"FAITHFULNESS"
(A Goal for You in 1991)
12/30/90

INTRODUCTION: I Corinthians 4:1-2. A steward is a manager. As Christians, we are all stewards (managers) of what God has entrusted into our care.

***Are you a faithful steward?**

Find out by comparing your life with men whom God calls "faithful."

I. ABRAHAM - Faithful in <u>Guiding His Family</u>
(Gal. 3:9; Gen. 18:17-19)

II. JOSEPH - Faithful in <u>Resisting Temptation</u>
(Gen. 39:1-23)

III. MOSES - Faithful in <u>Leading God's Household</u> (Israel)
(Num. 12:7; Heb. 3:2-5)

IV. DANIEL - Faithful in <u>Living Above Reproach</u>
(Daniel 6:4)

V. TIMOTHY - Faithful in <u>Following Biblical Instruction</u>
(I Cor. 4:17; cp. II Tim. 3:14-15; II Tim. 2:2)

VI. PAUL - Faithful in <u>Preaching God's Word</u>
(I Tim. 1:12; II Tim. 4:1-7 -- *V. 6-7)

VII. GAIUS - Faithful in <u>Serving God's People</u>
(III John 5)

VIII. ANTIPAS - Faithful in <u>Dying for his Convictions</u>
(Rev. 2:13)

CONCLUSION:

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Whatever God has entrusted into your sphere of influence, He holds you accountable for.

We are stewards of: truth, our children, our financial resources; our bodies; our church; our jobs, etc.

The word "faithful" (pistos - the adjective form of the verb pistis, meaning faith) means:

-- To be <u>trustworthy</u>; it describes someone you can put "<u>full faith</u>" in; someone who is dependable; someone you can count on; reliable.

Hebrews 11 describes those heroes of the past who have had their names inscribed in the "Hall of Faith."

Today, we will briefly examine the lives of those whom God calls "faithful."

Psalm 12:1 - "Help, LORD, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

Prov. 20:6 - "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can

find?"

Examples of men who were not faithful: Samson; KIng Saul; Judas Iscariot; Demas (II Tim. 4:10); Diotrephes (III Jn. 9).

***Are you a faithful steward?**

Find out by comparing your life with men whom God calls "faithful."

I. ABRAHAM - Faithful in Guiding His Family (Gal. 3:9; Gen. 18:17-19)

Abraham guided his family rightly by himself doing what God said (EX: the circumcision of Ishmael and his household - Gen. 17:23-26; Ex. the offer of his son Isaac - Gen. 22:3).

Abraham guided his son Isaac by protecting him from marrying a pagan Canaanite; He prepared for his son's marriage (Gen. 24:1-9).

Abraham had the obedience of his children (Ex. Isaac - Gen. 22:3ff)

Abraham had the respect of his wife (I Pet. 3:6)

II. JOSEPH - Faithful in Resisting Temptation (Gen. 39:1-23)

Though the word "faithful" does not appear next to Joseph's name, he is called a man of "faith" (Heb. 11:2), and has a life that unquestionably points to faithfulness.

Joseph is one of the few men in the Bible who does not have a "black mark" next to his name (the other is Daniel).

No fault of Joseph is ever recorded.

Joseph was someone Potiphar could fully trust (Gn. 39:4, 6).

What was Joseph's secret to victory over temptation?

1. He said "NO" ("He refused" - v. 8)

2. He loved God (v. 9)

3. He didn't flirt (come close to) with temptation (v. 10)

4. He ran (v. 12) ("Flee youthful lusts" II Tim. 2:22)
("Flee fornication" I Cor. 6:18)

The only reason we can be faithful in resisting temptation is because God is faithful!

I Cor. 10:13 - "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

III. MOSES - Faithful in Leading God's Household (Israel)
(Num. 12:7; Heb. 3:2-5)

--Moses was faithful in identifying with the nation of Israel (Heb. 11:24-25)

--Moses was fiathful in defending his people (Acts 7:24)

--Moses was faithful in delivering his people (Acts 7:36)

--Moses was faithful in loving his people (Ex. 32:11-13)

--Moses was faithful in governing his people (Ex. 18)

--Moses was faithful in teaching his people (Lev.; Deut.)

Moses put up with bickering (murmuring); complaining; slander (Num. 12:1-2); unbelief (Numb. 14); and rebellion (Ex. Korah - Num. 16). Yet he remained faithful because he humbly trusted in God - Num. 12:3; 16:4).

IV. DANIEL - Faithful in <u>Living Above Reproach</u>
(Daniel 6:4)

Daniel was a beacon in the midst of darkness; an example of purity in the midst of perverseness; a patter of honesty in the midst of corruption.

In pagan Babylon and now in the Medo-Persian Empire, Daniel remained impeccable in the eyes of the world.

V. TIMOTHY - Faithful in <u>Following Biblical Instruction</u>
(I Cor. 4:17; cp. II Tim. 3:14-15; II Tim. 2:2)

I Cor. 4:17 - "My beloved son" = son in the faith; spiritual offspring, showing that Paul evidently led Timothy to Christ (cp. v. 14-15).

Timothy was not too proud to be taught.

He had a <u>teachable</u> spirit. God blesses such people.

II Tim. 2:2 - "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

VI. PAUL - Faithful in <u>Preaching God's Word</u>
(I Tim. 1:12; II Tim. 4:1-7 -- *V. 6-7)

Though his <u>motives</u> were often questioned by his adversaries, though his <u>message</u> was often scored, though his <u>mannerisms</u> were often offensive, Paul faithfully preached the revealed Word of God.

VII. GAIUS - Faithful in <u>Serving God's People</u>
(III John 5)

Gaius generously supplied the needs of God's ministers.

He was a man who had a testimony for his charity (v. 6)

One reason for which we are saved is to serve others!

Do you want to be great? Then SERVE! (Mt. 20:25-28)

Along with Gaius, we could include the following in the ranks of some "great" men (though relatively unknown):

--Tychicus ("a faithful minister" - Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7)

--Onesimus ("a faithful brother" - Col. 4:9)

--Silvanus ("a faithful brother" - I Pet. 5:12)

--Hananiah ("a faithful man" - Neh. 7:2)

VIII. ANTIPAS - Faithful in <u>Dying for his Convictions</u>
(Rev. 2:13)

Suffering has always been a part of Christianity.

Phil. 1:29 - "For unto you <u>it is given</u>..."

Mt. 5:11-12 - "<u>Blessed</u> are ye..."

I Pet. 4:12-19

If, in 1991 you wee called upon to give your life and die for your faith -- would you?

Can we truly answer "yes" when we are not living faithfully for what we believe?

CONCLUSION:

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Lk. 16:10)

Because Abraham was faithful, God placed the birth of a nation in his hands.

Because Joseph was faithful, God placed the house of Potipher, the jail of Egypt, then the nation of Egypt in his hands.

Because Moses was faithful, God placed the nation of Israel in his hands.

Because Daniel was faithful, God placed the Empire of Medo-Persia in his hands.

Because Paul was fiathful, God placed the Church of the Gentiles in his hands.

**What has God placed into your hands?

Great men are not great because they are talented (gifted, skilled, etc.), but because they are FAITHFUL.

Great men are not great because they achieve "success" (In the eyes of the world), but because they are FAITHFUL.

A faithful person is like a refreshing glass of cold ice water and like a cool mountain breeze (Prov. 25:13 - "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.")

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (mt. 25:21-23).

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