

The Individual Christian

(My Responsibility toward Other Christians)

Introduction:

When one becomes a Christian, they are added to the Lord's church and become a part of the family of God (cf. Acts 2:41-42). There are collective (church) and individual responsibilities that the Christian must meet in this new sanctified state. There is much more to being a Christian than simply stating, 'I believe in God and I attend a local church.' Being a Christian involves duty (Eph. 4:1ff). This lesson shall examine who the Christian is and then take a close look at what the individual Christian's responsibility to other Christians should be. We will discuss other individual Christian responsibilities in the coming weeks.

I. Who is the Christian?

- A.** One cleansed of sins (i.e., sanctified) (Heb. 9:22; 10:10, 22; I Cor. 1:1-2; Acts 22:16; etc.)
- B.** One who has the Spirit of God dwelling within (I Cor. 3:16).
- C.** Those who are "*enlightened*," "*tasted of the heavenly gift*," "*made partakers of the Holy Spirit*," "*tasted the good word of God*," and "*the powers of the age to come*" (Heb. 6:4-5).

II. The Individual Christian is to be:

- A.** A worker and laborer in the faith (I Thess. 1:2-3).
- B.** A "*true*" disciple (cf. Jn. 8:31).

III. What is the Individual Christian's Responsibility toward other Christians?

- A.** The Corinthian problem (they were not treating each other with love) (I Cor. 6:7ff).
- B.** Ten responsibilities that I have to my fellow Christian:
 - 1.** I am to love my fellow brother:
 - a.** I am to care for my brother's physical well being (Heb. 6:10; James 2:15; I Jn. 3:17).
 - b.** I am to care for my brother's spiritual well being (I Jn. 4:10-17).
 - 1a.** Such a love will motivate me to warn my brother when he is sin (I Thess. 5:14; Heb. 3:13).
 - 2b.** Such a love will cause me to expose a brother's sins rather than turning a blind eye to it (Eph. 5:11).
 - c.** I am to love "all men" (help physically and spiritually as there is a need) (I Thess. 3:11-13) (note that the church [my collective responsibility] is not authorized to help needy of the world).
 - 2.** I should be patient and longsuffering with my brother (I Thess. 5:14) (not 'ever-suffering' Rev. 2:20a).
 - a.** Compare Paul's admonition to the Corinthians in his first epistle to them with II Cor. 8:10; 9:1-2; II Cor. 12:19-13:2. Apparently Paul waited a year to see whether his teaching was effective.
 - b.** Compare I Thess. 5:14 with II Thess. 3:6
 - 3.** I am to consider my brother's conscience in matters of liberty (I Cor. 8:9-13).

4. I am to encourage my fellow brother when he is down (I Thess. 5:14).
5. I am to comfort my brother with words of hope (I Thess. 4:18).
6. I am to support my brother when he is weak (I Thess. 5:14) (compare Rom. 15:1).
7. I should “prefer one another (Christians)” (Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1 in its context).
8. I should not “bite and devour” (Gal. 5:15), “provoke” to anger (Gal. 5:26), “envy” (Gal. 5:26), or “hate” (Titus 3:3) my fellow brother.
9. When a brother wrongs me and then repents of his sin against me I should be willing to forgive that brother as God forgives me (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
10. When a brother continues to walk disorderly, even after the church with its elders and members have tried teaching in patience, I should “withdraw” myself from such a brother (II Thess. 3:6). Withdrawing from the disorderly occurs as a collective and individual action. The church administers the discipline by the authority of Christ (cf. I Cor. 5:1ff); however, it is the individual who must exercise the ‘withdrawal’ on a day to day basis (cf. II Thess. 3:6).

Conclusion:

The scriptures portray the individual Christian as a busy person. One who does not simply say, ‘I believe,’ but one who truly loves and considers his brother.