

# ENDURE HARDSHIP

By Keith Greer

When we want to talk about being a Christian to those outside of Christ, do we tell them the "**whole story**"? Yes, we tell them the five step plan: hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. Do we go any further?

Many times since becoming a preacher, I have been asked this question... "Why do so many who become Christians fall away?" Sadly, this does happen much too often. While no one answer can suffice let me offer some observations for your consideration.

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord," (Acts 3: 19) what does it mean to be converted? " To turn about, to turn towards. Turn again. "(Vine's Expository Dictionary, pg.239)

One must "turn towards God" to be truly converted. This implies a submission of ones will to His will. A person must be committed to following the Lord's will in his life. One's true change will be evident by his actions! Please read 2 Corinthians 5:17. A new creature! Not the same person.

When one becomes a child of God his life must exhibit such a change. Friends, loved ones, co-workers, and others will see a new focus in his life. Read Romans 12:1,2; 1 Peter 4:1-4;

"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier." (2 Timothy 2:2-4) What kind of "hardship" comes with being a Christian? Let me offer a few examples.

**TIME.** Now our time is not just for what we want to do. It will take TIME to study about God and His word. This will increase our knowledge and strengthen us for the "good fight of faith". 2 Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 6:1-11; For one to truly be converted, TIME will have to be surrendered to God!

**FRIENDS.** Sadly, some of our old friends may not like the new course we have chosen. Will we try to set the example and influence them to make the same decision in their lives? Could they weaken our resolve to remain on the "straight and narrow path"? This struggle is real and must be understood by those who desire to serve God. Yet, we do have help in achieving our objective to please God. Read Philippians 4: 13; Hebrews 13:5,6.

**SATAN.** Just because a person becomes a child of God does not mean the devil is done with him! Satan already has those in the world, but he wants us also. He will use every one of our weaknesses to defeat us and draw us back into the world. Let us take comfort; we are not in this fight alone. 1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:13-16; 2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Peter 5:7,8;

No, I'm not trying to discourage people from becoming Christians. What I'm hoping to do is to get them to remain Christians! Let us remember not to make promises that God has not given.

Whatever problems we had before going under the water, are still there when we come up, but there are two great changes. Our sins are now forgiven and God is there to help us win the battle. Satan and the world will do their dead level best to get us to return to his domain and custody. Satan cannot win the battle of our souls if we resist him. We can endure hardship! \*\*\*