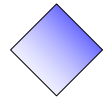


# The Voice of Truth



May 4, 2014

## "Charges to Christians"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

One of the real problems of Christianity is a lack of dedicated service to Christ. You must serve Christ zealously and faithfully. Living the Christian life is pictured in the New Testament as: warfare (**Eph. 6:10-18**), an athletic event (**1 Cor. 9:24-26; Gal. 5:7**). A good start, so important in a race, does not insure a successful finish. Christians need to remember these charges for running the Christian race.

(1) "...stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (**1 Cor. 16:13**). Paul exhorts the Corinthians to stand fast. Meaning, stand fast in the truth (**Jno. 17:17**), God's word (**Psa. 119:9**), the New Testament (**2 Cor. 3:6**), the gospel of Christ (**Rom. 1:16**), the doctrine or teaching of Christ (**2 Jno. 9**). This is the urgency needed by all saints! We must prove our worth as a soldier of Christ and fight the spiritual warfare that Christians must wage! Stand fast in the faith, always be eager to defend (**1 Pet. 3:15**) and contend (**Jude 3**). Stand for things which Christ stood for, stand for the things which Christ died for, stand and ask for the old paths (**Jer. 6:16**).

(2) "Abstain from every form of evil" (**1 Thess. 5:22**). When one has learned what is good or true, and what is evil and false, he should hold fast the true and abstain from the evil. In **1 Timothy 6:11-12**, follow a discourse on a number of evils and the disastrous results that come upon those that follow such things. Paul addresses Timothy as a "man of God", indicating that he is one who is committed to God in this life. In view of the evils just mentioned (**1 Timothy 6**), Paul urges Timothy to "flee these things" (**vs. 11**). There are times when running is not cowardly, but wise. It is absurdity, foolishness and madness to remain in the presence of temptation needlessly. It is not wisdom to deliberately place one's soul in jeopardy. When Joseph was approached by the wife of Potiphar for the purpose of fornication, Joseph fled the scene completely. We cannot always avoid temptations, but we do not have to remain in their presence. "Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not

travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on" (**Prov. 4:14-15**).

(3) "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (**Jno. 14:15**). This says in effect, that love for the Lord is evidenced in keeping His commandments. If you'll keep on loving Me, you'll keep my commandments. "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keep-eth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (**1 Jno. 2:3-5**). "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (**Jno. 15:9-10**). This love for God is not simply an emotion. It is a disposition that seeks the glory of God. It is an attitude of submission to His will. It is the desire to do His bidding! Love is not only obeying commands; it is having them! "He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to Him" (**Jno. 14:21**). Love **MUST** be expressed in obedience! Such glorifies the Son and thus, glorifies the Father. Do you love the Father? Do your actions show that you do?

(4) "...Be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living" (**1 Pet. 1:15**). We are encouraged to live lives of complete dedication to God. As the song we sing, we need to:

*Take time to be Holy,  
speak oft with thy Lord;  
Abide in Him always,  
And feed on His word.*

Are we taking time to be holy when we want worship services shortened? Or, when we want the sermon not to be over twenty minutes? We want the prayers short, the

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songs few. What's the big hurry? Are we in a hurry to visit the sick and erring after services? No, we want to go to a restaurant and eat a delicious meal, watch TV or whatever we desire. If the Lord's Supper is served first, some brethren will partake of it and leave on a trip the minute after they partake! Is this taking time to be holy, or is this taking time for our own desires? We need to forget the cares of

the world and take time to be holy! We should study God's word and pray every day.

The truth of God has been placed in the care of those who love the Lord. It is an awesome responsibility, so let us handle it aright, love it, obey it, live it and stand fast for it! ♦

## "Let Us Also..."

By Jarrod Jacobs

In **Hebrews 12:1**, we read the statement that draws **Hebrews 11** to its conclusion. By my count, I found at least 20 distinct instances (but more than 20 people!) of those God says were living by faith. After listing these, the statement is made, *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us also** lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us"* (**Heb. 12:1**). What can we learn from this statement, and specifically, those three words, "Let us also" ?

"Let us also" means that those reading this letter are included in what was said in the previous chapter. In other words, the Holy Spirit is saying that after reading the examples of these "great faith heroes", then let everyone reading this letter do the same.

### Let us also ....

... **"Lay aside every weight"** (**Heb. 12:1**). What does this mean? It means we have to let go of things that are holding us back from growing as we should (**II Pet. 3:18**). It means letting go of things that we know are keeping us from a right relationship with God! In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to pluck out an eye or cut off an appendage if these things cause us to offend (sin) in **Matthew 5:29-30**. No, Christ was not teaching self-mutilation. Rather, His point was the same point made in **Hebrews 12:1** — lay aside the weights keeping us from living right. This could be grudges, sinful habits, or any number of things. Let them go so you can run the race!

... **Lay aside every "sin" that besets us** (**Heb. 12:1**). The word "beset" means to cling, or stand close by. What sins "cling" to us? Lay all those aside! To what sins do we return often? Is it lying? Is it cursing? What? Lay those things aside and leave them! Paul gave us a remedy for sins which beset (cling to) us in **Romans 13:14** when he reminds us to not "make provision" for the flesh to fulfill its lust. Lay it aside!

... **"Run ... the race set before us"** (**Heb. 12:1**). Our race needs to be run with endurance (patience). In other words, we have to run with the view of the future, and not just the immediate. When (not if!) we fall (**Rom. 3:23; I Jn. 1:7-10**), we must get up again! Those of old had to do this (see: **Heb. 11**), and so must we!

... **"Look to Jesus"** (**Heb. 12:2**). He is the origin and completion of our faith! Just think, even those in Old Testament days were aware of the promised Messiah and they looked forward to His coming (**Jn. 8:56; Heb. 11:26; I Pet. 1:10-12**). We now look to the Resurrected Messiah, knowing of His life, death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-11). We now look to Him and walk in His footsteps (**I Pet. 2:21; I Cor. 11:1**).

"Let us also" (**Heb. 12:1**) means we are included in this text of **Hebrews 11-12**. Do the things those faith heroes of old did! Live by faith! When we do, we will be blessed as they were, and be people of faith as they were. Are you doing this? If not, why not? We can do it!

Credit: The Old Paths – 8/4/13 ♦

## HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT

- If you want friends — **be friendly.**
- If you want someone to smile — **smile.**
- If you want courtesy — **be courteous.**
- If you want knowledge — **study.**
- If you want a good name — **live right.**
- If you want to reap well — **sow well.**
- If you want to be a Christian — **obey God's word.**
- If you want to go to heaven — **live a Christian life** ♦

## Weakness and Weak Brethren

### By Mark Mayberry

In this lesson, let us consider what the Bible says on the subject of weakness. God's Word speaks of those who are weak in conscience and in faith; it refers to the weakness of the flesh, and also describes those who are spiritually weak. Yet, none of these conditions should be constant or chronic. No one is justified by saying, "I am weak. I will forever be weak. Therefore, I am excused." Rather, we are commanded to grow in grace, faith and knowledge (**Eph. 4:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:17-18**). In each case, in the very context that discusses weakness, we also learn that God has made provision for the weak to become strong.

#### Weak In Conscience

In **1st Corinthians 8**, Paul discusses those who are weak in conscience regarding meat that had been sacrificed to idols (**1 Cor. 8:1-12**). Apparently, such individuals came from a Gentile background. Prior to their conversion, they had worshipped in the idol's temple, and in various ways, had honored false gods. Now that they were Christians, how should they view such matters? What position should they take regarding meat that had been offered in sacrifice to an idol? Paul affirms the truth that the idol is nothing, and meat formerly used in idolatrous worship is clean. Yet, not all men have this knowledge. Therefore, caution is in order. Paul admonished the brethren to treat one another with deference. He said, "Don't violate your own conscience, or do anything that would cause a fellow-Christian to violate theirs." The Corinthian disciples were to be helpful and supportive towards one another. Furthermore, they were to avoid any actions that would imply an endorsement of idolatry (**1 Cor. 10:14-33**).

Having emphasized the need for forbearance, let us recognize that weakness should not be a permanent state. God has made provision for the weak to become strong. True, a man should not violate his conscience, but one's conscience should be reflective of a continually growing basis of knowledge. Ignorance may lead us to object to things that are not objectionable. Ignorance may also lead us to participate in things that are sinful and wrong. However, with continued growth, both of these problems should be corrected. The conscience operates according to what it has been taught, and it must be constantly instructed according to the Word of God (**1 Tim. 1:5; 3:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:18**).

#### Weak In Faith

In **Romans 14**, Paul discusses those who are weak in

faith regarding the eating of meats and the observing of days. Apparently such individuals came from a Jewish background. Throughout their lives, they had been taught that certain meats were to be regarded as unclean and certain days treated as holy. Now they are Christians. How should they view such matters? Paul affirms the truth that all meats are clean and days are equal. The solution is in the context. Yet, not all have this knowledge. Therefore, caution is in order. Again, Paul admonished the brethren to treat one another with deference: "Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died." Further, he repeated the admonition, "Don't violate your own conscience, or do anything that would cause fellow Christians to violate theirs" (**Rom. 14:1-4, 13-23**).

Nevertheless, let us recognize that weakness should not be a perpetual condition. God has made provision for the weak to become strong. Once more, the solution is in the context. Here, as well as in other places, God's word affirms that meats are clean and days (other than the Lord's day) are insignificant (**Acts 10:9-16; Col. 2:16-17; 1 Tim. 4:1-5**). The weak brother is mistaken in his beliefs. Now that he has been properly instructed, he should accept God's revelation on the subject. Granted, sometimes it takes a while for teaching to sink in, but in time, his conscientious convictions should reflect this newfound understanding of God's word.

How tragic that in recent years this passage has been used in defense of Homer Hailey, an aged and learned brother, who teaches error on marriage-divorce-and-remarriage. Those brethren who would employ **Romans 14** in defense of brother Hailey's error must, of necessity, categorize him as the weak brother who misunderstands God's will, as opposed to the strong brother who knows the truth. Such application is mistaken on two fronts: (1) although the context of **Romans 14** speaks of things that are morally neutral, it has been improperly applied to matters of serious and doctrinal import. Can one commit fornication "to the Lord?" Is adultery "clean?" Are unscriptural marriages matters of moral indifference? Obviously not. (2) The weak brother of **Romans 14** is expected to accept God's revelation on the disputed subject: Meats are clean and days are nothing. Hopefully, in time, his conscience will reflect this newfound understanding. Ultimately, it matters not whether he eats meats or refrains from such, but he must accept the truth of God. The weak brother is not to remain weak forever.

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How amazing, therefore, it is that this passage has been used in defense of an aged warrior of the cross who has held an erroneous position of marriage-divorce-and-remarriage for over 50 years. First of all, his doctrine allows for men and women in unscriptural marriages to remain in a state of adultery. The eternal consequences of such teaching are grave (**Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21**). Secondly, despite the repeated and prolonged efforts of faithful men, brother Hailey shows absolutely no willingness to change his position. How could such an individual be called a weak brother? If by some stretch of the imagination, the term could be properly applied, then we must ask, "How much time is required for a weak brother to become strong?" Obviously, we should give individuals time to come to a knowledge of the truth. However, if fifty years is not sufficient, how much time is required? Seventy-five years? One hundred? Patience demands that we allow adequate time for study, correction and restoration. No one is advocating rashness. However, if longsuffering requires 50, 75 or 100 years, then the bounds of Christian fellowship can never effectively be drawn. If such a rule were applied to the restorative efforts of a local congregation, no disciplinary action would ever be forthcoming (**Matt. 18:15-17; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; Tit. 3:10-11**; etc.).

**Weak In Flesh**

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus made reference to the weakness of the flesh (**Matt. 26:36-41; Mark 14:32-38**). Indeed, honesty demands that we acknowledge, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." However, is this an excuse of permanent weakness? Is this a justification for continually sinning? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? May it never be! How shall those who have died to sin still live in it? (**Rom. 6:1-2**). Instead, the solution is in the context: Here, as in other passages, watchfulness and prayer are essential to overcoming temptation (**Acts 20:31-32; 1 Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2-4**). If we are watchful and constant in prayer, we will be prepared to meet Satan's assault; however, if we are negligent and forgetful,

we will be overthrown (**1 Pet. 5:8-9; Jas. 4:7-10**).

**Weak In Spirit**

In a variety of verses, the Scriptures speak of those who are spiritually weak. Indeed, there are many in this condition. Yet, how does one move from a state of weakness to a state of spiritual strength? The solution is in the context: Paul encouraged the Ephesian elders to "assist" the weak (**Acts 20:35**). The Thessalonians are told to patiently "help" the weak (**1 Thess. 5:14**). In writing to the Corinthians, Paul not only referred to their weakness, but also repeatedly alluded to the source of spiritual strength, the gospel of Jesus Christ (**2 Cor. 13:1-10**).

**Conclusion**

We have discussed those who are weak in conscience, in faith, in flesh and in spirit. Weakness is a reality, but God does not want us to remain in this state perpetually. He wants us to become strong. Strength is derived from sharing a genuine relationship with God, and abiding in his word. In admonishing Joshua to "Be strong and courageous," God said, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success" (**Josh. 1:6-9**). The Corinthians were admonished to "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (**1 Cor. 16:13**). The Ephesians were exhorted to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." They did this by putting on the full armor of God (**Eph. 6:10-13**). Timothy was told, "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." He did this by abiding in the foundational message of truth, and sharing it with others (**2 Tim. 2:1-2**). John said, "I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one" (**1 John 2:14**). This, brethren, is the key! Like the heroes of **Hebrews chapter 11**, by faith we can from weakness be made strong (**Heb. 11:32-34**). Through faith in God's revealed word, we can be sound, knowledgeable, and, ultimately, victorious. ♦

*A pint of example is worth a barrel full of advice. ♦*

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**Schedule of Assembly**

**Bible Study:** Sunday, 9:00am  
**Worship Service:** Sunday, 10:00am  
**Bible Study:** Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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