

**13th Annual
BIBLICAL VIEWPOINTS
LECTURESHIP**

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THEME:

**STAND FAST
IN THE FAITH**

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SHUT UP UNTO THE FAITH

BY: DUKE GREGORY

INTRODUCTION: TEXT: GALATIANS 3:23

PURPOSE: TO SHOW GOD'S PLAN FOR REDEMPTION DEVELOPED IN ETERNITY AND ALSO ITS UNDERLYING PRESENCE IN THE EVENTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. There is a great need for this Lectureship series, especially since there are so many of our brethren who are going astray.
2. Explanation: My topic is "SHUT UP UNTO THE FAITH."
3. We will look at four areas under the heading of "shut up unto the faith."
 - a. We will show and place emphasis upon how the faith was shut up.
 - b. We will make our lesson relevant to our day.

DISCUSSION:

- I. GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION WAS IN THE MIND OF GOD BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.
 - A. Man's fall in the Garden of Eden — Genesis 1-3.
 - B. This created a need for redemption. It began in eternity.
 - C. Redemption stated in Genesis 3:15.
 1. Christ slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8)
 2. Chose Christ before the foundation (Ephesians 1:4; 2:20).
 3. Peter emphasizes this (I Peter 1:18-20).

II. THE PROMISE OF REDEMPTION BEGAN WITH THE PATRIARCHS AND WAS RESTATED OVER AND OVER AGAIN BY THE PROPHETS.

- A. The Patriarchs
 - 1. Abraham (Genesis 12:1)
 - 2. Isaac
 - 3. Noah (Genesis 6)
- B. The promise of redemption was emphasized by the prophets.
 - 1. Pictures of redemption as given by the prophets
 - a. Isaiah 28; 53
 - b. Zechariah 1:2

III. REDEMPTION AND ITS UNDERLYING PRESENCE IS SEEN WHEN WE STUDY THE GENEALOGICAL EVENTS, THE TYPES AND THE SHADOWS OF REDEMPTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. From Adam to Christ we see a straight line of redemption portrayed in genealogy (Matthew 1; Luke 1).
- B. Redemption is seen in the sacrifices made under the law (Heb. 10:1-5).
 - 1. Lamb sacrifice (Leviticus 3).
 - 2. Blood on lintel of door (Exodus 12:15).
 - 3. Atonement under old law (Leviticus 1-25).
 - 4. Scapegoat (Luke 16).

IV. THE FAITH WAS SHUT UP IN THE LAW OF GOD AND WASN'T REVEALED UNTIL CHRIST CAME AND ESTABLISHED HIS CHURCH ON MT ZION IN JERUSALEM.

- A. The law could not deliver complete redemption (Galatians 1-2).
- B. The law was a school master to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3-4).
- C. Moses and the vail (II Corinthians 3:13-18).

- D. The faith was shut up to those whose minds had been blinded by the teachings of the old law (Galatians 5:1-4).

V. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. Jews today are still shut up to the faith and don't know that the law of Christ is in effect today.
- B. People in the religious world are still shut up to an old system that has long since been nailed to the cross (Ephesians 2; Colossians 2:14). They do not understand the faith once delivered (Jude 1:3).
- C. People in the church are shut up to the faith when they don't study to know God's will for them (II Timothy 2:15). Especially, if our life is not in harmony with the faith once delivered.
- D. Teachers of the New Hermeneutics are shutting up the faith by their false doctrine of interpretation.
 - 1. The matter of grace in the Old and New Testaments (Ephesians 2:8-9; Genesis 6:8).
 - 2. Our brethren on baptism (Acts 2:38).
 - 3. The matter of worship and the instrument (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:17).
- E. It is my conviction that we are going to have to re-emphasize the restoration plea.
- F. Our preaching needs to exhort and rebuke those that are disturbing the unity of the faith. These brethren need to see what they are doing to our great brotherhood (Psalms 133:1; I Corinthians 1:10-13; Eph. 4).

REVELATION OF THE FAITH THE UNFOLDING PLAN

BY: EDDY CRAFT

1. In this lesson I want to show the gradual unfolding of the faith by selection of the holy people, types and shadows and the prophetic message.
2. By the statement "*The Faith*" I mean the system of faith, the Gospel of Christ (Romans 10:17).

DISCUSSION:

I. THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM:

- A. Genesis 12:1-3
- B. Carried on through Isaac and Jacob.

II. THE PROMISE EXPANDED THROUGH JUDAH:

- A. Genesis 49:10
- B. Not only will the Seed of Abraham bless all nations, but he will appear as some form of a ruler who will gather God's people together.

III. PROMISE THROUGH THE PROPHETS:

- A. Deuteronomy 18 — Shows that the prophets were a cardinal part of the Holy Nation.
- B. The prophets warned people about straying away from God's covenant (Ezekiel 3:17-19).
- C. They would also gradually reveal the details of God's coming redemption through Jesus Christ.
 1. I Peter 1:9
 2. Acts 3:24
- D. Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, etc. were all great prophets that helped bring about God's great plan.

IV. PEOPLE LINKS:

- A. Names, names, names! Was this your reaction when you first began to read the Bible?
- B. By the time you read the first 11 chapters of Genesis you have already been exposed to seventy-nine different names, including two sections of what just seems to be meaningless name lists.
- C. The Bible is essentially a book about people. The line begins with God and ends with God (Luke 3:23, 38). Around the people in between is formed the framework of the scheme of redemption! Do not misunderstand the genealogical structure of the Old Testament.

V. TYPES AND SHADOWS:

- A. One rich area of Bible study is found in the examination of the types and shadows of the Old Testament which point to the New Testament truths.
- B. Types and shadows show the development of the scheme of redemption.
- C. Some of the shadows and types are:
 1. Melchisedec=Christ
 2. Israel=The Church
 3. The Passover=Jesus is our passover
 4. Noah's Ark=the Church
 5. Adam=Christ
 6. Crossing the Red Sea=Baptism
 7. Canaan=Heaven
 8. Roaming in the wilderness=Our presence in this world

VI. CHRIST — THE BEGINNING AND THE END:

- A. Read carefully Galatians 3:23-29.
 1. The emphasis is that we are children of God (Abraham's seed) by *the faith*. The definite article is in the Greek. Not *our* faith but by *the* faith.
 2. This points out that the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham was in obedience to

Christ (Galatians 3:16). It begins and ends with Christ.

B. Read carefully Hebrews 12:1-2.

1. In chapter 11 of Hebrews there are a number of names mentioned. People of great faith. Yet none of them were without sin. Therefore they could not serve as the perfect example through which redemption would come.
2. The text says, "*looking away*" (Greek — *aphoraw*) that is looking away from the people of Hebrews 11 to Jesus who is the beginning (Greek — *archagon*) and end (Greek — *teleiotan*).
3. Jesus is the beginning and end of the faith. The word *our* is in italics. It is not in the original Greek New Testament. So it is not *our* faith but *the* faith.
4. From the preceding we learn that Jesus is the fulfillment of the scheme of redemption and to him we must look for our authority.

CONCLUSION:

1. The unfolding plan and being able to see its unfolding is very crucial in our being able to understand God's word.
2. The unfolding of the plan finds its end in Jesus Christ:
 - a. Matthew 17:5
 - b. Matthew 28:18-19
 - c. Hebrews 1:1-2
 - d. He is our only authority! Will you listen to and obey Jesus?

THE WORD REVEALED

BY: CLAYTON WINTERS

1. God's plan for revealing the gospel scheme of redemption was progressive, consuming about fifteen hundred years in the process.
2. New Testament revelation may be best designated as starting with Christ's personal ministry in 27 a.d., and ending with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 a.d. — a period of forty seven years.
3. New Testament revelation might be best understood by viewing it in three time periods: Oral or Direct Revelation, 27-48 a.d.; Oral and Written Revelation, 48-70 a.d.; and All Revelation Given Through the Written Word, a.d. 70 and onward.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE PERIOD WHEN ALL REVELATION WAS ORAL OR DIRECT:

- A. Jesus delivered revelation to His disciples orally; to our knowledge He wrote no books or sermons (John 8:28; 12:48; 14:10; 3:34; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2:1-3).
- B. The Apostles, through Jesus, and with the aid of the Holy Spirit, received all their revelation directly (Matthew 10:19,20,27; John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 2:1-4; Galatians 1:11, 12; II Cor. 5:18-10).
- C. Others in the Apostolic Age received direct revelation by the means of imparted gifts (Acts 8:14-19; 19:1-6; 19:1-6; Romans 1:11; II Timothy 1:6; I Corinthians 14:1).

II. BEGINNING WITH 48 A.D., REVELATION WAS STILL BEING RECEIVED DIRECTLY, BUT IT ALSO, AT THAT POINT, BEGAN TO BE COMMITTED TO WRITING:

- A. *The Galatian Church.* They received revelation directly from the inspired Apostle Paul, but they also got the same message along with additional revelation through the medium of the written Word (Acts 16:6; 18:23; Galatians 1:6-12; 1:1,2; 6:11).
- B. *The Thessalonian Church.* This church also had the benefit of hearing the gospel message orally from Paul and other inspired men; but they too were the recipients of inspired and authoritative written documents (I Thessalonians 1:5; 2:4; 5:27; II Thessalonians 2:15; 3:14).
- C. *The Corinthian Church.* This was one of the most gifted New Testament churches. They had enjoyed the benefit of Paul's personal teaching, and many imparted gifts, but they too received revelation in written form (I Corinthians 2:1-5; 12; 14:37-40; II Corinthians 2:9).
- D. *Timothy.* This faithful gospel preacher had been tutored by the Apostle Paul, and received gifts by the laying on of his hands; but in addition to this he also received revelation from the written Word (I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6; I Timothy 3:14,15; 4:13).

III. ALL REVELATION WAS FINALLY COMMITTED TO WRITING:

- A. The miraculous means for revealing and confirming the Word ceased (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:1-4; I Corinthians 13:9-12; Ephesians 4:8-13).
- B. Why the Word was committed to writing.
 - 1. That we might read and understand what inspired men taught (Eph. 4:1-3).
 - 2. That we might have the faith-producing message (John 20:30,31).
 - 3. That we might have full joy (I John 1:1-4).
 - 4. That we might be able to contend for the faith once delivered (Jude 3).
 - 5. That we might know how to conduct ourselves in the house of God (I Timothy 3:14,15).

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- C. What the written Word contains.
1. All that we need to know to have eternal life (John 20:30,31).
 2. All that Jesus began both to do and to teach (Acts 1:1-2).
 3. Everything we need for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16-17).
 4. All that will serve as a standard of judgment in the last day (Revelation 20:12-15).
- D. The authority of the written Word.
1. It is the Word of God (I Corinthians 14:37).
 2. We are to hold fast the traditions taught therein (I Thess. 2:15; II Thessalonians 3:14).
 3. Jesus Himself said, "*Scripture cannot be broken*" (John 10:35).
 4. We must neither add to nor take from its contents (Rev. 22:18,19).
 5. It is dangerous to wrest its holy contents (II Peter 3:15-16).
 6. We must not think in men above that which is written (I Cor. 4:6).

THE REVELATION OF FAITH-COMPLETE, FINAL AND AUTHORITATIVE

BY: WESLEY SIMONS

1. One needs guidance (Jeremiah 10:23).
2. One can think he is right, but be wrong (Proverbs 14:12).
3. One cannot trust in his own heart (Proverbs 28:26).
4. We need a standard
 - a. Yardstick
 - b. Scales
 - c. Watches

DISCUSSION:

I. THE STANDARD MUST BE AUTHORITATIVE.

- A. Over 3,800 times the Bible claims to be from God.
- B. It claims to be inspired (II Timothy 3:16,17).
- C. Notice the following verses:
 1. Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Cf. Acts 3:22,23
 2. Matthew 17:5
 3. Hebrews 1:1,2
 4. John 12:48
 5. Matthew 7:28
 6. John 16:13-15
 7. I Thessalonians 2:13

II. THE STANDARD MUST BE COMPLETE.

- A. We must make God's thoughts our thoughts (Isaiah 55:6-9).
- B. The Old Testament was His thoughts for the Jews (Deuteronomy 5:1-6).
- C. The Old Testament foretold of additional revelation (Jer. 31:31-33).
- D. We have that completed revelation (Hebrews 8:7-9).

- E. Therefore, one is brought to God by means of a teaching and learning process (John 6:44,45; John 8:32).

III. THE STANDARD IS A FINAL ONE.

- A. It is complete (II Timothy 3:16,17).
- B. It contains all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3).
- C. With it Paul preached the whole council of God (Acts 20:27).
- D. It was confirmed by miracles (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:1-4).
- E. Since complete and final revelation has been given, miracles have ceased (I Corinthians 13:8 ff).

IV. THE COMPLETE, FINAL AND AUTHORITATIVE STANDARD IS NOT TO BE TAMPERED WITH.

- A. One is not to add to or take away from it (Deuteronomy 4:12; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18,19).
- B. One is not to pervert the standard (Galatians 1:6-9)
- C. One is not to go beyond the standard (II John 9-11).
- D. One is not to wrest the standard (II Peter 3:16).

V. WAYS PEOPLE TRY TO GET AROUND THE STANDARD.

- A. Creeds and doctrines of men (Mark 7:7)
- B. The sayings of the Pope (Acts 10:25,26).
- C. Feelings (Proverbs 14:12; 28:26).
- D. Visions and dreams (John 8:32).
- E. Authority of parents (Matthew 10:37-38; Ephesians 6:1).
- F. Voices of the multitude (Matthew 7:13,14; Exodus 23:2).
- G. "So-called" Holy Spirit Baptism of today (Ephesians 4:5).
- H. Modern-day revelation (II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:3).
- I. Wrong Hermeneutics (II Timothy 2:15).
 - 1. Old Testament-New Testament

2. Faith only
3. Law-Grace
4. *"Loving God is all that Matters"*
5. *"Does not matter what one believes"*
6. *"The man and not the plan is what matters"*

CONCLUSION:

1. May God help us to love and obey His word (Acts 20:32).
2. For in so doing it will set us free (John 8:32).

THE PATTERN OF FAITH

BY: DAVID COSTELLO

1. God is a God of precision. Consider the exactitude of God's patterns.
 - a. God specializes in patterns.
 - b. Mankind must respect the patterns God has given.
 - 1) God gave the pattern for creation/nature/universe (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18).
 - 2) God gave the pattern for human structure, development, and reproduction (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 139:13ff).
 - 3) God gave the pattern for marriage and the home (Genesis 2:18-24; Matthew 19:4-9; Ephesians 5:21-6:4).
 - 4) God gave Christians a pattern of life contingent to the civil government (Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-2; Titus 3:1; Acts 5:29).
 - 5) God gave the pattern for the church/kingdom (Daniel 2:44ff; Matthew 16:18f; Ephesians 1:22,23; Ephesians 3:8-11).
 - a) This is an eternal plan.
 - b) This pattern is recorded in the gospel.
2. LESSON TEXT — Joshua 22:27-29; Hebrews 8:1-5.
 - a. God's people built all things according to the pattern.
 - b. The Old Covenant was a shadow/pattern of the New Testament.
3. OBJECTIVE — We want to show that the New Testament contains a necessary pattern for all generations relative to work, worship and way of life.

DISCUSSION:

I. PROPERTIES OF THE PATTERN.

- A. The definition of "Pattern."

- B. What exactly do we mean when we say "there is a pattern of faith?" We are saying that God has given us specific guidelines for structuring our work, our worship, and our way of life in the age in which we are living. Consider some of the terms the New Testament uses to refer to this objective standard or pattern given to us by God (e.g. the faith—Jude 3; the truth of the gospel—Galatians 2:5,14; the faithful word—Titus 1:9; the perfect law of liberty—James 1:25).
- C. The Pattern is very plain (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18,19).
- D. The Pattern is our guide for worship, work, and way of life in this age (Matthew 26:28; Galatians 3:15, 24-29; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12; 8:8-13).
1. A way of life.
 - a. A way to walk by faith (II Corinthians 5:7-9).
 - b. A way of gaining admission into the church/kingdom (John 3:3,5).
 - c. A way to be reconciled when we walk contrary to God's will and repent (I John 1:7ff).
 2. A way to worship (John 4:21-24).
 3. A way to work (John 4:34).

II. PROOF OF THE PATTERN.

A. Old Testament Proof Of A Pattern

1. Exodus 25:9
2. Numbers 8:4
3. Joshua 22:28
4. Jeremiah 31:31-34

B. New Testament Proof Of The Pattern

1. "*Tupos*" appears 16 times and is translated: "Print, figure, fashion, manner, form, example, and ensample."
2. "*Hupodeigma*" appears 6 times is translated: "Patterns, example, ensample."
3. "*Hupotuposis*" appears twice and is translated: Pattern, form.

4. "*Antitupos*" appears twice and is translated "figure."
5. "*Hupogrammos*" appears once and is translated "example."

III. POTENCY OF THE PATTERN.

Does this pattern need to be updated? Human nature has not changed (Ecclesiastes 1:4ff); sin has not changed (Romans 3:9,10); God has not changed (Malachi 3:6); Satan has not changed (John 8:44); the Saviour has not changed (Hebrews 13:8); death and judgement have not changed (Hebrews 9:27); heaven and hell has not changed (Matthew 25:34,41,46). Why then would the Word of God need to be changed (Isaiah 40:8; Hebrews 4:12)?

IV. PROBLEMS WITH THE PATTERN.

(Why is there so much resistance to the biblical pattern today?)

- A. We think that rebellion to God's will is a trivial thing (I Kings 13:11-26; Acts 5:1ff).

The libertine philosophy of this world makes people think they can do what they want and get by with it.

- B. We live during a time of constant change, therefore we think that religion must change to keep up with the times (Matthew 24:35).
- C. We want to do whatever we want to do exactly the way we want to do it (Judges 21;25; Romans 10:3).

This kind of thinking is at the very heart and core of the new "unity in diversity" movement!

- D. We want to solve things intellectually without any reliance upon God and His word (I Corinthians 1:21ff).
- E. We want to believe that our way corresponds perfectly with God's way of doing a thing (Proverbs 21:2).

V. PURPOSE OF THE PATTERN.

- A. Aid us to correct misunderstandings. Here are just a few of the erroneous views relating to the pattern.
 - 1. There is no model.
 - 2. The Bible is a historical record without any real relevance upon men today.
 - 3. The Bible is a book that needs constant updating.
 - 4. The Bible is just a "love letter" and not a pattern.
- B. Help Us Please God (Deut. 14:1,2; II Corinthians 4:3ff). The pattern must be studied, searched, heeded, obeyed, and shared.
- C. Enable us to challenge those today who are casting God's pattern aside (I Corinthians 14:8-11). Today, we are hearing a lot of uncertain sounds.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Since the Bible is not a Systematic Theological book, we must study to ascertain which covenant we live under, learn how to live faithfully, and then determine to follow it as close as is humanly possible.
- 2. The New Testament contains a necessary pattern for all generations relative to work, worship, and way of life.
- 3. The Bible is the pattern for our way of life, worship, and work but this pattern does not squelch the fact that there is a relational aspect involved.

THE SHIPWRECK OF FAITH

BY: JERRY R. BROWN

1. Scripture reference — I Timothy 1:18-19
2. Definition by Scriptures of "the Faith" —
 - a. Faith, a belief of the individual — Luke 17:5, Romans 10:17, I Cor. 13:2, I Cor. 13:13; Hebrews 11:1; Hebrews 11:6, James 2:18.
 - b. Faith and belief — John 8:24, John 14:1, John 20:30-31, Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:14; Hebrews 11:6.
 - c. "The Faith" — Ephesians 4:13; I Timothy 5:8; II Timothy 4:7; Jude 3; Acts 14:22; Acts 16:5.
 - d. Parallel meaning of shipwreck of faith.
3. Biblical examples of shipwreck of faith
 - a. Churches in Asia
 - 1) Ephesus — Revelation 2:1-7
 - 2) Pergamos — Revelation 2:12-17
 - 3) Thyatira — Revelation 2:18-29
 - 4) Sardis — Revelation 3:1-6
 - 5) Laodicea — Revelation 3:14-22
 - b. Individuals
 - 1) Simon — Acts 8:9-24
 - 2) Ananias and Sapphira — Acts 5:1-10
 - 3) Diotrephes — III John 9
 - 4) Hymenaeus and Alexander — I Timothy 1:18-20

DISCUSSION:

I. COMMON PRACTICES OF SHIPWRECKING PERSONAL FAITH:

A. Materialism

1. Personal Priorities
 - a. Treasures on earth — Matthew 6:19-21
 - b. Love of Money — I Timothy 6:10
2. Covetousness

- a. Rich ruler — Luke 18:18-23
- b. Rich farmer — Luke 12:16-21

B. Lusts

1. Temptation of Adam and Eve — Genesis 3:6
 - a. Lust of the flesh
 - b. Lust of the eye
 - c. Pride of life
2. Temptation of Jesus — Matthew 4:1-11
 - a. Lust of the flesh
 - b. Lust of the eye
 - c. Pride of life
3. Forbidden to Christians — I John 2:15-17

C. Doctrines of men

1. Condemnation of false doctrine
 - a. Divisions — Romans 16:17
 - b. Deceptions — Ephesians 4:14
 - c. Personal desires — II Timothy 4:3
 - d. New doctrines — II John 9-10
2. Warnings
 - a. Vain worship — Matthew 15:9
 - b. Commandments of men — Colossians 2:22-23
 - c. Doctrines of demons — I Timothy 4:1
 - d. Strange doctrines — Hebrews 13:9
3. Sound doctrine — II Timothy 3:16-17, Titus 2:1.

II. THE SHIPWRECKING OF FAITH WITH NEW CONCEPTS:

A. Teaching about the church

1. Scriptural teachings
 - a. Prophecy — Daniel 2:44; Matthew 16:18-19
 - b. Purchase price — Acts 20:28
 - c. Establishment — Acts 2
 - d. Qualifications of elders — I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1
 - e. Work of elders — Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:7, 17
 - f. Unity of the Church — Ephesians 1:22-23; Eph. 5:23-27
2. New anti-scriptural movements

- a. Christians in all churches
 - b. Sincerity of believers, a binding doctrine
 - c. Church teaching of leadership — outdated
- B. Acceptance of Scripture
- 1. Scripture, a standard of faith
 - a. Inspiration — II Timothy 3:16-17
 - b. Truth — John 8:32; John 17:17; John 1:17; Hebrews 1:1
 - c. Study — John 5:39; II Timothy 2:15; Romans 10:17
 - d. Foundation of doctrine — Psalm 119:105; Acts 17:11; Col. 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:22-23
 - 2. "New Hermeneutics" — destruction of faith
 - a. Interpretations — personal choice
 - b. Scriptures — modernized application
 - c. Sermon topics — relevance and signs of the times
 - d. Approach — new paths for modern man
 - 3. Need for old paths — Jeremiah 6:16
- C. New Morality
- 1. Scriptural purity
 - a. Pure in heart — Matthew 5:8
 - b. Purity of self — I Timothy 5:22
 - c. Fleeing lusts — II Timothy 2:22
 - d. Abstaining from evil — I Peter 2:11
 - 2. New acceptance of an alternate style of life
 - a. Ignoring adultery and fornication — Ephesians 5:5; Heb. 13:4
 - b. Gays, homosexuals, and lesbians — a personal choice
 - c. Condemnation — I Corinthians 6:9

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Transformation of Christians from sin — Romans 12:1-2
- 2. Separation from sin — II Timothy 2:2-4; Galatians 5:1
- 3. Opposition to Satan — I Peter 5:8-9
- 4. Responsibility to Christ — Matthew 5:16
- 5. Addition of graces — II Peter 1:5-10.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

BY: JOHN TABER

The theme of this lectureship ought not only be the desire of every child of God, but also the commitment and life of every child of God. Only the faithful are going to be saved (Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 10:38; II Timothy 4:7). In the parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), we read that the five talent man and the two talent man received the reward because of their faithfulness. I Believe one reason they were faithful was because they knew what they had and realized what could be done with it and how to use it to please their master. The one talent man simply had a misconception of what true faithfulness means.

Faithfulness involves knowing what the Lord wants me to do with that which He has given to me to use in His Kingdom. God's divine truth has been given to each one of His blood washed children (Romans 1:16; Matthew 28:19-20; II Cor. 4:6-7; Col. 4:6; I Peter 4:11; I Peter 1:23; Acts 20:32).

We have a divine obligation towards the truth of God (Proverbs 24:24; Psalm 119:127; Matt. 28:19-20; II Timothy 1:13; Ephesians 4:15; Galatians 4:16; John 8:32; Eph. 6:14; II John 4). But foremost, brethren, I believe we have an obligation to contend for the faith (Jude 3; I Timothy 6:12; II Timothy 2:3). We must stand up and fight for the faith and see to it that truth [The Faith] is kept divinely pure (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19).

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD HAS NEVER ALLOWED THE ABUSE OF HIS WORD [THE FAITH] TO GO UNPUNISHED:

- A. Man will have to suffer the consequences when he shows disrespect towards divine truth.

1. Adam and Eve — Genesis 3
2. Pharaoh of Egypt — Exodus 5:2
 - a. "Who is the Lord" is the silent slogan of those today who are trying to change Christianity into an "anything goes" social club.
 - b. Ignorance of God fills many with pride because they think they can decide on their own what God's will is. (Isaiah 5:13; Hosea 4:6; Proverbs 16:18; Isaiah 55:8-9; I Corinthians 1:27).
 - c. Job 32:9; Proverbs 14:7; Proverbs 15:33; Matthew 5:2
3. The nation of Israel (Deuteronomy 28:13-68)
4. Moses (Numbers 20:11-12)
5. Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10)
6. Saul (I Samuel 13:13; 15:3, 9-14, 22)
7. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10)
8. Many in Judgment will fail the obedient test (Matthew 7:21-23)
 - a. II Corinthians 13:5; I Corinthians 16:13).

II. CONTENDERS OF THE FAITH HAVE ALWAYS BEEN NEEDED BY GOD:

- A. God used those who would fight for the truth as He began His great scheme of redemption.
 1. Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3)
 - a. His obedience to the word of God never wavered (Heb. 11:8-19; Romans 4:18-21; Genesis 18:19; Gen. 22:1-18)
- B. The Mosaical system required contenders for the faith.
 1. God needed men who would fight against those who tried to corrupt and pollute the Law of God.
 2. Moses, in spite of his weakness, was a great contender of the truth.
 - a. He fought against unfaithfulness (Numbers 16:1-11).
 - b. He spoke the truth as God revealed it to him (Exodus 19:4-8; 24:3; 25:1-9).

3. Joshua is an example of one contending for the faith.
 - a. Willing to take the lead when called upon (Joshua 1:7-9).
 - b. Joshua explicitly obeyed when God commanded (Joshua 3:7-17; 4:1-17).
 - c. When sin was found in the camp of Israel, Joshua did something about it (Joshua 7:11-26).
 - d. Joshua kept nothing back when instructing the people in the law of God (Joshua 8:34-35).
 - e. Joshua was the spiritual leader of his family (Joshua 24:15).
4. The prophets were not ashamed to be contenders of the faith.
 - a. *Nathan* (II Samuel 12:1-7) realized that his job was not finished until he did what God said for him to do.
 - b. *Micaiah* (I Kings 22:14) spoke what was right according to truth, rather than what would make the King feel good (II Timothy 4:2).
 - c. *Elijah* (I Kings 18) was not fearful of the majority.
 - 1) Proverbs 11:21; Exodus 23:2
 - d. *Isaiah* — who gave hope to a hopeless people by emphasizing the future hope that all nations could enjoy through the promised Messiah.
 - 1) Isaiah 2:1-4; 7:14; 9:1-7; 53:4-12
 - e. *Jeremiah* — The prophet who could not be quiet when truth needed to be heard (Jeremiah 4:19; 20:9).
 - 1) He continued to preach even when his preaching resulted in his suffering. (Jeremiah 38:6)
 - 2) He preached even while other "preachers" had more success (Jeremiah 28).

- 3) He continued to preach truth even after the truth he preached offended some (Jeremiah 36:23).
- f. *John the baptizer* left us an example of contending for the faith.
 - 1) Matthew 14:3-4.
- 5. The Apostles contended for the faith
 - a. Acts 4:12, 19, 20; 5:29; 8:18-22; 21:13; I Cor. 6:9-11; 14:34-35; Romans 1:14-16; Galatians 6:14; Ephesians 4:1-6.

III. WE MUST CONTEND FOR THE FAITH TODAY:

- A. Let us contend for the faith in its plea for the distinctiveness of the church.
 - 1. Not a denomination. Must stop trying to act like one.
 - a. The Church of Christ does not need soul-damning denominations to teach it how to be a church.
 - 2. Jesus left the church, "How To" instructions [New Testament] and all we need to do is follow the instructions (II Peter 1:2-3; II Tim. 3:16-17).
 - 3. Contend for the faith as it teaches the oneness of the church (Ephesians 4:4) that salvation is found only in the church (II Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 5:23) that Jesus is coming again only for His church (I Corinthians 15:24).
- B. Let us contend for the faith by observing the pattern it reveals for worship.
 - 1. John 4:24; Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
- C. Let us contend for the faith with a life-style that is compatible to New Testament Christianity.
 - 1. Titus 2:11-12; Phil. 2:5; II Cor. 5:15; Col. 2:12; 3:1-4; I Cor. 6:19-20.
 - 2. Galatians 5:19-21, A Christian cannot engage in these and still be a Christian (Romans 13:14; Ephesians 5:11; I Thess. 4:7; Eph. 4:24).

- D. Let us contend for the faith in the qualifications of Elders
 - 1. I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9
- E. Let us contend for the faith as the hope for our homes.
 - 1. Matthew 19:9; Ephesians 5:21-6:4; Colossians 3:18-21; I Peter 3:1-7
- F. Let us contend for the faith in its fight against false teachers.
 - 1. I John 4:1; I Thessalonians 5:21; Romans 16:17; Isaiah 8:20; Galatians 2:5.
- G. Let us contend for the faith in it's demand for sound gospel preaching.
 - 1. I Thessalonians 2:4; Acts 20:27; II Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:13

CONCLUSION:

[Philippians 1:17] We are to be contenders, not pretenders. We must live aggressively for Christ. [Ephesians 6:17] Must be militant, never apologizing for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

LIVING BY FAITH

BY: JUDITH BROWN

1. Biblical definition of faith
 - a. Hebrews 11:1
 - b. John 5:24
 - c. Acts 27:25
2. Examples of faith in every day activities

DISCUSSION:

I. CHALLENGES OF LIVING BY FAITH:

- A. Biblical examples
 1. Sarah
 2. Moses
- B. Today's challenges
 1. Society's influence
 - a. General acceptance of sin
 - b. Agnosticism
 - c. Liberalism
 2. Personal weaknesses within the Christian
 - a. Lack of knowledge
 - b. Lack of service
 - c. Lukewarm in worship and attendance

II. OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TO LIVING BY FAITH:

- A. Reasons to overcome challenges
 1. Please God — Hebrews 11:6
 2. Necessary to salvation — Ephesians 2:25
 3. Assurance — I John 5:13
- B. Method of overcoming challenges
 1. Determining what pleases God
 2. Doing what is necessary to attain salvation
 - a. Desire to "hold fast" — II Timothy 1:12-13
 - b. Heavenly inheritance — I Peter 1:3-5

- c. Purpose and goal in life
- d. Faith that works — III John 5
- e. Faith that conquers — I John 5:4

III. QUALITIES TO INCREASE ONE'S ABILITY TO LIVE BY FAITH:

- A. Dedication
 - 1. Examples of Christ and apostles in dedication
 - 2. Wrongly directed dedication
 - 3. Dedication to God as a priority in life
- B. Discipline
 - 1. Lack of accomplishment for the undisciplined
 - 2. Use of rules and limitations
 - 3. Example of a faithful, disciplined Christian
- C. Determination
 - 1. Steadfastness — I Corinthians 15:58
 - 2. Cultivating a peace of mind
 - 3. Example of a Christian with determination
- D. Diligence
 - 1. Scriptures
 - a. Hebrews 6:10-11
 - b. John 4:24
 - c. Hebrews 10:25
 - 2. Example of a Christian with diligence
- E. Dependability
 - 1. Scriptures
 - a. I Peter 5:10
 - b. Revelation 2:10
 - 2. Example of a Christian with Dependability
- F. Direction
 - 1. Creation in God's image — Genesis 1:27
 - 2. Proper attitude — Matthew 16:26, 33

IV. STRENGTHENING ONE'S ABILITY TO LIVE BY FAITH:

- A. Increasing faith in God by using "eye of faith"
 - 1. World of nature — Romans 1:20
 - 2. God in the Bible
 - 3. God in His Son

- B. Increasing our faith through service
 - 1. Worship service — John 4:23,24
 - 2. Involvement in the work — I Corinthians 15:33
 - 3. Family
 - 4. Compassion for other people
 - 5. Importance of faith and service regardless of daily temptation
- C. Improving one's faith through Christian living
 - 1. Resisting easy way
 - 2. Maintaining principles of God
 - 3. Standing for truth
 - 4. Utilizing the motivation of love
- D. Improving faith through self-evaluation
 - 1. Accepting faith through self-evaluation
 - a. I Corinthians 15:10
 - b. I John 1:7
 - 2. Gaining self-confidence
 - a. Philippians 1:13, 4:13
 - b. Hebrews 13:5
 - 3. Taking on same characteristics found in our Father
 - a. I John 4:8, 19
 - b. James 1:22-25
 - c. Romans 8:29
 - d. Colossians 3:9-10

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Wearing a shield of faith
- 2. Seven "down-to-earth" suggestions for living by faith
- 3. Walk by faith, live by faith
 - a. II Corinthians 5:7
 - b. Romans 1:7

LIVING BY FAITH (1)

BY: KEITH B. COZORT

1. In this first lesson we will attempt to show what is meant when we say "living by faith."

DISCUSSION:

I. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

A. Living.

1. "To live, to be alive, is used in the New Testament of...(d) spiritual life, John 6:57; Romans 1:17; 8:13b; Galatians 2:19; Hebrews 12:9" (Vine's Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words, pg. 688).

B. Faith.

1. "Firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing, is used in the New Testament always of faith in God or Christ, or thing spiritual" (Ibid., pg. 411).
2. "The main elements in faith in its relation to the invisible God, as distinct from faith in man, are especially brought out in the use of this noun and the corresponding verb, *pisteuo*; they are:
 - a. a firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgment of God's revelation or truth, e.g., II Thessalonians 2:11,12;
 - b. a personal surrender to Him, John 1:12;
 - c. a conduct inspired by such surrender, II Corinthians 5:7" (ibid.).
3. "Faith is confidence as to things hoped for; conviction as to things not seen" (Edward Robinson, quoted by J.W. McGarvey, "Faith", McGarvey's Sermons, 1975, p. 84).
4. Faith serves as a telescope to peer into the distant past (Heb. 11:3) and future (Hebrews 11:13).

II. WHAT IS MEANT BY "LIVING BY FAITH?"

- A. Saving faith is inseparable from God's word.
 - 1. Romans 10:17 — faith comes from hearing word of God.
 - 2. Hebrews 11:7-8, 17 — faith was guided by the Word.
- B. Acting apart from God's word is profitless.
 - 1. II Kings 5:11 — Naaman the Syrian leper.
 - 2. Matthew 7:21-23 — doing the will of God is obedience.
 - 3. II Corinthians 5:7 — walk by faith.
- C. Without the word, faith will lose its direction.
 - 1. II Thessalonians 2:9-10 — salvation is result of receiving the love of the truth.
 - 2. II Timothy 4:3-4 — itching ears for things other than the word of God.
 - 3. Matthew 15:8-9 — commandments of men not equivalent to doctrine.
 - 4. Our attitude toward God's word affects the direction our faith will take.

III. THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38):

- A. Who are the "just?"
 - 1. Just — "equitable (in character or act); by implication innocent, holy...righteous" (Strong's, pg. 23).
 - 2. Noah — Genesis 6:9
- B. How do they live "by faith?"
 - 1. The Christian life is one which begins with faith (Heb. 11:6; John 20:30-31; Colossians 2:11-13).
 - 2. It is a distinct life (II Timothy 1:12).
 - 3. It is to live a life of love, devotion and service.

IV. EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO LIVED BY FAITH:

- A. The Bible tells us who lived by faith.
 - 1. Hebrews 11 — The Hall of Faith.
 - a. Abel — offered

- b. Enoch — “walked with God” (Genesis 5:22,24).
 - c. Noah — prepared an ark
 - d. Abraham (James 2:21-24) — obeyed
 - e. Rahab (James 2:25).
2. II Timothy 2:8-9; II Corinthians 11 — Paul.

CONCLUSION:

1. “Living by faith” involves more than just mental assent.
2. James 2:17,26

LIVING BY FAITH (2)

BY: KEITH B. COZORT

1. In lesson one we attempted to show what was meant by "living by faith."
2. James 2:17, 26 — faith alone is dead; faith without works is dead also.
3. Now we will attempt to show how Christians should be "living by faith."

DISCUSSION:

I. FAITH IS EXEMPLIFIED IN FACING THE TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS OF LIFE:

- A. The Bible has much to say about trials and temptations.
 1. Trials and temptations will come.
 - a. Matthew 4:1-11 — Our Lord was tempted and tried.
 - b. II Timothy 3:12 — His followers will suffer persecutions.
 - c. Philippians 3:8-10 — Paul suffered much (II Cor. 11:22-28).
 - d. I Peter 4:12-16.
 2. Trials and temptations are useful.
 - a. James 1:3-4
 - b. Romans 5:3-5
 - c. Matthew 5:10-12
- B. God has not left us defenseless.
 1. Ephesians 6:13-17 — the armor of God (shield of faith).
- C. God gives warning to help protect our faith.
 1. Mark 4:24 — "Take heed what you hear."
 - a. Since faith is based on what we hear, we must be careful.

- 1) II Thess. 2:9-12 — some follow the working of Satan.
- 2) I John 4:1 — try the spirits.
2. Matthew 17:5 — We must take heed who we hear (I John 4:1).
 - a. It is important to know who said what (I Kings 13).
3. Luke 8:18 — "Take heed how you hear."
 - a. We must hear in view of obedience (II Timothy 2:15; Acts 11:17).
- D. God encourages faithfulness in facing trials & temptations.
 1. I Timothy 6:11-12
 - a. Flee love of money, etc.
 - b. Follow righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.
 - c. Fight good fight of faith (II Timothy 4:7).
 2. II Timothy 2:22-26
 - a. Flee youthful lusts (Genesis 39:7-12-Joseph).
 - b. Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace and those who call on the Lord with a pure heart.
 3. I Peter 5:8-9 — Be sober and watchful
 4. James 4:7 — Resist the devil
 - a. Failure to resist will probably result in denying the faith, pressured or frightened into ceasing to confess faith in Christ.
 - b. Peter's denial of Christ three times is possible outcome if James' admonition is not heeded.
 5. I Thessalonians 5:22 — Abstain from all appearance of evil
 6. Matthew 5:11-12 — rewards will far out weigh the persecutions.

II. FAITH IS EXEMPLIFIED IN SERVICE:

- A. Matthew 6:33 — seek the kingdom and righteousness.
- B. Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16 — great commission demands service.

- C. I Corinthians 15:88 — abounding in the work of the Lord.
- D. Galatians 6:7; I Corinthians 15:33 (Sowing & reaping; companionships).
- E. I Peter 5:5-7 — An exhortation to humility
 1. "Gird" — be clothed, putting on a garment which was tied over others with a knot (an apron).
 2. Humility is lowliness of mind.
 3. Christians are to act, giving humility expression in serving others.
- F. James 1:27; 2:14-26
 1. Faith of itself cannot be seen, only works, and they are necessary to make faith evident.

III. FAITH IS EXEMPLIFIED IN OUR RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER:

- A. Brethren are to love one another (John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17).
 1. I Corinthians 13:4-8 — charity (love) will seek others best interest.
 2. I Peter 1:22 — love with a pure heart fervently.
 3. I Timothy 1:3-5 — charity, good conscience, faith unfeigned.
 4. I Corinthians 6:1-12 — going to law with a brother.
- B. Christians are to love their enemies (Matthew 5:43-48).
 1. Galatians 6:10 — all men.
 2. Romans 12:14, 20 — bless, feed, quench thirst.

CONCLUSION:

1. "Living by faith" involves much more than mere mental assent.
2. May we actively encourage and promote "living by faith."

FAITH STRENGTHENED THROUGH WORSHIP

BY: DAN CHAMBERS

THESIS: To show how worship increases our faith and makes us stronger.

1. Begin with defining how we will use and understand the word "worship" in this lesson.
 - a. Since we normally think of congregational worship when we hear the word "worship" that is how the term will be used today.
 - b. So, what we're really going to explore is how congregational worship increases our faith and makes us stronger.
 - c. This is not to deny the importance of private, personal worship in your Christian development — private, personal worship is as vital as congregational worship. It just will not be explored at this time.
2. We will deal with how worship strengthens us through building up our faith in two parts: first, we will explore "How worship strengthens us" and then "why sometimes worship doesn't strengthen us."

DISCUSSION:

I. HOW CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP STRENGTHENS US:

- A. From day one, congregational worship assemblies were intended and designed by God to be events through which Christians would be built up (of course, this is just one purpose of worship; the other is to commune with God through prayer, praise and thanksgiving).
 1. I Corinthians 14:3 — prophecy for the purpose of "edification, exhortation, and consolation."

- a. It is the content of the divine message which accomplishes these three goals.
- b. Today that divine message is contained in the Bible, thus when it is clearly taught and understood through Bible preaching and teaching we are edified, exhorted and consoled.
 - 1) I Thessalonians 4:18 — "words" bring "comfort"
 - 2) I Corinthians 14:26 — understandable words bring edification
 - 3) I Corinthians 14:31 — "learning brings exhortation."
 - 4) Since we gain strength through the divine message, our worship services ought to be saturated with clear and thorough teaching of God's word.

II. WHY MANY SO-CALLED "WORSHIP SERVICES" TODAY DO NOT STRENGTHEN THE WORSHIPERS:

- A. Probably all have left worship on at least one occasion less than satisfied with what happened in it — in other words, the blessings you should have received were not received.
- B. This is always a real possibility for any number of reasons. It may be something inside of you that you need to correct, or it may be something outside of you that the local church needs to correct.
 1. Something outside of you that the church needs to correct.
 - a. Sometimes a local congregation pursues an unbiblical purpose of worship that prevents the blessings from manifesting themselves.
 - 1) Entertain the world in an effort to make Christianity attractive to the world. This belief has led many churches to dress up the "worship service" in worldly clothes

making it into an "entertainment extravaganza."

- a) contemporary illustrations
 - b) This worship philosophy may draw a crowd but it doesn't build up or increase the faith of those present for a number of reasons.
 - Cheapens the message of grace in Christ.
 - Overshadows the message of grace in Christ.
 - Robs worship of the "wonder" and "awe" that is essential for worship to be "Christian."
2. Something inside of you that you need to correct.
- a. Going to worship has just become a traditional routine that we go through from time to time — its just motions we go through (meaningless ritual).
 - 1) Isaiah 1:13
 - 2) Jeremiah 6:20
 - b. Practical suggestions as to how we can prepare ourselves to be strengthened through corporate worship.

FAITH STRENGTHENED THROUGH PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

BY: PAUL VAUGHN

1. It is not possible to live without faith.
 - a. It is inevitable
 - b. The atheist has faith, not in God.
 - c. A patient has faith in the doctor.
 - d. Parents have faith in the school system.
2. Christianity is a religion of faith (Romans 10:17).
 - a. Faith in the Bible as God's Word (II Timothy 3:16,17).
 - b. Faith in Jesus as the Son of God (John 8:24).
3. Some lose their faith
 - a. Demas (II Timothy 4:10).
 - b. Those who add to the Word of God (Proverbs 30:6).
4. Faith strengthened through personal involvement.
 - a. Faith can be strengthened.
 - b. How can faith be strengthened? **THROUGH
PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT!**

DISCUSSION:

- I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PERSONALLY INVOLVED?**
 - A. It means something done personally.
 - B. It requires work.
 - C. It means that one must be busy.
 - D. It may be difficult.
 - E. It may be dangerous.
 - F. It may bring disappointment.
- II. EXAMPLE OF STRENGTHENED FAITH THROUGH PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT:**
 - A. Noah's faith was strengthened (Hebrews 11:7).
 - B. Abraham's faith was strengthened (Hebrews 11:8-19).

- C. Moses's faith was strengthened (Hebrews 11:24-29).
- D. David's faith was strengthened (I Samuel 17:1-46)
- E. Hannah's faith was strengthened (I Samuel 1:1-2:2).
- F. Esther's faith was strengthened (Esther 4:13-14).

III. WAY TO STRENGTHEN FAITH TODAY:

- A. Get personally involved in the Church.
 - 1. Become a teacher (Hebrews 4:12-14).
 - 2. Pray often for the Church, preacher and elders (I Thess. 5:17; I Chronicles 4:9,10).
 - 3. Visit the sick and elderly (Matthew 7:12).
 - 4. Attend area gospel meetings.
- B. What happens when one's faith isn't strengthened?
 - 1. They don't grow in the faith (II Peter 3:18).
 - 2. They will not be able to overcome the temptations of the world (I Corinthians 10:13).
 - 3. They become dull of hearing (Hebrews 5:11, 12).
 - 4. They may lose their faith and fall away (II Peter 2:20-22).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Are YOU personally involved in the Lord's work?
- 2. Is your faith growing?

Stand Fast In The Faith

"Now let all of you stand,

Every loyal and true remain:

Always let Christ have command,

Then a home above you'll gain."

Ellis J. Crum

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH LUKE 17:1-5

BY: CHARLES HUFF

1. Discuss text in its context.
 - a. (verse 1) — Offenses or occasions of stumbling will come, and a woe is pronounced on those who cause others to stumble.
 - b. (verse 2) — A serious matter—better than a millstone be hung around the neck of the offender and he be cast into the sea.
 - c. (verse 3) — Take heed lest you be guilty of causing the offense. If your brother trespasses against you rebuke him; and if he repents forgive him.
 - d. (verse 4) — This forgiveness is to be extended without limitation.
 - e. (verse 5) — The apostles said unto the Lord, "increase our faith."

DISCUSSION:

I. "...LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH:"

- A. We need increased faith and grace in our inter-personal relationships with other Christians.
 1. Problems of division existed in the first century church (I Cor. 1:11; 11:18-19).
 - a. The Body of Christ is made up of individual members with different personalities and peculiar problems (Isaiah 11:6-9).
 - b. We must learn to interact with love and patience (Eph. 4:1-3; James 1:20).
- B. Instead of gossiping and back-biting we need faith to obey God's word (Psalm 15:3; Proverbs 16:27-28; 25:23).
 1. Rebuke or confront the offender personally.

2. We have a personal responsibility whether we are offended or have offended another (Matthew 18:15-18; Matthew 5:23-24).
 3. As brethren we must affect restoration toward the erring (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
 - a. If we are pleasing to God we must grow in these things (Romans 14:19).
- C. We need increased faith to be like God in forgiving others.
1. What right have we to judge one who says, "I repent" — only God can know the heart (I Corinthians 2:11; James 4:11-12; Romans 14:13).
 - a. "...seven times a day...?" (Cf. Matthew 18:21-22).
 - b. Number (7) denotes completeness or perfection.
 - c. Thus, our forgiveness must be unlimited.
 2. Unless we forgive, we cannot be forgiven.
 - a. Matthew 6:9-12, 14-15
 - b. Colossians 3:12-15
 - c. Ephesians 4:31-32
 3. We must learn to forgive with cheerfulness to be like God (Luke 15:7). "...He that showeth mercy with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:8).
 - a. Matthew 5:7

II. HOW MAY WE GROW IN FAITH?

- A. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).
1. The father of an afflicted child cried out to Jesus. "...I believe; Help Thou my unbelief." (Mark 9:24)
 - a. As Christians we have saving faith, yet we admit our faith needs to increase or grow (II Thessalonians 1:3).
 - b. As our faith grows, our love for one another will grow also (I Thessalonians 4:9-10).

- c. Peter wrote many things about Christian growth (I Peter 1:22; 2:1-2, 17; 3:8-9; II Peter 3:17-18).
2. Our faith must be manifest by definite action.
 - a. James 2:1; 14-17; 3:13-18; Galatians 5:6
 - b. We also must pray for a growing faith
 - c. Jude 20-21; Ephesians 6:18; I Peter 4:7-9

CONCLUSION:

1. Surely we can all agree that our faith needs to grow
2. Let us examine ourselves in the light of God's word (II Corinthians 13:5).
3. God wills that all be reconciled to Him and to each other (Colossians 1:20-22; II Peter 3:9).

