

On Begging Christians to Remain Christians

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. A blessing in Christ is support from brethren in times of crisis.
 - 1. The strong are to support the weak - Rom. 15:1
 - 2. The spiritual are to help those overcome in a fault - Gal. 6:1
 - 3. It is part of the law of Christ to bear one another's burdens - Gal. 6:2
- B. At the same time, we have a responsibility to become strong.
 - 1. Each Christian has a responsibility to bear his own load - Gal. 6:4-5
 - 2. We will be held accountable for our own actions - Rom. 14:12
 - 3. It is our own responsibility to pick ourselves up, too - Heb. 12:12-13
- C. Some Christians never seem to progress from being supported to the point of being self-sustaining.
 - 1. They remain very dependent on brethren; unless constantly visited by brethren, they fall away or become apathetic.
 - 2. Mark Copeland describes them as "high maintenance Christians."

I. THE DEFINITION OF DISINTEREST

- A. "High maintenance: refers to the need for a lot of attention required to maintain something in good order; demands a lot of time, energy, or money.
 - 1. Any person or thing that requires a lot of attention
 - a. Employees that require close supervision to do their jobs right
 - b. Girlfriends that require a lot of gifts or dates, or they lose interest
- B. Applied To Christians
 - 1. Christians are high maintenance if they require a lot of attention in order to remain faithful, if they require a lot of coddling or pampering to work.
 - 2. Christians that are high maintenance:
 - a. Babes in Christ just starting their new spiritual life
 - b. Christians who attend and work only when constantly prodded
 - 3. Churches can be high maintenance:
 - a. The church in Corinth was - 1Cor. 3:1-4; 2Cor. 12:20-21
 - b. The church in Philippi was not - Phil. 1:3-7

II. THE DIFFICULTY IN DISCERNMENT

- A. Where constant attention is necessary:
 - 1. Continuing attention is critical for the newborn Christian.
 - a. Weak in faith, weak in knowledge, they are very vulnerable
 - 2. Continuing attention is essential for the hurting Christian.
 - a. Just as it is for someone who is sick or injured
 - b. Overtaken in a fault, grieving, suffering physical illness, or enduring hardship, they are weakened by trials
 - c. Without they proper attention, they may be overwhelmed
 - 3. In such cases, constant attention is certainly called for - 1Thes. 5:14
- B. Where it is harmful:

1. When it hinders the growth of the church, which grows through evangelism, edification, and limited benevolence practiced by all.
 - b. These works cannot be attended to if undue effort is spent on a few who are in a persistent state of immaturity.
2. When it holds back the efforts of workers
 - a. Paul wanted to preach where Christ was not named - Rom 15:20
 - b. Yet churches like Corinth held him back - 2Cor. 12:12-15
3. When more serious needs go unmet
 - a. Babes in Christ not being helped because others expect coddling
 - b. The sick and dying neglected because others require attention
4. There may be times in our spiritual lives when we all require some high maintenance. But to avoid keeping helpful attention from those who really need it, we must make the effort to grow up.

III. THE DEFIANCE OF DULLNESS

A. Through personal growth

1. We all need attention when we are babes in Christ, but we should reach a point where we do not need it.
2. We must become the providers, not just the recipients - Heb. 5:12-14

B. Through individual strength

1. Strength from brethren is certainly helpful when we need it, but we should also reach a point where our strength comes from the Lord.
2. We must become the producers of strength, not just the consumers.
3. Phil. 4:11-13; 2Cor. 1:3-6

Conclusion:

- A. I am not discouraging constant attention when it is rightly needed by new converts and suffering Christians. We are to bear one another's burdens and bear with the infirmities of the weak.
- B. My desire has been to challenge you in thinking about your service to Christ. Are you bearing your own load? Or, do you have to be constantly begged in order to get you to remain in Christ?
- C. "He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer" (Prov. 18:9).