

## BE THOU AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS

The above words were written to Timothy by the apostle Paul (I Tim. 4:12). They serve well as a reminder to each of us that as Christians, we must present the proper example to the world. Paul told the Corinthians, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (II Cor. 3:2). If we are to teach others the way to eternal life, it is imperative that we live that which we teach. Jesus once said, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:2-3). Many are the times that He referred to them as, "hypocrites".

How can we expect those who hear our words to actually believe that we are serious when they see actions on our part that speak otherwise. If we say that we love the Lord and His church, but then forsake the assembling of the saints at the drop of the hat (and even throw the hat down ourselves sometimes), do you think they will really believe us? If we join in with the sinful practices of those around us, pardon me if others who witness our fellowship with sin think we are hypocrites and turn away from any words of advice in spiritual matters.

Peter commanded Christian wives, to "be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear" (I Pet. 3:1-2). Though this is specifically said of Christian wives toward unbelieving husbands, the same end result can come from our conversation (manner of life) before the non-believers of the world. But, not if we present the wrong example before them.

It may be that the key to this whole picture is based upon how seriously we take the Lord, His word and His body, the church. One would have to say that obviously, if one is truly serious about these things, they would take priority over any fun and games type of activities we might encounter. If we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, as Jesus said (Matt. 6:33), we would not be setting an improper example in the first place, now would we?

So here is where we conclude: If you desire to have a home in heaven, take seriously the way you live this life, setting the example that others can follow you to heaven!

*Tillis*

## THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE

It has been said that knowledge is the key to success. Such can certainly be found to be true in numerous realms. Knowledge in financial affairs is needed if one is to be financially successful. Many times people have come into large sums of money by inheritance, winning some lottery or such, only to find themselves broke again in just a short while. They lacked the knowledge of how to make that money work for them and grow instead of flying away so fast. Knowledge is a valuable asset in dealing in foreign affairs. In war, knowledge of where the enemy is located, how strong they are and how they can be overcome is much better than blindly going off to battle, who knows where. Knowledge of the aims, needs and goals of other countries can often be used to head off a war before it even begins.

The realm in which knowledge is the most important of needs is that of serving God. It was said of John the Baptist that he would, "...give knowledge of salvation unto his people..." (Luke 1:77). Paul prayed that the Colossians would, "...be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9). And, he told Timothy that the Lord would, "...have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). Paul's sorrow for Israel was "...that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2).

Without knowledge of God's word, one cannot know and therefore cannot do what God requires of them in order to enter into the gates of heaven. Obviously, knowledge of God's word is one of the most important areas of knowledge that should take first priority in one's list of needed knowledge. That being the case, how can we go about obtaining this much needed knowledge? James tells us that if we lack wisdom, we should ask God for it (James 1:5). However, knowledge does not come that way. There is one way and one way only that one can have knowledge of God's word. That is to read it and study it diligently. Paul told Timothy to, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). We can obtain some knowledge by way of the teaching of others, but only if we do as those of Acts 17:11, and search the scriptures daily, whether those things are so. Grab the key, get knowledge of God's word.

*Tilis*