

Hope through Stewardship

Key Verse: *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*
—I Peter 4:10

Selected Scripture:
I Peter 4:1-11

BELIEVERS WHO APPRECI-ate Christ’s great sacrifice of his perfect humanity in order to provide redemption from sin will consequently desire to devote their own lives to following the principles of righteousness in their daily conduct. As fallen beings we cannot actually manifest perfection in our thoughts, words, or deeds in every particular. However, by accepting the merit of Christ’s

sacrifice as the basis for our justification, we, as New Creatures whose lives have been transformed by the influence of the Holy Spirit, will not willfully desire to practice sin. In those instances where we recognize we have fallen short of the divine standard of righteous conduct, we will promptly seek forgiveness at the throne of heavenly grace.—Heb. 4:16; I Pet. 4:1,2

“The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.”—vss. 3,4

The foregoing passage describes a period prior to our

having made a full consecration to do God's will. Although we may not have been afflicted totally by such degrading influences, to whatever degree any of those qualities might have been present in our lives, our focus should now be upon the manifestation of holiness in all of life's affairs.

Peter continues by telling us that from the divine standpoint we are dead to the world's aims and ambitions. Therefore, God judges us based upon our heart intentions and faithfulness in walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit despite our imperfections as well as the disesteem of others who might ascribe evil motives to our efforts in walking righteously. (vss. 5,6) Continuing, the apostle reminds us of God's promises that a time of future blessings for all the human family draws nearer each day. This should make us sober in our conduct and sympathetic toward the needs of all with whom we come in contact, especially the household of faith.—vss. 7-9

Our Key Verse affirms how gracious God has been to us both in spiritual and temporal matters. As stewards, we should minister unto others according to their needs as we have opportunity. Some of the ways in which many of the Lord's people fulfill their stewardship include visiting shut-ins, volunteering for projects to promote the Gospel, circulating convention recordings, creating web pages, hosting brethren, praying for others engaged in witnessing activities, transporting brethren to meetings, writing spiritual articles or poetry, visiting consecrated believers in foreign lands, providing financial support to help further spread God's Word, and assisting with humanitarian needs. All of these activities cost us something. However, if done from a joyful heart, they demonstrate a spirit of devotion to the Lord and give evidence that we are setting our affections on things above as opposed to seeking earthly pleasures. May we heed the spirit of this admonition: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."—I Cor. 4:2 ■