

Five Qualities Every Christian Laborer Must Possess

Lesson 4—Godly Faithfulness

OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: Mark 12:41-43

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 11:24-27; Proverbs 4:25-27

BEFORE CLASS

Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- Today's lesson is on faithfulness—Here's a quote to think about: *"We cannot ask others to do something we are unable or unwilling to do."*¹
- To what extent would you consider yourself a "laborer" for Christ?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed on Sunday morning.
- Use postcards to reach out to your class.

CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.

CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.

CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.

THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, "It really doesn't matter if you're here or not." Small things communicate great messages. Let the three "small" things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Opening Questions

- *If you were to compare the Christian life to a sport, which one would you choose? Why?* (i.e., boxing because we're fighting against the world, a race that we're running with our eyes on the Finisher of our faith, etc.)
- *Would you say that the Christian life is more like a sprint or a marathon? Why?*

SAY: We live in a world of "I want it now!" Where people move from one fad to another—It's a world of "flitters and quitters" where very few people stick to anything for very long.

Consider the following examples in your life:

- (1) What is the longest you've ever been on a diet?
- (2) What is the longest you've ever kept a New Year's Resolution?
- (3) When was the last time you actually finished a book that you began reading?

• *Do you think you treat the Christian life like this—that you “get on fire” for a little while until other things come up and you get busy or distracted?*

SAY: We want you to be ready to live for Christ outside of the walls of the church all the time, to be a campus missionary and one who lives his faith for Christ every moment of everyday. So today we are simply continuing a series on *The Five Qualities Every Christian Laborer Must Possess*.

• *Who remembers the three qualities that we've already talked about?* (Godly Speech, Godly Conduct, Godly Love.)

SAY: Today we're going to talk about Godly Faithfulness. To effectively live for Christ you must not only have faith but remain faithful.

The Faithfulness Test

SAY: Answer the following three questions to get a feel for how faithful you are:

(1) *Are you faithful in the small things?*

Jesus said, “*He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much*” (Luke 16:10). Do you want God or others to give you big responsibilities? It begins with you first completing all the small matters you've been given with integrity and excellence.²

(2) *Are you faithful in the tough times?*

King David challenged us to follow through on our commitments in Psalm 15:4 when he describes a godly man as someone who “*swears to his own hurt and does not change.*” Keeping your word even when it costs you will prove how reliable and credible you really are.³

(3) *Are you faithful in the long run?*

Do you run the Christian life in sprints—i.e., you attend church actively for a while and then fall away for a while; you read your Bible for a while and then stop for a while; you get excited about something in your faith for a while and then it passes away. Or are you a pacesetter, keeping a steady pace, like a marathon runner?

KEY VERSE

SAY: Today we're going to take a look at someone whose life was the summary of faithfulness—the apostle Paul. Let's take a look at part of his testimony.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-27

- *How does hearing what Paul endured make you feel?*
- *If God called you to be a part of something and you knew that everything that happened to Paul would also happen to you, how would you feel?*
- *Why do you think Paul kept going? Why didn't he stop? (Because he had found something so worth living for, it was worth dying for.)*
- *How far would you be willing to go to follow Jesus?*

Quote: Jim Elliot, a missionary who was killed by native Indians in Ecuador, once wrote, *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."*

- *What do you think he meant? How does this relate to Paul's experiences?*

BIBLE LESSON

SAY: Sometimes people glamorize suffering for righteousness sake. In fact there are people in the world who would say that they are willing to die for Christ when they are not even willing to live for Him. However, faithfulness isn't just about endurance. It's also about obedience, even in the smallest of matters. Consider the following story:

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Mark 12:41-43

- *What is Jesus doing in this passage?*
- *How would you have felt if you were the widow—everyone else is making a show of putting in great sums of money and all you have are two small coins that weren't worth much at all?*
- *Can you think of any reason that she might NOT have given her money? (Excuses: Embarrassed of what people might think; How is such a little amount going to do any good; Shouldn't she keep it since it's all the money she has. Isn't that okay?)*
- *According to Jesus, who put in the most money? Why?*
- *What was the difference between how the rich people gave and how the poor widow gave? (She gave out of her poverty and she gave her all.)*
- *If you were to give like the widow, what would that mean to you? What would it cost you if you gave your life like this?*

SAY: The point here is not just about money but about the way you handle everything in life. Although it's true that money can be called the "True Test" because the way

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you handle your money is usually reflective of the way you live your life and a show of what is important to you. The point of this story, though, is that real and godly faithfulness gives its all to Jesus—everyday in every way.

- *Have you given your best to Jesus in the way you live?*
- *Have you given you all to Jesus in the way you live?*
- *Is there anything holding you back from being completely faithful to God in every area of your life?*

KEY VERSE

- *What advice would you give people to help them remain faithful to God in every area of their lives? (i.e., spend time with God, read your Bible, be consistent in going to church, obey God, etc.)*
- *Are you taking your own advice?*
- *What temptations do you think you'll face when you return to school? What's your plan for staying faithful to God? (We use a plan to build a building. We use a plan to play a football game. Why not use a plan in facing temptation?)*
- *What Bible verses would you share with people to help them stay on the right path?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Proverbs 4:25-27

SAY: Whether in your life you are up on a “spiritual mountaintop”, down the mountain, or on either side, keep your focus on Christ, keep your feet from evil, always follow Him and keep following Him until the end. At the end of your life may you be found faithful!

WRAP IT UP

Prayer Time

Pray specifically today that your students will go all the way with God.

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

¹ Steve Shadrach, *The Fuel and the Flame* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2003), 36.

² Ibid, 35.

³ Ibid.