

WALKING IN WISDOM (Colossians 4:5) Number #1

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All Scripture quotations from the Editor are from the New King James Version

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Spiritual "Addiction"

By John T. Polk II

"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love. I urge you, brethren--you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints-- that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us" (**1 Corinthians 16:13-16**). After a serious summary of what it means to follow Christ, Paul gives an example of a family who shows what it means.

"Watch" refers to open-eyed alertness either to spiritual dangers ("incoming!") or spiritual opportunities to doing good (**Galatians 6:10**). *Militarily it means "stay on guard."*

"Stand fast in the faith" means to let nothing shake our confidence, either in God's Word or our faith in obeying that Word (**1 John 5:4**). *Militarily it means "don't give ground."*

"Be brave" means to "act like a man," something sorely needed in the church of Christ and present societies! Manliness is not abusive, arrogant, or selfish behavior, but acceptance of the responsibility to lead in seeing to it that only good is being done. *Militarily it means "don't flinch or flee."*

"Be strong" means to have an aggressive defense of the Gospel of Christ (**Jude 3**). This means resisting the Devil with all his deceits (**2 Corinthians 2:10-11**), his angels (**Matthew 25:41**), and his intimidation (**1 Peter 5:6-9**). *Militarily it means "be ready for an attack or to attack!"*

"Let all that you do be done with love" gives the overriding motive that keeps a Christian above the world (**1 Thessalonians 4:1-12**). In the qualities of "love" it means "love never fails" (**1 Corinthians 13:4-8**).

These conditions prove that God expects the commitment of a Christian to be consistent and persistent. Solomon had said, "If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small" (**Proverbs 24:10**).

"The household of Stephanas" were one of the three cases Paul personally had baptized (**1 Corinthians 1:14-16**) among the "many of the Corinthians, [who upon] hearing, believed and were baptized" (**Acts 18:8**). He emphasized that it was not who did the baptizing (**1 Corinthians 1:12-15**), but who authorized the baptism (**Matthew 28:18-20**) that made a difference.

Among **"the firstfruits of Achaia"** converted to Christ, **"the household of Stephanas" "devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints."** The King James Version used "addicted" instead of "devoted." The Greek word means they "set, determined, placed" themselves in a position of serving the members of the church of Christ. They did not wait for someone to tell them what needed to be done, they took responsibility upon themselves, for obedience to Jesus will involve everyone and everything to which a person has access. **"Household"** included all within the house who were old enough to understand what it meant to be converted to Christ (**Acts 16:30-34**).

Just as on the Day of Pentecost when people were told to "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" so that they would "Be saved from this perverse generation," then "those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (**Acts 2:38-41**). "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (**Acts 2:47**). Those first members of the church immediately set about to support, encourage, and teach others (**Acts 2:44-47**). In Corinth, "the household of Stephanas" set themselves in place to do the same!

Whereupon Paul tells Corinthian Christians to **"submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us"**

(**1 Corinthians 16:16**). Theirs was not a position of authority but of example! To "**submit**" merely means to "line up with, to follow" their splendid example of what it means to be converted to Christ. Just as those "firstfruits" of conversion on Pentecost had done, so now, in Corinth, the "firstfruits" had shown the way it needs to be done!

Peter later wrote: "He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because 'All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever.' Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you" (**1 Peter 1:20-25**). It is the greatest, longest-lasting, most wonderful decision anyone can make.

-----**John T. Polk II**

Exhortations Like Epaphras Colossians 4:12

Pulpit Commentary on 2 Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 11:20 - A picture of religious impostors.

"For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face." This verse suggests five things concerning religious impostors.

I. THEY ARE TYRANNIC. "For ye suffer [bear] if a man bring you into bondage." The reference is undoubtedly to those described in **2 Corinthians 11:13**, who were false teachers in Corinth. They were enslaving the souls of men with their dogmas and rites. False teaching always makes men spiritual serfs. Heathens are slaves to their priest, fanatics are slaves to their leader, papists are slaves to their pope. True teaching makes men free men. Spiritual bondage is infinitely worse than physical or political. A man's body may be in chains, yet he may be free in spirit; but if his spirit is enslaved, he himself is in captivity. The work of a

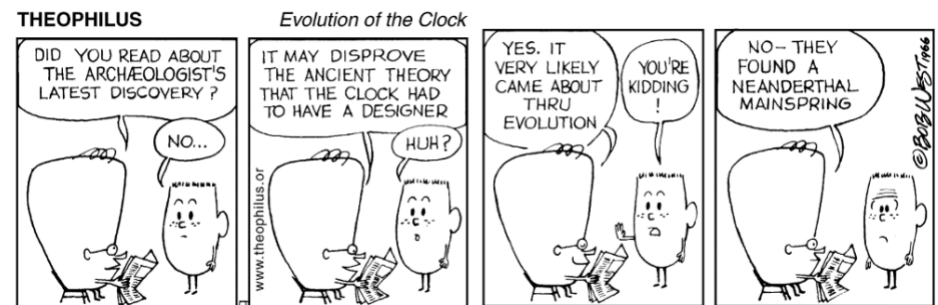
false teacher is always to subdue souls to himself; the work of the true, to win souls to Christ. Even conventional Christianity is enslaving.

II. THEY ARE RAPACIOUS. "If a man devour you." False teachers devour widows' houses. They teach for money, turn temples and churches into shops. They shear the sheep instead of feeding them. Greed is their inspiration.

III. THEY ARE CRAFTY. "If a man take of you [taketh you captive]." The expression "of you" is not in the original. The idea to me seems to be—if a man takes you in, deceives and entraps you. This is just what religious impostors do—they "take men in," they cajole men, and make them their dupes.

IV. THEY ARE ARROGANT. "If a man exalt himself." It is characteristic of false teachers that they assume great superiority. With this they endeavour to impress men by their costume, their bearing, and their pompous utterances. They arrogate a lordship over human souls.

V. THEY ARE INSOLENT. "If a man smite you on the face." This is the last form of outrage; no greater insult could be offered to a man. The religious impostor has no respect for the rights and dignities of man as man. With his absurd dogmas and arrogances he is everlastingly smiting men on "their face," on their reason, their consciences, and their self-respect.



Salted Speech Colossians 4:6

Hearts are wild creatures, that's why our ribs are cages.
Character, like a photograph, develops in darkness.