

January 2009—Faithfulness

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2).

Very recently I enjoyed the privilege of speaking at a banquet for an adult Sunday school class at Good News Baptist Church in Cutlerville, MI. Good News is our commissioning Church, as well as that of Roger & Pearl Foust Sr., Roger & Ruth Foust Jr., and Fred & Marian Norlin. It is also where Lori (Foust) Schroder grew up.

I *‘fessed up* and told those gathered that I wrote these thoughts for you dear missionaries, but wanted to share the message with them too. Like many of you, these Senior Saints exemplify a long history of faithfulness. Even so, I delight in the opportunity to challenge and commend as we look forward to a New Year—

Are we— Faithful to the Lord in our Person?

That is, not just *doing* the right thing, but *being* the right kind of person. Ultimately, God is more concerned with *who we are* than *what we do*. This was characterized in Paul’s commendation of Timothy—*“For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord”* (1 Cor 4:17). Success is not our benchmark—faithfulness is (1 Cor 4.2).

Are we— Faithful in possessions?

While not limited to finances this clearly affects our pocketbook. As new believers Terri and I learned to tithe. After a few years it dawned on us that while we were not content to be stagnant in any other area of our lives (Bible study, prayer, or witnessing—to name a few), we were perfectly content to be stagnant in our financial stewardship! The Lord led us and we began to methodically increase our regular giving as well as watch for special opportunities.

Once, after encouraging a group of missionaries to be deliberately openhanded, I was told that it was easier for me to be generous since I had my full support (which I did not). I didn’t reply, yet I wondered at the time if the opposite is true: could it be that we were well cared for *because* we were generous? *“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”* (Luke 16:11). And what are true riches? Spiritual fruit!

Are we— Faithful in pursuits?

Even busy missionaries can lose sight of doing what we are called to do: *taking the Gospel to a lost and dying world*. Like you, I have many opportunities to be involved with various endeavors. While it is obvious I will always make decisions between good and bad pursuits, I find it helps if I am consciously aware that I must continually make choices between good, better, and best. By God’s grace I can aspire to follow our Lord’s example: “. . . for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). *“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work”* (John 9:4).

Are we— **Faithful in priorities?** (*Priorities will help with the other areas too!*)

I love to remind myself that even Jesus Christ did not accomplish everything others thought He should—neither can you. Yet, he did accomplish everything His father expected of Him—so can you. His model is not out of reach: “*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*” (John 17:4). “*Jesus saith unto them, ‘My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work’*” (John 4:34).

Bill

