46

## Testing Our Faith

***“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).***

These are the famous words of the Hebrews writer that reveal the importance of faith. Without faith there is no pleasing God. As Paul said in Romans 1:17, *“The just shall live by faith.”* It must be realized, though, that there are certain degrees of faith, and not all degrees of faith save. James tells us that even demons believe and tremble, but who would conclude that they are saved? The faith that saves is an active faith that causes one to obey God. Now, because not all faith saves, we should all strive to be sure that we have the proper kind of faith. In this article we want to observe a few things that will put our faith to the test.

### Difficult Commands

Not all of the commands of God are difficult, but some certainly are. For example, when God commanded Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice, that was a hard command. By faith Abraham passed the test. He had the kind of faith that pleased God, i.e., an obedient faith. While we have not received any commands as difficult as that, there are some hard commands that we must keep. Consider two of them.

1. *Loving our enemies* - We are commanded to love our husbands, our wives, our children, etc., but that is not very difficult. Loving those who love us back is natural. However, to love our enemies is much more difficult. The concept is not hard to grasp; the hardness is in the application. You see, we must love, not only in word, but in deed (Matthew 5:43,44). A good definition of love is that which always acts in the best interest of whatever it is that is loved. Do you always act in the best interest of your enemies? This is a true test of faith, and whether or not we pass this test is an indicator of whether or not we have truly been converted.

2. *Forgiving those who sin against us* - The greater the sin, the harder this command becomes. Yet, we are told consistently in the Bible that we must forgive one another regardless of the extent of our pain (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Ephesians 4:32). But, when we instead hold grudges and refuse to forgive, we fail the test of faith.

### Severe Trials

Just because we are God's children does not mean that we will not be touched by trials and tribulations. They will come! How we handle them is another test of our faith (Job 1:6-22). If we give up because of persecution, it is because our faith in God is not what it should be (Revelation 2:10).

## What we are willing to do

What we are willing to do is a result of how much faith we have. If we have saving faith, we will be willing to go the extra mile in our service to God. It is sad to hear Christians who say things like, *"I do not attend Bible class because it is not commanded."* Personally, I think Bible class, whether on Sunday morning, or sometime during the week, must be attended. I believe that Hebrews 10:25 covers those assemblies as well as Sunday morning worship service. But for the sake of argument, let us say that they are not commanded. Should we not assemble with the saints whenever possible? A person who says, "I am not going to Bible class because it is not commanded," is a person who is trying to do as little as possible in serving God, and that says something about one's faith. Our attitude should not be "let's see how little we can do for God," but rather "let's see how much we can do for God." Worshiping and serving God should be done with hearts of joy and anticipation because of the degree of faith we have in our heavenly Master. Does your faith pass the test?

*Don*

## Real Confidence

Jason Moore

**T**he Lord is my portion; I have promised to keep Your words. I sought Your favor with all my heart; Be gracious to me according to Your word. I considered my ways And turned my feet to Your testimonies. I hastened and did not delay To keep Your commandments. - Ps 119:57-60

Self-assurance is a sacred value in our day. We applaud those who possess it. But self-assurance is an apparition—it's a ghost, and not a friendly one. No man can be totally confident who has not first placed his total confidence in God.

*"You are my portion, O Lord."* The man who has faith in God, always knows whence tomorrow's meal is coming. He doesn't have to fight to achieve and stay on top while neglecting his spiritual needs. The Lord is his portion. That's his confidence.

*"Be merciful to me."* Forgiveness! Ah, what assurance it gives! The man who knows that God has forgiven him need not fear death. He need not reason from consequences. He need not despair over life's inequities. He is forgiven. That's his confidence. What else does he require?

*"I thought about my ways, and turned my feet."* Men act with certainty. They exude confidence in their business decisions. They justify immoral behavior. But it's all a facade. The child of God thinks about his ways in the light of God's way, and gets on the right track. That's his confidence.

*"I made haste, and did not delay to keep your commandments."* Deadlines. Due dates. Appointments. So what if you keep them all, but never make an appointment with God? What have you accomplished? The believer doesn't put off spiritual priorities. He doesn't delay obedience. His priorities are in order. That's his confidence.