

What Does It Take to Go All the Way with God?
2 Timothy 2: 1 – 7
January 17, 2010

Last week I started a mini sermon series by asking the question, “Are you going all the way for God?” I was reminded how important this subject is for each of us as I witnessed the home going of Mrs. Glorraine Donaldson at Palm Bay Hospital yesterday. There was a sacred air about that hospital room because of the Christian life Mrs. Donaldson had lived, and the comfort it gave her husband and daughter in such a difficult moment.

Today, we want to see what is required to go all the way for God. Let’s look at 2 Timothy 2: 1 – 7 to find the answer (read).

If I am going all the way with God:

1. I will endure hardships along the way (2 Timothy 2: 3)

A. The key words are “I will.” Many people have a “want-to” about serving God, but until they make that conscious decision to cross the bridge from “I want to serve God” to “I will serve God,” they will never encounter the real challenges of being a Christian.

1. The first kind of Christian will travel comfortably along the Christian life until something of a hardship arises, and instead of enduring it – they run from it.

B. Peter is a good example of the differences between a “want-to” Christian and a “I-will” Christian.

1. I believe he was a “I-want” type of guy until the Day of Pentecost, and then he became a “I-will” type of guy. Before, he was mostly bluster and chest pounding, always subject to panic.

2. After Pentecost, he endured the hardships.

C. You may be sitting here saying to yourself, “I don’t think I will ever be able to endure hard times like Peter did – especially since the Pastor says they will come because I am a Christian.” Well, neither am I going to be able to endure such an experience – if I am left to sort out things myself. But there is help:

1. **2 Corinthians 1: 8 – 10** (read)

2. I’m not surprised by the news Jesus is there to help me; are you?

3. **I will endure any hardship with the help of Jesus Christ**

If I am going all the way with God...

2. I can not live as the rest of the world lives (v. 4)

A. When he/she is deployed on a mission, a soldier can not live as civilians live, with the popular emphasis on individual freedoms and personal preferences.

1. A soldier must be totally focused on his mission and his superior’s orders.

B. A Christian can not live as the world lives for much the same reasons a soldier is constrained while deployed under military orders.

2. A Christian must be totally focused on his relationship with his commander – Jesus Christ – to be successful.

If I am going all the way with God...

3. I must keep His rules (v. 5)

A. **Am I a cafeteria style Christian?** A cafeteria style Christian browses the menu of the Christian life, and chooses the rules and behaviors he wants to follow.

B. If I am choosing just a handful of rules and behaviors, while still retaining some that are holdovers from my pre-Christian life, I am not going all the way with God. Finally, if I am going all the way with God...

4. I need to do some heavy soul searching (v. 7)

A. First, let's look at verse 6, for it is the precursor to verse 7: "*It is the farmer who does the work who should get the first share of the crops.*"

1. You can not just put the Christian life on autopilot and recline in an easy chair for the rise through blue skies.

2. Actually, that is true of any relationship.

B. Now, to Verse 7: Paul tells Timothy he ought to engage in regular soul searching sessions.

1. I believe Paul understood very well the danger that a driven, high-achieving young minister like Timothy could be seduced by the praise and ego-stroking of well meaning church members.

2. He could easily begin to believe the press clippings: "Why I'm an impressive Christian; some might even say I'm a champion in Christian circles."

C. When I give in to such thinking, I am actually missing the mark of the high calling God has placed on my life.

The Christian life is an enigma wrapped in an irony: most who come to follow Christ have a limited understanding of the implications of that decision; and further, they have unrealistic expectations. Many new Christians expect blue skies and a gentle breeze at their back as they skip through fields of wild flowers on the way to a mansion on the hill top.

Little wonder, then, that many become disillusioned when they encounter hardships, struggle with temptations the same as their non Christian friends face, and the inevitable conflicts between God's Word and their selfish desires. I often wonder if there should be disclosure forms new converts should be required to sign before they set out to serve the Lord.

Are you all in with God, or are you holding back in some area of your life? The stakes are too high to not get it settled right now!

Let's pray!