

What Must I Do To Stay Faithful

Text : **II Cor. 13: 5-9 , Heb. 10: 19-25**

INTRODUCTION :

A. We have answered the question, “What must I do to be saved?”

1. When one seeks God he realizes that He has a will for His creation.
2. Upon learning of God, the believer will seek to conform his life to God’s will.
3. Though he tries, the believer will acknowledge that he falls short of God’s glory.
4. The repentant believer will place his trust in the sacrifice of Jesus to atone for sins.
5. The believers will become strong enough that he will gladly profess it before others.
6. He will then solemnize his relationship with God thru Christ by being baptized.
7. Once reconciled to God he will remain faithful and serve Him with joy eternal.

B. We then looked at the opposite side of the coin, “What must I do to be lost?”

1. We saw that it really takes no special effort to be lost; just live like everyone else.
2. One will be lost if he tries to be good enough to be saved. (*no one is good enough*)
3. Those who seek to approach God in their own way will be lost.
4. Believers who delay obeying the gospel most often end up being lost. (*Satan works*)
5. Those who obey the gospel, but do not surrender their lives in service are lost.
6. All who reject God and his gospel are lost.
7. Those whose eyes are on the earth tend to prosper on the earth, but lose everything.

C. To those who have chosen to be saved by grace through faith the question is, “What must I do the stay faithful?”

1. Faith is not an accomplishment; it is always fluid ... gets stronger or weaker.
Rom. 4: 19-21 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; **20** yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, **21** and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.
2. Satan never stops trying to persuade Christians to abandon their faith, but our salvation depends upon our holding fast the faith through which we are saved.
 - a. **Rom. 11: 22** – Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

- b. **Col. 1: 21-23** And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, **22** yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— **23** if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, ... (cf – **Heb. 3:14**)

2. **THEREFORE :** It is of utmost importance that we continue in the faith, but how do we do that in the face of Satan's opposition ?

Let us consider 5 practical ways we can keep ourselves faithful to our commitment to God.

- I. Keep moving
- II. Keep fighting
- III. Keep in formation
- IV. Keep well supplied
- V. Keep in touch with headquarters

I. One who will keep faithful must ... keep moving.

A. Atrophy is the leading cause of the weakening and eventual death of faith.

- 1. Just as with one's physical body, faith must be exercised to stay strong.
" *Use it or lose it*"
- 2. **James 1: 2-3** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

B. Faith can no more be taken for granted than can one's marriage.

- 1. One of the leading causes of divorce after 5 years of marriage is atrophy.
 - a. Couples often begin to take each other for granted.
 - b. People must work to keep the relationship with their mate close.
- 2. One must also work to keep his relationship with God close.

C. Atrophy occurs without effort.

- 1. People get in a comfortable rut and do not exert effort.
- 2. Unless a ship stays under power, it loses the ability to stay on course. (*river barges*)

D. A body in motion tends to stay in motion unless acted upon by some outside force.

- 1. It takes much less effort to stay active than to become active. (*time allocated*)
- 2. Satan is an "outside force" who will consistently act upon the Christian.

II. One who will keep faithful must ... keep fighting. (Action with purpose)

A. Lengthy wars are lost at home rather than on the battle field.

1. ILL. ... The U.S. never lost a battle in Vietnam, but lost the war.
 - a. Public sentiment turned strongly against the war. (**TV coverage**)
 - b. War fighters were there by inscription ... counting days 'til discharge.
2. However, even dedicated soldiers must deal with battle fatigue. (*laborers are few*)
3. Even so, having no mission is even worse than lengthy deployments.

B. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world (Satan) are in an ongoing state of war.

1. Christians are repeatedly admonished to press the battle, e.g.,
 - a. **I Tim. 6: 12** – Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, (cf – **1:18**)
 - b. **Eph. 6: 10-12** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.
¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
2. We are warned that we dare not try to make peace with the enemy.
James 4: 4 – You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

C. Satan's favorite tactic is seduction, rather than direct conflict.

1. **I Pet. 2: 11**– Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly desires which wage war against the soul.
2. **I John 2: 15** – Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

D. The outcome of the war is not in doubt.

1. God allows the conflict to continue while He gathers lost souls.
II Pet. 3: 9 – The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
2. When the patience of God has been completed, the world will be destroyed.
II Pet. 3: 10 – But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

E. The scope of our Lord's war is worldwide and we are His soldiers.

1. Our command is to go into all the world and take it for Him.

Mark 16: 15 – **And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”**

2. While we are on the attack, we will not be lead astray. (*Be the aggressors.*)
3. Staying on the attack keeps us in the process of growing stronger.

** An added bonus ... armies on the attack don't have morale problems.*

III. One who will keep faithful must ... keep in the formation.**A. Successful militaries do everything in groups. (*Planes don't fly helter-skelter.*)**

1. New recruits are divided into groups for training.

- a. They eat together.
- b. They sleep together.
- c. They march together.

** Basic training appears to be all about physical conditioning, but of greater importance is teaching individuals to follow chain of command and to function as members of a unit, to be cogs in a wheel.*

2. After basic training men are put together as a squad.
 - a. Each soldier in the squad has a specific individual function.
 - b. Survival in battle depends upon each member performing his function.
3. Each squad has a function within the platoon and each platoon in the company.

B. Though military terminology is not commonly used, God has organized His troops to function as an interactive, interdependent entity.

1. When new Christians are created in Christ Jesus, God adds them to His army of believers.
 - a. **Acts 2: 38-47** ... Daily social and spiritual interaction (*meld together*)
 - b. **I Cor. 12: 12ff** ... All Christians are part of the same body (*interdependent*)
 - c. Both passages present Christians as interacting in coordinated group activities.
2. Each Christian is responsible for the welfare of every other Christian.
 - a. **Gal. 6: 2** ... By law, each Christian is required to assist every other Christian.
 - b. **Heb. 3: 13** ... Spiritually, day by day Christians must have each other's backs.

C. Our Lord requires all Christians to function as part of a cohesive unit.

1. The assembly is a necessary part of the Christian's spiritual life.

- a. **Acts 20: 7** ... Christians have always met every Sunday to remember Jesus.
- b. We're also commanded to meet for the purpose of keeping each other faithful.
Heb. 10: 23-25 **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to motivate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; ...**
- 2. HOWEVER .. just attending the regular Sunday assembly as conducted today doesn't accomplish the biblical relationship within the unit. (*squad = congregation*)
 - a. The N.T. church met together frequently ... not just weekly.
 - b. The Sunday assembly had a special purpose, but it was not the only one.
 - c. In the N.T., the assembly also included a meal together .. love feast .. **Jude 12**
- D. **As with an army, each small unit determines the strength of the whole entity.**
 - 1. Strong members make for a strong congregation. (*vise-versa .. weak make weak*)
 - 2. You cannot be weak individually without making the congregation as a whole weak.
ILL. - A runner with one strong leg and the other weak will not win the race.

IV. One who will keep faithful must ... keep well supplied.

- A. **One key to a successful military campaign is maintaining adequate supply lines.**
 - 1. Great generals are careful not to advance beyond their supplies. (*Ramses vs Hittites*)
 - 2. Conversely, a part of every war is attempts to cut the enemy's supply lines.
 - 3. Logistics management is a required course at every military college. (*degree in*)
- B. **God's army also marches on its stomach.**
 - 1. Of course, we are not considering physical food and drink.
 - 2. When tempted by Satan, Jesus replied :
Matt. 4: 4 – It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'
 - 3. The famous most famous sermon of Jesus pronounced a blessing on the hungry.
Matt. 5: 6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- C. **Regular consumption of the words of God are essential to keep one in the faith.**
Phil. 2: 15-16 **so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.**

D. In order to keep faithful, one must stay well fed on the word.

Therefore, Satan does his best to distract us from it .. to cut off our supply line.

1. Satan tries to keep us too busy to study.
2. If we allow him to cut us off from our supply lines, our faith will be defeated.

E. As well, Christians are supplied with edification through being together.**V. One who will keep faithful must ... keep in touch with headquarters.****A. When one becomes a Christian he publicly declares himself to be Satan's enemy.**

1. It is like putting on a uniform and running up the flag.
2. As soon as one is identified as the enemy, the attacks begin.
3. When hostilities begin, the first target is the enemies command and control.
 - a. When the general loses communications with troops, they become disorganized.
 - b. Hearing the voice of their commander will calm the troops in times of trouble.

B. Christians stay in touch with their commander through constant prayer.

1. The most frightening thing about losing one's mate is losing their loyal support.
2. God is the ultimate support system.
 - a. He is always there for His bride .. which is the church .. composed of Christians.
 - b. The problem is that Christians tend to lose touch with God ... not vise-versa.

CONCLUSION :**A. The keys to success in the faith are similar to those of any other effective force.**

1. Christians must stay active. (*Never allow ourselves to atrophy spiritually.*)
2. We must keep fighting the good fight of faith. (*There can be no peace with Satan.*)
3. The Christian must fight in formation. (*We do not fight as individuals.*)
4. We must stay well supplied. (*Feeding on the word is essential to survival.*)
5. Christians must keep in touch with God. (*"Never stop praying."* **I Thes 5: 17**)

B. Our eternal victory is secured – IF – we keep ourselves in the faith. (**II Tim 4:7f)****INVITATION :**

Are you in the faith ? Are you in it for the long haul ?

Lesson Text :**II Corinthians 13: 5-9**

5 Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? **6** But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test. **7** Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved. **8** For we can do nothing against the truth, but *only* for the truth. **9** For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete

Heb. 10: 19-25

19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and since we *have* a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.