

## Imitate That Which is Good

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the churches, or individual brethren, he did so with great love. He identified the importance of love, when he said, “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

When Paul said, “I do all things for the gospel’s sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof. Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?” (1 Cor. 9:23-24) Paul wrote to the brethren for their physical, as well as their spiritual well-being. Therefore, “If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2).”

The Apostle Paul’s life was to be imitated and so he encourages the godly, saying, “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). The things Paul endured should give us, not only hope, but also a sober look at what he meant, when he said, “Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

Paul described his life “as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; in pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Corinthians 6:4-10).

The Apostle Paul, as all men, suffered, and rejoiced in his life. No matter what took place, he kept his focus on the things above. Therefore, he was able to say, “I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).

If you have the same desire to serve the Lord, that which is required is that which was set forth by the Apostle Paul to the brethren in Thessalonica, saying, “For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and ye know” (1 Thessalonians 3:4).

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