

# The Brown Street Beacon

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

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



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## Privileges and Responsibilities of Christians

**B**eing a Christian is both a privilege and a responsibility (Hebrews 10:19-25). Let's observe some of the inspired thoughts of the Hebrews writer in this text.

### **PRIVILEGES**

**1. “Having therefore, brethren...” (ver. 19).** When one obeys the gospel of Christ, he becomes a part of the greatest family in the world. A family that has Jehovah as Father. But we see privileges, not only in the fact that God is our Father, but also in all the brothers and sisters we have in Christ. Think of how large this family is. You have brothers and sisters in Christ all over the world, those who love you just because you are a part of the family. I know a Christian who traveled from Oklahoma to California without staying in one hotel. He simply contacted family members in the different cities or towns where he and his family (a family of four) planned to stay the night, and brethren invited him to spend the night in their homes. Any of us could do the same thing because we too have family across the United States, family members who are willing to open their homes to us. It does not matter that we have never met them. We are related. We have the same Father. They would gladly take us in for the night. Now many of us would not think of doing such a thing. For most of us it would be more convenient to just get a room (perhaps because we don't always think of brethren as family). But the mere fact that we could travel from one end of the country to the other, relying on our spiritual family to put us up, emphasizes the privilege of having brethren. We can call on them for help. We can call on them when we want to spend time with someone who feels the same way that we do about spiritual matters, or when we just need a friend. We have a large family and we should take advantage of it.

**2. “Boldness to enter into the holiest...” (ver. 19).** The Holiest represents the present dwelling place of God, i.e., heaven. It is the antitype of the Holiest of Holies (the Most Holy Place) in the physical tabernacle of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the Most Holy Place was the place where God dwelt in presence among the Israelites. It was a type of heaven. In Exodus 25:21-22 the record says, “And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat...” The mercy seat and the ark of the covenant were located in the Most Holy Place or the Holiest of Holies (Hebrews 9:1-5); and thus, the Most Holy Place was known as the dwelling place of God. Only the high priest could enter into the Most Holy Place, and he could do so only once a year (Hebrews 9:7). Now we can all boldly enter the Most Holy Place whenever we want. Not the physical structure, but the real thing—heaven. How do we do it? We enter it through the avenue of prayer. What a privilege! We can boldly approach the dwelling

place of God anytime of the night or day. We have constant access within the veil (Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 10:22). We do not have to wait for another person to approach God on our behalf. We can all do it ourselves. It is one of the wonderful privileges of being a Christian.

**3. “Having a high priest...” (ver. 21).** The high priest was the one who made intercession for the people of God (Hebrews 5:1-3). Christ is our great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14). And our High Priest is far superior to any of the high priests under the Levitical order. Why? First of all because He knew no sin. The high priests under the old law were all sinners; therefore, they had to first offer sacrifice for themselves and then for the people (Hebrews 7:26-27). Having never sinned, Jesus only had to offer one sacrifice once for all (Hebrews 10:10). Furthermore, His priesthood is superior because it is permanent. Those under the Levitical priesthood held the office temporarily, but Jesus abideth a priest continually (Hebrews 7:3). As our High Priest, Jesus works on our behalf. He ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). This is what makes access to the throne of God possible. And when we sin Jesus pleads on our behalf for forgiveness, for He is our advocate (1 John 2:1-2). Surely that is a great and wonderful privilege.

**4. “The blood of Jesus (ver. 19).** As Christians, the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). The word cleanse in this text is in the perfect tense indicating an ongoing action. The blood of Christ washed away our sins when we were baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16), but it did not stop working for us at that time. Whenever we sin, the blood of Christ cleanses us from that sin, provided we repent and confess our sin to God (1 John 1:9; Acts 8:22). Since we all sin from time to time, imagine our condemnation if the blood of Christ did not continue to work on our behalf. The effects of Christ’s blood is certainly a privilege we should be thankful for as Christians.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

**1. “Draw near with a true heart...”** There are different ways to draw near to God. We can do so by living a pure life, abstaining from willful sin to the best of our ability. This does not mean that we will never sin. As we have already seen, we all sin from time to time (1 John 1:7-10). But we do not have to go around purposely violating the will of God. And if we do, we have no fellowship with God, for God is light and in Him there is no darkness (1 John 1:5-6). We have a responsibility to obey God’s truth and thereby purify our souls (1 Peter 1:22). When we do so, we draw nigh unto God (Jas. 4:8), and this is certainly one of the responsibilities of being a Christian. We also draw near to God by studying His Word. The more we search the scriptures the closer we come to God, the more we know Him, and the more we are acquainted with His ways. Let’s not allow God to become a stranger to us by neglecting to draw near to Him through Bible study. Another obvious way we draw near to God is through the avenue of prayer. Prayer is not only a great privilege, it is a duty that we have as God’s children. Paul said, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). That’s a command. To neglect to pray is to neglect to draw near to God and fail in the responsibility God has given us.

**2. “Hold fast the profession of our faith...” (Ver. 23).** The word profession is better translated confession. When we obeyed the gospel and accepted Jesus as our Savior, we confessed our faith in Jesus. Now we are obligated to remain steadfast in that confession. We must continue to believe in Christ. This implies that one can become a believer and then forsake that belief and become an unbeliever. This is why Paul encouraged the brethren at Corinth to keep in memory what he had preached to them so that their original faith would not have been in vain (1 Corinthians 15:2). If we continue to believe in Christ as we should, we will continue to confess Christ. And we confess Christ in part by living according to the high standard of the gospel. This is how we hold fast to our profession, and this

is what we all have a responsibility to do.

**3. “Consider one another...”** To consider one another means to take careful note of each other’s spiritual welfare. Therefore, the age old question, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” should be answered yes. We must be aware of each other’s spiritual condition (Galatians 6:1-2). We have a responsibility to stimulate each other to a greater love and higher service. We should be helping each other make it to heaven. One way we do this is by not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). A great deal of stimulating can occur when we assemble together to provoke each other to good works. Let us not be negligent

We have a great covenant with great promises and precious privileges. But in order to obtain these privileges, we must meet our responsibilities. Let’s not forget that as God’s children, we have both privileges and responsibilities. Let’s be thankful for our privileges and work hard at fulfilling our responsibilities.

*Don*