
Words of Truth

We Labor To Be Accepted Of Him

By: Brian A. Yeager

In a second recorded letter to the church of Christ in Corinth, Paul and Timothy taught some powerful things from which we are taking our lesson in this article. Notice part of the context that our study is taken from: *“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. **Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences”* (II Corinthians 4:16-5:11).

People go through this life often wondering, “what’s it all for?” Solomon wrote a whole book about the vanity of life in the flesh. His conclusion was this: *“Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear **the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”*** (Ecclesiastes 12:8-14).

On occasion, we need to remind ourselves of what we are living for. The day to day in this world can get a bit tiring. The things we face because we are faithful can, if unchecked, get discouraging. Thus, we have to fight becoming tired of doing the right things (Galatians 6:9).

Reminding Ourselves Of The Reward We Labor For

The end of our faith, though we may face many trials, is the salvation of our souls (I Peter 1:3-9). During this journey we have to keep our eye on the prize (so to speak). This can be accomplished by looking to Jesus, the source and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-3). Then again, we must also look to ourselves. Notice: *“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward”* (II John 1:8).

Do you want Heaven? Consider the word “want”. The English word “want” means: “have a desire to possess or do (something); wish for” (New Oxford American Dictionary). Desiring something badly enough makes you work hard for it. Consider this: *“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. **But now they desire a better country**, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city”* (Hebrews 11:8-16).

Brethren, we need to long for the salvation that comes from God (Psalms 119:174). We need to labor to enter into that rest (Hebrews 4:9-11). We, like the disciples of Christ in the first century, must endure till the end (Matthew 10:22). We have to fight for our reward, lay hold on it, and not let go (I Timothy 6:12). In addition to the reward we'll gain though, we must also think of the relationship we have now and seek to continue with our Father.

Reminding Ourselves Of The Relationship We Labor For

Paul and Timothy had stated that we labor to be accepted of Him “whether present or absent”. That is, we labor to be acceptable before God even in the present and not just for the future. He is our Father (I John 3:1-3). As His children, our relationship with Him ties to our reward (Romans 8:17 and Colossians 1:12).

Conclusion

We labor to be accepted by our Father and should rightfully want to be acceptable in His sight (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 5:10, and I Peter 2:5-9). The hope we hold to. The motivation for our faithful work. It is all about the end. The end that we want is everlasting life (Romans 6:22). Let's show God, through our labor, how badly we want to be in Heaven!

Milkshakes

Faith Towards God

By: Brian A. Yeager

Amongst some first principles listed in the Scriptures, we find this statement: “faith toward God” (Hebrews 6:1). We should know this: *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”* (Hebrews 11:6). As you can see, our salvation requires that we have faith. It is impossible to please God without faith.

We know that we are not saved by faith only (James 2:14-26). There are many things required of us in addition to faith, by God, for us to be saved (Matthew 13:18-23, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 14:25-33, John 8:31-32, Acts 2:38-47, Acts 3:19, Acts 8:1-38, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 16:13-15, Acts 16:22-33, Romans 10:9-13, Galatians 3:26-29, James 1:21-27, I Peter 2:1-2, I Peter 3:20-21, II Peter 3:9-18, etc.). Having said all of that, let’s talk some more about faith.

What is faith? The Bible defines faith perfectly. Here is God’s definition of faith: *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1). Faith comes from hearing, understanding, and believing God’s revealed word (Romans 10:14-17, Psalms 119:130, and Acts 18:8).

God has put forth much effort in revealing to us what will give us proper faith and allow us to faithfully obey Him. God has chosen, from many things that could have been written, what to reveal to help us in our seeking of faith (John 20:30-31 and John 21:24-25). Through inspired men (I Corinthians 2:9-13, II Timothy 3:15-17, and II Peter 1:20-21) the right things have been recorded. Think about these statements: *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God”* (I John 5:11-13).

We have the right information. We have the details necessary for us to have faith towards God. If we choose not to believe that information we will be condemned (John 3:18). On the other hand, if we grab hold on faith toward God, we have all the information we need to make our calling and election sure (II Peter 1:3-10).

Faith, hope, and charity [love] are the remaining survivors coming out of the first century when spiritual gifts ended (I Corinthians 13:1-13). Love is the greatest. Now, guess how faith works? Faith works by love (Galatians 5:6). Faith and love are inseparable (I Thessalonians 3:6, II Thessalonians 1:3, I Timothy 1:5, I Timothy 2:15, I Timothy 4:12, II Timothy 2:22, and Revelation 2:19). Our love for God is shown through obedience (John 14:15 and I John 5:2-3).

Having considered all that we have already read, we have to consider this statement by Jesus in conclusion to our study: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”* (John 5:24).