

Letters from James, Peter encourage faith, works

Paul's letters were not the only ones recorded in the Bible — James and Jude, half-brothers of Jesus, and the apostles Peter and John also wrote letters to Christians warning them of trouble to come and encouraging them to endure.

The need for faith was a theme in James' letter; he said faith and works go hand in hand, and both are necessary. He also said people of faith should pray to God for help, including wisdom.

In chapter 1, verses 5-8, he said, "So, if any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. But let him keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about. In fact, let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from God; he is an indecisive



sharon corcoran

• use it or lose it

man, unsteady in all his ways."

Many people believe their problems are trials from God and even worry that they have displeased Him when they are suffering.

James 1:13-15 says, "When under trial, let no one say: 'I am being tried by God.' For with evil things God cannot be tried nor does he himself try anyone. But each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been accomplished, brings forth death."

Though some trials come from

the Devil and other opposers to God's servants, many are caused by a person's own desires.

For example, Paul wrote at 1 Timothy 6:9, 10: "However, those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."

Whatever the cause of trials, enduring them and maintaining faith can bring good results. 1 Peter 1:6,7 says, "In this fact you are greatly rejoicing, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been grieved by various tri-

als, in order that the tested quality of your faith, of much greater value than gold that perishes despite its being proved by fire, may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Jesus foretold an everlasting future for his followers, but he warned them that trials and difficult times would come first.

At 2 Peter 3:3-7, his apostle reminds Christians of this: "For you know this first, that in the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.' For, according to their wish, this fact escapes their notice, that there were heavens from of old and an earth standing

compactly out of water and in the midst of water by the word of God; and by those means the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water. But by the same word the heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men."

Christians will be ridiculed by those who "according to their own desires" don't want to believe anything has changed throughout history or will change. They just want to live their life day to day without any thought of God, but just as destruction met the ungodly world of mankind in Noah's day and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, another destruction is coming.

Peter went on to remind Christians that better times would follow that destruction. Verses 12, 13 say, "awaiting and keeping close in

mind the presence of the day of God, through which the heavens being on fire will be dissolved and the elements being intensely hot will melt! But there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness will dwell."

Being righteous doesn't just happen; it requires effort. But that effort is not a burden for those who love God.

2 John verse 6 says, "And this is what love means, that we go on walking according to his commands."

Jude encouraged Christians in verses 20 and 21: "But you, beloved ones, by building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying with holy spirit, keep yourselves in God's love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view."

Voters' work isn't done when the election's over; contact legislators

Each year 125 Representatives and 40 Senators from the Kansas House and Senate descend on our Capitol city to address the needs of Kansans and establish a budget for the next year.

The 165 individuals plus five state-wide elected officials are sent to Topeka because they won the vote in November. But as a citizen of Kansas, your work isn't done there. You need to make sure your elected officials follow through on promises made and keep the priorities established during their run for political office.

As one of the individuals on the ballot back in November, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support. It is my honor to serve another four years as your State Treasurer.

It's important that we elected officials know how you feel about



lynn jenkins

• state treasurer

various issues affecting our state. As issues are discussed, you will want to stay informed and let your representatives know where you stand on the issues. To assist you, I have compiled seven helpful suggestions to help you stay connected:

1. Get to know your local senator and representative. If you befriend them before you need their help, your relationship could come in handy when you are faced with a difficult legislative matter. While legislators will do their best to help everyone, like anyone, turning

down a friend is a harder thing to do.

2. Stay connected. Write. Call. E-mail. Fax. The only way to be heard is to communicate! You can write your legislator at: Senator/Representative (Name), State Capitol Building, 300 S.W. 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612-1504.

You can also call the Capitol operator at (785) 296-0111 during session to get specific information about your representative or you can go on-line at www.KsLegisla.ture.org to find out just about anything you ever needed to know about the Kansas House or Senate.

3. Understand the issues. The more you know and understand about your issue the better chance you will have to make a strong im-

act on your legislator. Legislators deal with numerous issues during a typical session, so any information you can give them on the specifics of a bill is appreciated.

4. Arrange for meetings when your legislators are back in the district. When legislators are in Topeka, their schedules are extremely busy between committee meetings and session.

By setting up a time to discuss your issue back in the district, you will have a better chance of having their full attention, plus you will be in familiar and comfortable surroundings. Most lawmakers "return home" each weekend and many hold public forum meetings. This is a good time to visit with them.

5. Be honest and accurate. When supplying information to your representative, ensure that it is correct

and relevant and that you stay focused on the issue at hand. If you don't, you run the risk of not being believable and then you will have defeated your entire purpose.

6. Seal the deal. Once you have provided your input on an issue, try to get your legislator to commit to voting for your position. If they will not commit, stay in contact with them until they get the information necessary to make a decision.

7. Respect your legislator. Even if you are unable to persuade them on your issue, understand that they represent a vast number of people who all have varying opinions on the issues. The job of a legislator is to strike a balance between everyone and do what he or she feels is

the best for their district. Remember, our system of government is built on compromise, so nobody can win 100 percent of the time. Be patient with the system.

I hope you take time to get to know your legislators and express views on the issues that are important to you. They represent you, so do not hesitate to call, write or contact them. If I can ever assist you, please feel free to call my office at (785) 296-3171 or visit me on-line at www.KansasStateTreasurer.com.

Lynn Jenkins is the Kansas State Treasurer. She is a Certified Public Accountant and former small business owner. Call her office at (800) 432-0386.

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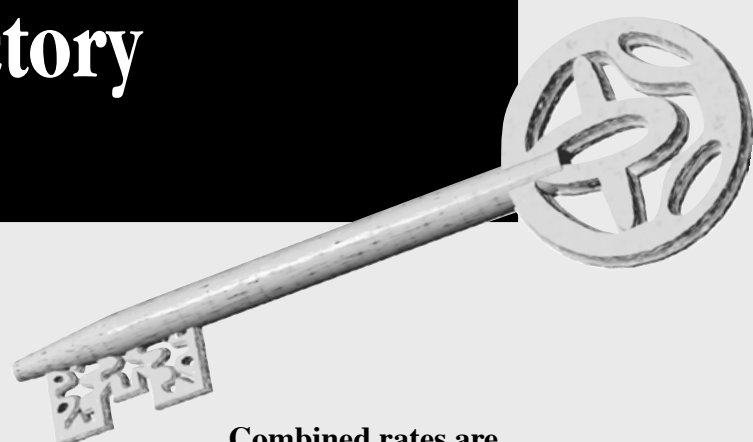
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