

We are the light of the world, the salt of the earth. The Bible tells us that it is the Father who works in us to “do and to will of His good Pleasure” (Phil. 2:13), and that the Spirit give us gifts for use in the edifying of the Body, the Church. (Eph. 4:12). We are taught that it is the Holy Spirit who works in us, and His strength that brings spiritual fruit. (John 15:5)

But we are not without a part in this relationship. God leaves us with the power of choice and surrender. (Rom. 6:13, 16, 19) As we grow in Him, we develop experience with Him by trusting His Word when there are needs, temptations, and opportunities, and we learn how He works. He also sees us demonstrate our interest in walking with Him over time. (2 Pet. 3:18)

You have heard of Vitamin D? How about some “D5?” We as Christians are in a fight. We are to be an influence for Christ. We all have a little “world” around us of family, friends, contacts, connections, and even our brethren in Church who notice us, look to us, and are influenced by us.

We are indeed weak; frail; weak in the flesh; and God does indeed love us, and knows that “our frame is dust.” (Ps. 103:14). But He also promises us knowledge, wisdom (Col. 1:9) and power (Eph. 3:20, 6:10) with which to live out a life of usefulness to Him on this earth. Don't we often let ourselves “off the hook” too easily?

What about the metaphors of “warfare” (2 Cor. 10:4, 1 Pet.: 2:11) a “race”, (Heb. 12:1) a “fight” (1 Tim. 6:12)? How about the instructions about armor (Eph. 6:13), and resisting the devil (James 4:7), and such? I think if we want to become stronger Christians, someone that the Lord can use more effectively, to have a greater impact, to be more useful, we can use some supplemental “D”! We ought to commit in this new year to become more:

- 1) **Doctrinal:** Heb. 13:9a “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrine...”
 - a) Eph. 4:14: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
 - b) 2 Tim. 3:16: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
 - c) 2 Tim. 4:2-3: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
 - d) Titus 2:1: But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.
 - e) 2 John 1:9: Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.
- 2) **Devoted:** Our relationship with Jesus is very personal. How often do we make it a point to spend time with Him, to pray to Him, to ask His intervention as though He were the real Person He is?
 - a) The greatest gifts, efforts, and sacrifices are often made for personal reasons, affections, or gratitude. The more we love, appreciate, and interact with Jesus, the more affectionate our devotion to Him will become. (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:3)
- 3) **Disciplined:** Are we a “soft” bunch of soldiers sometimes?! Paul said “I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:31) and “I bring my body into subjection” (1 Cor. 9:27). He spoke of “enduring hardness, as good soldiers”. (2 Tim. 2:3)
 - a) He wrote of Christians giving with extravagant sacrifice out of their “deep poverty.” (2 Cor. 8:2)
 - b) He reminded us of Jesus, who “endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself” (Heb. 12:3)
 - c) He directs that we “renew our minds” for transformation. (Rom. 12:2)
 - d) He promises strength to overcome temptation (1 Cor. 10:13)

- e) He promises wisdom (James 1:5)
- f) He promises rewards (Matt. 10:41, I Cor. 3:14, Col. 3:24)
- g) Why don't we make a concerted, focused, determined effort to "study to show ourselves approved unto God..." (2 Tim. 2:15)
- h) Why don't we systematically study the Word? Practice sharing it? Prepare a testimony of what God has done for us? Why don't we treat this as an OBLIGATION, not just an OPTION? (John 8:31)

4) Discerning:

- a) "Baby" Christians who still let childish, selfish, expectations stand in the way of spiritually "adult" relationships with other Christians?
 - i) Are we still stuck on "milk?" (Heb. 5:12-13: ¹²For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.¹³For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.
- b) Are our senses "dulled" by
 - i) Lack of the Word (2 Pet. 1:8-9; I Pet. 2:2)
 - ii) Sinful indulgences (Rom 8:5)
 - iii) Worldly entertainment filling our minds and time? (John 2:16-17)
 - iv) No surrender to the Spirit? (Gal. 5:16)
- c) If we develop spiritual discernment over time, we will have no trouble
 - i) Handling difficult conflicts (Eph. 6:10)
 - ii) Making godly choices in complex situations (Heb. 5:14: But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.)
 - iii) Handling responsibilities (James 3:13) (Col. 4:5)
 - iv) Avoiding worldly activities and associations that diminish our influence for the Lord (James 1:27)
 - v) Avoiding false teachings, teachers, cults and ministries (Rom. 16:17)
 - vi) Settling our convictions about the Word of God (Jude 1:7; 2 Tim. 3:16)

5) Determined

- a) Armor indicates determination to survive and win (Rom. 13:12)
- b) Commitment to God (Josh. 24:15)
- c) Desire for His goals (Matt. 6:10)
- d) Motivated to try at any cost (1 Cor. 9:24)
- e) "Having done all, to stand" indicates a determination to fight to the death.
Eph. 6:13: Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

God offers forgiveness and salvation to all who believe. He demands no service, no work, for nothing we have is of sufficient use to cleanse sin, make us holy, or fit for fellowship with Him. It is only the free grace by which He saves us in Christ. But to Him who gave all, for we who had nothing, to give us everything, would we offer nothing back? Or everything?

"I wonder, have I done my best for Jesus, For He, who did so much for me."