

INSTRUCTIONS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Photo

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Entry 9 - 9

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Finding Friends With Faith

“Woe to him who is alone when he falls.” Ec. 4:10 NKJ. Friendships are important but all of us connect with people at different levels. Some friends are just acquaintances, while others become intimate companions who we can share our deepest thoughts with. We may even have a friend who becomes closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24). Those friends earn our trust and we can receive correction from them. Scripture says, **“Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” Pro. 27:67** Strong friendships take time to develop. They should not be taken for granted. When we find a true friend, we have found a treasure. Some people have no friends because they do not make themselves friendly (Prov. 18:24). Some people are obnoxious, prideful and self-focused; they are takers and not givers, and that drives people away. We should be strategic when choosing friends. Be friendly with everyone, but find some friends who have faith.

Some of our friends should have a level of faith that is larger than life. Those friends focus on the positive, they always anticipate God’s miraculous victory. Their words may even seem over the top, causing you to feel uncomfortable. They reach beyond what is logical into a realm of the impossible or even the ridiculous. You need some friends like that. Do you have any?

The story of Jesus’ resurrection reveals four sets of friends; some had faith and some did not. They are: 1. The women who came to the tomb. After seeing the angels and Jesus, they had amazing faith. 2. The soldiers who guarded the tomb. They should have had faith but they had to obey orders and that left no room for faith. 3. The chief priests received word of the resurrection but they refused faith. Instead, they fabricated lies to protect their interests. 4. The disciples were good friends, but some had faith and some did not. When they heard the testimony of the women and saw Jesus at a distance, some of them doubted.

If you could choose from these 4 groups of friends, which would you have? Would your friends be the women who received amazing faith, the disciples with their mixture of faith, the duty bound soldiers who were told not to have faith, or the Pharisees who twisted the truth and refused faith?

Let’s look at the story in more detail.

“On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was an earthquake, for an angel ... came ... and rolled back the stone ... The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, “do not be afraid ... go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He is risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee’” ... the women hurried away from the tomb ... Suddenly Jesus met them ... Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee ...

While the women were on their way, some of the guards ... reported to the chief priests ... the chief priests ... devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away'" ... Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee ... When they saw him [Jesus], they worshipped him; but some doubted." Mt. 28:1-17

Pharisaical Friends

Perhaps you work with people who are like the chief priests. They may even be part of your family or they may be neighbors. These people take an erroneous intellectual position. Their views may include lies, politically correct arguments, or slanderous denials of the gospel. Connecting with them can result in an attack against your faith. They can drain your spiritual strength. You may be forced to work with them or be under their government, but you should not choose to make them your close friend. Connecting with them may advance your career or give you prestige, but they may be subject to demonic deception which can undermine your faith and leave you in ruins.

Ungodly Coworker Friends

The soldiers in our story represent ungodly coworkers. It is your place to influence them but not to slide down the slippery slope of unbelief

where many of them live. They are like a flock of misguided sheep. They follow and conform to the ideals of the world like puppets on a string. They may be friendly and even kind-hearted, but if they are not established in Christ they will not take a stand for righteousness when serious issues arise. Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good. Influence them, but do not become like them.

Friends Who are Disciples

Church folk are usually disciples of Christ, but just because they attend church does not mean they have a strong faith. Some are acquaintances and even good friends but they may not inspire you to live with extraordinary faith. Some Christians speak more worry and doubt than victory and faith. Perhaps you will be the one who speaks faith into their lives. It is good for you to have some of these folks as friends but you need more than what they can offer. You need to befriend some people who have amazing faith.

Friends With Amazing Faith

If you have some friends whose faith is larger than life then you are blessed. Do not try to balance them with logic or reason. Let them speak boldly about the amazing grace and victories of God. One day they will be proven right. The women who went to the empty tomb were met by angels and the Lord. God reveals Himself to those who have a heart to believe. If these people are your close friends they

may include you as part of the group when extraordinary miracles or supernatural visitations occur.

As we study the New Testament we discover that this amazing faith grew. We see the disciples catch up with the women of faith who went to the tomb. After the day of Pentecost the eleven disciples received so much faith that they turned the world upside down.

Faith grew among the soldiers as well. Cornelius, the famous centurion, was filled with the Holy Spirit and the Philippian jailor and his family came to Christ. History reveals stories of great faith growing rapidly within the Roman army.

Even the priests experienced a great increase of faith. Scripture says:

"So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith." Acts 6:7

Take a look at your friends. If you have some with great faith then you are blessed. If your friends are not people of faith, ask the Lord to help you find some who have great faith. Then, together, you can influence those who have little or no faith. Faith comes through the hearing of God's word, the seeing of supernatural miracles and being around others who have great faith. May God give you friends like that. AΩ



Christians for Messiah Ministries

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