

Christian Consistency

"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38, ESV)

The one who does not give should not expect to receive. The one who does give should expect that, at some point, the measure used will be the measure received. Christ is teaching about consistency. Consider a disciple who forsakes assembling with brethren for exhortation and encouragement (Heb. 10:23-25), doing good deeds to brethren and strangers (Gal. 6:9-10), participating in Christian service (Eph. 4:11-12), or walking in truth and love (1 Jno. 1:6; Eph. 5:2). According to Christ's words, what should this disciple expect to receive in equal measure? Consider the following.

1. Consistency in giving. John wrote, "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (1 Jno. 3:17) If we expect to receive good things from others, do we make it the intent of our heart to give good things to others? If not, why not? I want to give myself to my God, my brethren, and my physical family. I want to recognize that, like Christ, my role is to serve, not to be served. (Mar. 10:45) When called to serve, what is my response? Do I shrink away to the corner of the room, or even stop attending my brethren? Or, do I stand boldly and say to God, Master, Here Am I?

2. Consistency in reading, interpreting, and applying. If I truly believe 2 Tim. 3:16-17, that the scripture is the very word of God, then I cannot treat the authority of the Bible in some loose-constructionist way. (Saying, "Well, scripture doesn't say I CAN'T do this!" to justify my actions and beliefs.) The words of God mean what God intended them to mean. Scripture cannot now mean something it never meant before. We should not expect the words of the apostles or the principles of the Old Testament to fade in our own application: Ours should be most similar to the understanding and application of the first century church. Paul's exhortation to be all things to all people was for individuals to adapt to reach individuals, not meaning that the church organization should adapt. (1 Cor. 9:22)

3. Consistency in living. This poses the most challenge for us. Yet, living is the way we apply scripture. If we have misunderstood what we have read or interpreted, it will likely come through in our lives, just as bad fruit gives away a bad tree. (Luk. 6:43) Yes, we slip up, we sin, we make mistakes. But, our hope is to be tender in heart so that when we are shown our error, we will repent. How can we expect to be shown our error if our sins are "tolerated" by well-meaning brethren? Tolerate truth, not sin.