

Godly Church Members

by John Newton

A Godly church is characterized by living proofs of the Gospel, mutual love, and humble conduct, and its members strive together for the faith of the Gospel.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:20, Ephesians 4:1, Philippians 1:27, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 3:8

Topics: "Gospel Ministry", "Christian Living"

Description

John Newton emphasizes the importance of a sound and faithful Gospel ministry, urging the congregation to value their privileges and truly desire to grow in their faith. He highlights that the kingdom of God is not just in words but in power, calling for a genuine transformation in the lives of believers. Newton encourages the people to pray for grace to walk worthy of the Gospel, living out their faith in all aspects of life with humility, love, and integrity. He expresses the joy of a minister whose congregation reflects the teachings of godliness in their daily actions, contrasting it with the challenges faced when believers fall into formality, worldliness, or discord.

Transcript

July 7, 1777

Sir,

I have had a letter from your minister since his arrival at-- I hope he will be restored to you again before long, and that he and many of your place will rejoice long in each other. Those are favoured places which are blessed with a sound and faithful Gospel ministry, if the people know and consider the value of their privileges, and are really desirous of profiting by them: but the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. I hope those who profess the Gospel with you will wrestle in prayer for grace to walk worthy of it. A minister's hands are strengthened, when he can point to his people as so many living proofs that the doctrines he preaches are doctrines according to godliness; when they walk in mutual love; when each one, in their several places, manifests a humble, spiritual, upright conduct; when they are Christians, not only at church, but in the family, the shop, and the field; when they fill up their relations in life, as husbands or wives, masters or servants, parents or children, according to the rule of the word; when they are evidently a people separated from the world while conversant in it, and are careful to let their light shine before men, not only by talking, but by acting as the disciples of Christ: when they go on steadily, not by fits and starts, prizing the means of grace without resting in them: when it is thus, we can say, Now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. Then we come forth with pleasure, and our service is our delight, and we

are encouraged to hope for an increasing blessing. But if the people in whom we have rejoiced sink into formality or a worldly spirit; if they have dissensions and jealousies among themselves; if they act improperly, and give the enemies occasion to say, There, there, so would we have it; then our hearts are wounded and our zeal damped, and we know not how to speak with liberty. It is my heart's desire and prayer for you, that whether I see you, or else be absent from you, I may know that you stand fast in one spirit and one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

I am, &c,

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