**How Do We Measure Faithfulness?**

David Dann – Poudre Valley e-bulletin

 Luke recounts the conversion of Lydia as follows, ***"And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.' So she persuaded us"*** (**Acts 16:15**, nKJV). Lydia's desire to be judged as one who is "**faithful to the Lord**" raises a good question. How do we measure one's faithfulness to the Lord?

 The measure of faithfulness that is often employed is one that emphasizes a Christian's attendance when it comes to the assemblies of the local church. If a brother or sister is in attendance on a regular basis, then that one is typically regarded as being faithful. While the Scriptures do teach that assembling is necessary for all who are able (cf. **Hebrews 10:24-25**), is attendance the primary measure of faithfulness? What about cases in which one is physically unable to attend the assemblies of the church? What happens when the church is unable to assemble in its normal manner for a period of time? If our faithfulness to the Lord is primarily measured by our attendance when the church assembles, what happens when the church is unable to assemble? Perhaps we need to think more deeply about what constitutes faithfulness to the Lord. Please consider what the Bible says concerning how to measure one’s faithfulness**. The faithful child of God is one who:**

 **Loves God**. When questioned concerning which was the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus said, ***“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind”*** (**Matthew 22:37**). The faithful Christian is one who is truly dedicated to the Lord. Rather than simply being an emotional response, this love motivates the child of God to trust in the Lord (**1 Timothy 4:10**), to worship Him (**John 4:24**), to search and apply His word (**Psalms 119:104, 159**) and to maintain a commitment to truth while rejecting and exposing error (**Ephesians 5:8-11**). Jesus said, ***“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him”*** (**John 14:23**). The faithful child of God is one who loves God.

 **Loves others**. After emphasizing love for God as the first and greatest commandment, Jesus went on to say, ***“And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’”*** (**Matthew 22:39**). The faithful Christian is one who truly wants what is best for others and acts accordingly. This love motivates the child of God to treat others properly (**Luke 6:31**), to patiently encourage others (**1 Thessalonians 5:14**), to help those in need (**1 John 3:16-18**), to be a godly influence on others (**Matthew 5:13-16**), to teach others the gospel (**2 Timothy 2:2)** and to correct those who are in error (**James 5:19-20**). The apostle Paul writes, ***“Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law”*** (**Romans 13:10**). The faithful child of God is one who loves others.

 **Loves righteousness**. The psalmist spoke of the Lord, saying, ***“You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions”*** (**Psalms 45:7**; cf. **Hebrews 1:9**). John writes, ***“If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him”*** (**1 John 2:29**). The faithful Christian is one who consistently follows the Lord’s example of loving righteousness by maintaining holy conduct and godliness (**2 Peter 3:11**), by following God’s instruction in the home (**Ephesians 5:33; 6:1-4**), by ***“continuing earnestly in prayer”*** (**Colossians 4:2**), by turning away from ***“the works of the flesh”*** (**Galatians 5:19-21**), by cultivating ***“the fruit of the Spirit”*** (**vv. 22-23**) and by making personal correction where needed (**1 John 1:9**). The faithful child of God is one who loves and practices righteousness.

 Conclusion: While regular attendance in the worship assemblies of the local church is a visible indication of one’s faithfulness to the Lord, it is not the whole measure of faithfulness. Each child of God must apply the word of God to his or her life in order to truly measure individual faithfulness. Remember the Lord’s message to the church in Smyrna: “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (**Revelation 2:10**). Are you faithful to the Lord?