



# Northside Proclaimer

*Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord*

1 Thessalonians 1.8

**Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!**

**April 3, 2016**

## **Character Traits of the Faithful #3**

**Bryan Garlock**

“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.” 2 Timothy 2.1-7 ESV

While Paul prepared Timothy for his coming death, he encouraged him to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. All those who carry out the Lord’s work from day to day need this strength to continue steadfastly in the faith. Paul taught young Timothy to pass the gospel along to others for safekeeping so they might be able to teach others also. These particular men were to be faithful. Therefore, Paul gave him at least three illustrations to help him identify those who were among the faithful. In this article let us notice the third illustration.

To identify how the faithful are to be like farmers, one must understand what a farmer is and does. In an article entitled, “What does a Farmer do?” one writer wrote, “... There are several kinds of farmers ranging from farmers who raise animals to farmers who grow crops. ... ‘Farmers farm for the love of farming. They love to watch and nurture the growth of plants. They love to live in the presence of animals. They love to work outdoors. They love the weather, maybe even when it is making them miserable.’ - Wendell Berry. A farmer's main goal is to produce a good crop and/or healthy animals in order to make a living and to feed the population. Farmers are responsible for all crops and livestock that are needed for us to survive. Without food, the world would slowly die, and farmers work hard every day to keep plenty of crops and animal products in the market to keep that from happening ... A farmer has various responsibilities within their particular field. Whether it is the purchasing and planting of seeds on a cash crop farm, the purchasing of quality breeding stock on an animal husbandry farm, or the diet and care of a specific type of livestock on an animal production farm, a farmer needs to have a wide knowledge base of the agricultural industry as a whole. Besides the general knowledge of planting dates, breeding cycles and harvesting periods, a farmer often needs a good working knowledge of mechanics in order to keep their equipment running and in optimal order. A strong working knowledge of the limitations and regulations of the Food and Drug Administration, state agencies, and local government is a must for a farmer, as there are many regulations placed on the agricultural industry.” (Author Unknown) “What Does a Farmer Do?” Web. 01 Apr. 2016.  
<<http://www.sokanu.com/careers/farmer/>>.

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## Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email Bryan to add announcements, thanks.
- **We need volunteers for door knocking. Please see Bryan.**
- **We need volunteers for picking folks up. Please see Bryan.**
- Make plans now to attend our gospel meeting! April 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Five Day A Week Reading Plan

Mon: 2 Kings 13-17

Tues: 2 Kings 18-22

Wed: 2 Kings 23-1 Chron. 2

Thurs: 1 Chron. 3-7

Fri: 1 Chron. 8-12

From the above short article this writer learns several things concerning farmers. The main point that stands out above the rest is the knowledge, wisdom and experience farmers must possess to be successful in their field. Without wisdom of all the particulars mentioned above, this world would not have the available crops or stock needed to sustain life.

Interestingly, every character trait that Paul set forth in 2 Timothy 2.1-7 has one thing in common: each must have knowledge of his trade. The application is simple: one cannot live the gospel nor share the gospel without first having knowledge of the gospel. This is where so many Christians fail. No wonder each generation is getting further and further away from the truth! No wonder each generation knows not God and does whatever one pleases! Biblical knowledge is not cared for nor held in reverence and awe, as it ought to be (see Judges 21.25, etc.).

Not only does the farmer have knowledge, but Paul also says he is hard-working. This means he puts to use the knowledge he has acquired. He wakes early in the morning because he knows the work that awaits him. Throughout the day he cares for and tends to every need of his crops or animals. He cannot put off his work, shift it aside or take the day off. Therefore Paul states he "ought to have the first share of the crops."

Finally, another quality of a farmer is his patience. James taught, "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5.7-8). While inspiration is perfectly clear in its wording, we must make application of James' words. Once our knowledge and wisdom from above is put to use in hard labor for the Lord, we must patiently wait for God to give the increase and for his word to take effect (1 Cor. 3.6-8; 15.58; Isaiah 55.11). Further, we must patiently endure to the end so that we may share in heavenly blessings (Rom. 8, etc.).

A faithful Christian must emulate the time and care a farmer puts in to his work because the Christian has a more important and fruitful work to accomplish. While we made mention of the rest that all Christians need from time to time in our last article, we must understand that when the opportunity affords itself we cannot shift it aside or put it off. We must be ever ready to tackle the good work our Lord has given us. As the farmer redeems the time he has been allotted, so must the Christian (Eph. 5.16).

The Lord said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few..." (Matt. 9.37). The church needs more faithful men who will be able to teach others also! BG