

Remaining in the Faith

Key Verse: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”
—II Corinthians 13:5

Selected Scripture:
II Corinthians 13:1-11

excluded from fellowship until personal acknowledgment of this sinful conduct was made and repentance occurred.—I Cor. 5:1-11

Paul also found it necessary to affirm his apostleship as well as warn the brethren against the beguilement of false teachers. (II Cor. 11:2-15) Since the Corinthian brethren had not properly addressed all the problems they faced, Paul forewarned them in this epistle that in his next visit, he would deal with such transgressions in a forceful manner.

He writes: “This is the third time I am coming to you.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare: Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.”—II Cor. 13:1-4

Our Key Verse underscores the necessity for introspection to ensure that we are manifesting the spirit of Christ in thought, word and deed. If we discover that we have been deficient in any of these areas, we should promptly repent, and with renewed diligence pursue the principles of righteousness with every fiber of our being. “Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.”—vss. 7,8, *New International Version*

Paul’s letters were addressed to specific congregations or individuals as exhortations to be internalized for developing and maintaining a character that would be pleasing to the Heavenly Father and ultimately a position in the glorified body of Christ. Accordingly, since he was an inspired servant of God, as consecrated believers we are admonished to heed the instructions contained in his epistles.

The word “finally” in verse 11 implies an advanced stage of Christian development to which we must progress. We should attain unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart and humility, and should be striving to exhibit these at all times in our walk. It is important also that we evaluate our motives in life, because, although we are unable to perform perfectly, the Lord judges us largely by our heart’s intent. How thankful we should be to have such a merciful Heavenly Father. ■