

Seven Characteristics of a Faithful Church (*Colossians 1:1-8*)
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Truth Bible Church
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Introduction: In this section, Paul expresses why he is grateful to God for the Colossian church. [v. 3a: "We give thanks TO GOD..."]

→ Notice that Paul directs his praise to God, not to the Colossians themselves. **What are you thankful to God for today? Take a minute of silence to express to Him your gratitude.** Alexander MacLaren writes: "This praise is cast in the form of thanksgiving to God, as the true fountain of all that is good in men. ... The fountain, not the pitcher filled from it, should have the credit of the crystal purity and sparkling coolness of the water." (MacLaren, 23) There is a difference between BIBLICAL ENCOURAGEMENT and the secular substitute, SELF-ESTEEM. At first glance, they seem similar because both involve being encouraging, uplifting, & complimentary. But in the SELF-esteem approach, the glory is given to man, whereas BIBLICAL ENCOURAGEMENT gives the glory to GOD.= Tell people about the good qualities that you have seen in them, but make sure to direct the credit and praise to God!

[v. 3b: "...praying always for you..."] **This is a good reminder that a healthy, faithful church is a praying and prayed-for church!**

What are you praying regularly and earnestly for? What should we be praying consistently and passionately for – for ourselves, our family, our church, our country, our world?

1) A healthy church is known for their F in Christ [v. 4a: "...since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus"]

→ Their trust was not in themselves, not in their leaders, not in their families, not in their political candidates, not in their economic forecasts—not in man at all. Their trust was placed completely "in Christ."

What is the Greek word for faith? (Meaning of the word *pistis* and *peitho*) How do we have greater faith in Christ in our Church?

2) A faithful church is known for their L for all believers. [v. 4b: "...and the love which you have for all the saints"]

- Notice 3 simple things from this phrase: The love he mentions here is Agape: self-sacrificial, giving, fervent love. This kind of love was directed toward all the saints. This love is closely connected to their faith in Christ.

1. Their love was self-sacrificial [Cf. 1 John 3:16-18]

2. Their love was comprehensive [Cf. James 2:1-9]

3. Their love was proof of their faith [Cf. 1 John 3:10,14,19] Colossians 1:5⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel

Discuss agape/divine love and how we can practically show it and practice it more and more in our church?

3) A faithful church has a certain H & a certain F . [v. 5] because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel

→ In contrast to the uncertain hope that comes from trusting in your own works to merit salvation, the Christian has a CERTAIN HOPE based on the finished work of Jesus Christ!

= All that needs to be done for our salvation has already been done by Christ.

= Therefore, our hope is not a wish, it is a REALITY. "laid up for you in heaven." The verb translated "laid up" (apokeimai) has the idea of being "reserved," "put away," "stored up" or "destined for." This is same word is used in [Heb. 9:27 "It is appointed (apokeitai) for men to die once and after this comes judgment."]

= Our hope is "laid up" for us in heaven with as much certainty as death is "laid up" for men on earth!!! [Cf. 1 Peter 1:3-5]

How do you demonstrate a certain hope of heaven and future with Christ in the way you view and live your life? How can you (with God) improve your hope in life?

4) A faithful church bears F and G . [v. 6a: "in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it"]

→ Notice the phrase "constantly bearing fruit and increasing."- The Greek grammar Paul uses here—a present indicative modified by two present participles—emphasizes that the exponential expansion of the gospel is continuous and ongoing.= All over the world, Paul says, the gospel is constantly expanding and multiplying. There are three aspects of gospel expansion mentioned in this verse:

1. **Geographical Expansion:** [v.6a: "in all the world"] [Acts 1:8: "...even to the remotest part of the earth"]

2. **Quantitative Expansion:** [v.6b: "constantly bearing fruit and increasing"] - This verse says that the gospel is ALWAYS, CONSTANTLY, and CONTINUALLY saving more and more people. [John 4:35: "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest"]

3. **Qualitative Expansion:** [v.6c: "even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth."]- This verse says that the gospel is ALWAYS, CONSTANTLY, and CONTINUALLY bearing more and more fruit in the lives of those who have heard and understood the grace of God in truth. [Mt. 13:23: "The one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty"] Mt. 13:23 in Col. 1:6: ["hears and understands" ... "bears fruit"] Paul is emphasizing that spiritually healthy Christians and churches BEAR FRUIT. Spiritually healthy churches BEAR FRUIT because Jesus PROMISED to build His church: [Mt. 16:18: "...I will build my church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."]

= Beloved, Jesus didn't send us to fight a losing battle. He didn't send us on a futile mission. He didn't send us to labor in barren field.

But let's be honest: We don't believe there will be a harvest of souls in our day, do we? A spirit of pessimism and defeatism has permeated the churches, and we have lost the zeal exemplified by William Carey when he said: "Expect great things FROM God. Attempt great things FOR God."

- We forget that the WORST method of evangelism is to not do it at all. The MOST ineffective method of outreach is no outreach at all.

→ But far too often, we pessimistically reject method after method, and we apathetically pass up ministry after ministry and opportunity after opportunity.

= And we tell ourselves that our day is a day of spiritual famine, and that there is no harvest to bring in.

= We tell ourselves that “maybe someday” a time of harvest will come, but for now...why waste our time?

John 4:35a: “Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and THEN comes the harvest?’”- “When the harvest comes, I’ll get involved in outreach. But there’s still 4 months until the harvest. Might as well just wait around until THEN.” But while we’re sitting around bemoaning the fact that people in OUR day “simply aren’t interested” ...Jesus is saying TO US: **John 4:35b:** “Behold, I say to you: Lift up your eyes and LOOK on the fields, that they are white for harvest. ALREADY he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.”

→ In other words, quit sitting in your pews, telling yourself, “maybe some day, a harvest will come, and when it does, I’ll definitely do my part.”

= **Lift up your eyes and LOOK!** Look at the people in the apartment complexes all around us! Look at the souls right next to you in your office and your neighborhood. **The fields are white unto harvest!**

→ Beloved, let us shake off the defeatist, apathetic attitude which assumes there will be no fruit before we even TRY.

= If our particular corner of the Lord’s field turns out to be barren, let it not be for lack of plowing, sowing, and watering.

= If the third Great Awakening does not come in OUR day, let it not be for lack of intercessory prayer, intentional effort, and evangelistic zeal.

= If lost souls plunge into hell, may it not be without ignoring our earnest pleas that they repent and believe the good news of the gospel.

→ As Spurgeon famously put it: “If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.” → Beloved, “in all the world” the gospel is “constantly bearing fruit and increasing.”

How are you intentionally growing, progressing, and maturing in the area of evangelism/faithfulness to the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20, Acts 1:8)? With the church plant TBC is definitely growing geographically, how can we also grow quantitatively and qualitatively?

5) A faithful church understands the G _____ of God. [v.6b: “you...understood the grace of God in truth”]

→ Paul is reminding them of the pure gospel that saved them, the foundation of the gospel upon which they had taken their stand.

→ He reminds them of what they heard and believed in the PAST, in order to exhort them to live out their faith in the PRESENT and to reject the errors and heresies they would face in the FUTURE. - In chapter 1 he points back to the gospel they first heard, and then in chapter 2, he urges them not to be led astray from the power and simplicity of the gospel: **[Col. 2:8-10]**

→ Paul is trying to pre-empt the heresies he knew they would encounter by reminding them that they already heard and received the truth. In v.6, when he says they “heard,” and “understood” he uses aorist tense verbs, to signal that they already fully heard and correctly understood the truth. So there is no need for the so-called “higher knowledge” the false teachers were promoting.

→ In fact, in front of the word for “understand,” Paul adds a pre-fix which strengthens the meaning: They FULLY understood the grace of God in TRUTH!

→ In our day, there are still false teachers telling you that the Word of God and the indwelling Spirit is not enough. They’re telling you their new philosophical, psychological, or sociological theory has some sort of “secret sauce” that can lift you to a higher plane, solve your problems, and help you to REALLY understand. But Col. 2:10 says you are COMPLETE in Christ, and our verse here in Col. 1:6 says that if you heard and understood the gospel, you heard and understood the grace of God IN TRUTH.

*** There are two opposite errors that can lead to an improper understanding of “grace.”**

1. Legalism (“pharisaism”): When we add to Scripture and try to earn God’s favor by keeping man-made rules. **[Mat. 23:23-28]** **[1 Cor. 4:5-7]** **[Col. 2:20-23]**

= The danger of LEGALISM is that it shifts the emphasis from loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength to keeping a bunch of man-made rules which “are of no value against fleshly indulgence.”

2. Licentiousness (“antinomianism”): When we subtract from Scripture and use grace as an excuse to sin. **[Rom. 6:2]** **[Titus 2:11-15]**

→ Sadly, in many American churches, the salt has lost its saltiness. Far too many pastors wink and nod at sin while cloaking their cowardice and compromise in the name of “grace.”

→ But according to Titus 2:11-15, REAL grace “instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.”

→ And REAL grace commands pastors: “These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

= **If we want revival, we need to take the shepherd's staff away from cowards and compromisers, and give it to men of gentle courage.** Colossians 1:8 ⁸ and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

→ So to be a faithful church, we need to understand the grace of God in truth...avoiding both legalism and licentiousness.

How does we come to better understand the GRACE of God in truth, practice/extend the grace of God in truth, and teach the grace of God in truth to our kids?

6) A faithful church learns from godly T _____ . [v.7] just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,

- Epaphras was a true and faithful servant of Christ who had accurately passed on the apostolic gospel.

= A healthy church seeks the teaching of godly men who are faithful communicators of “the faith once and for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). **[2 Tim. 2:1-2]**

What godly teachers has the Lord used in your life that you are thankful for and how are you emulating their impact towards you in others?

7) A faithful church walks in the F _____ of the S _____ [v.8] and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

- Paul says that their love was “in” the Spirit, meaning that their thoughts, words, and deeds were done IN the power of the Holy Spirit. **[cf. Gal. 5:22]**

What fruit/fruits of the Spirit are you weakest in that we can pray for you to know and grow in?

Application: How are we doing? Are these 7 marks true of us? How is our faith? Our love? Our hope? Our fruit? Our understanding? Our learning? Our walk in the Spirit?

Seven Characteristics of a Faithful Church

Colossians 1:1-8

* *This morning, I want to direct our hearts and minds to Colossians 1:3-8, which is going to give us:*

title slide

Seven Characteristics of a Healthy Church

[Colossians 1:3-8]

- In this section, Paul expresses why he is grateful to God for the Colossian church.

- *And by studying his expression of thankfulness, we'll glean "7 Characteristics of a Faithful Church."*

Some Introductory Thoughts:

[v. 3a: "We give thanks TO GOD..."]

→ Notice that Paul directs his praise *to God*, not to the Colossians themselves.

- He doesn't flatter the Colossians, nor congratulate them as if *they* had been the ones to produce these characteristics in themselves.

- Rather, he thanks the One to whom all the credit is due: "to God."

Alexander MacLaren writes: "This praise is cast in the form of thanksgiving to God, as the true fountain of all that is good in men. ... The fountain, not the pitcher filled from it, should have the credit of the crystal purity and sparkling coolness of the water." (MacLaren, 23)

→ This is the difference between BIBLICAL ENCOURAGEMENT and the secular substitute, SELF-ESTEEM.

→ At first glance, they seem similar because both involve being encouraging, uplifting, & complimentary.

→ But in the SELF-esteem approach, the glory is given to man, whereas BIBLICAL ENCOURAGEMENT gives the glory to GOD.

= Tell people about the good qualities that you have seen in them, but make sure to direct the credit and praise to God!

[v. 3b: "...praying always for you..."]

= This is a good reminder that a healthy, faithful church is a praying and prayed-for church!

* *Now, with those introductory thoughts in mind, let's look at the "7 characteristics of a faithful church."*

* *The first two characteristics we'll look at are both found in verse 4 and introduced by Paul's statement that he had "heard" of their faith and love: [vv.3-4]*

*****first characteristic*****

1) A healthy church is known for their faith in Christ

[v. 4a: "...since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus"]

→ Epaphras, in his report to Paul, was able to summarize the church by saying that their faith was "in" Christ.

→ Their trust was not in themselves, not in their leaders, not in their families, not in their political candidates, not in their economic forecasts—not in man at all.

= Their trust was placed completely "in Christ."

*****second characteristic*****

2) A faithful church is known for their love for all believers.

[v. 4b: "...and the love which you have for all the saints"]

→ I want you to notice 3 simple things from this phrase:

- The love he mentions here is Agape: self-sacrificial, giving, fervent love.
- This kind of love was directed toward *all* the saints.
- This love is closely connected in this sentence to their faith in Christ.

→ In other words:

1. Their love was self-sacrificial
2. Their love was comprehensive
3. Their love was proof of their faith

*** Their love was self-sacrificial.**

-For Paul to say that they "agape-loved" all the saints, there must have been some very tangible and noticeable expressions of that love.

[Cf. 1 John 3:16-18]

*** Their love was comprehensive**

- In other words, the Colossians were known for having a self-sacrificial, giving, and fervent love for every fellow believer, without exception.

[Cf. James 2:1-9]

= Favoritism and partiality are forbidden in Christ's church.

*** Their love was proof of their faith**

-Throughout Scripture, love for fellow believers is viewed as the inevitable result of faith in Christ.

[Cf. 1 John 3:10,14,19]

*****third characteristic*****

3) A faithful church has a certain hope & a certain future.

[v. 5]

→ One of the characteristics of all the Cults is that they teach an *uncertain hope*.

- Since they all teach salvation by works in one form or another, an individual can never be sure if he has been religious enough, good enough, or worked enough to merit heaven.

- For the cults, “hope” is just a wish. “I *hope* I’ve done enough make it to heaven.”

- **Illus:** When, on my first trip to Russia, I spoke with a Russian Orthodox Priest for almost two hours, this came out clearly. I asked him if he knew he was saved. He said, “No, but I hope I am.”

→ **But in contrast to the uncertain hope that comes from trusting in your own works to merit salvation, the Christian has a CERTAIN HOPE based on the finished work of Jesus Christ!**

= All that needs to be done for our salvation has already been done by Christ.

= Therefore, our hope is not a wish, it is a REALITY.

→ “laid up for you in heaven:” The verb translated “laid up” (apokeimai) has the idea of being “reserved,” “put away,” “stored up” or “destined for.”

→ **The same word is used in Heb. 9:27.**

[Heb. 9:27] “It is *appointed* (apokeitai) for men to die once and after this comes judgment.”]

= Our hope is “laid up” for us in heaven with as much certainty as death is “laid up” for men on earth!!!

[Cf. 1 Peter 1:3-5]

*****fourth characteristic*****

4) A faithful church bears fruit and grows.

[v.6a: “in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it”]

→ Notice the phrase “constantly bearing fruit and increasing.”

- The Greek grammar Paul uses here—a present indicative modified by two present participles—emphasizes that the exponential expansion of the gospel is continuous and ongoing.

= **All over the world, Paul says, the gospel is constantly expanding and multiplying.**

→ There are three aspects of gospel expansion mentioned in this verse:

*****3 aspects*****

1. Geographical Expansion:

[v.6a: “in all the world”]

2. Quantitative Expansion:

[v.6b: “constantly bearing fruit and increasing”]

3. Qualitative Expansion:

[v.6c: “even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth.”]

→ How exciting is the reality of **GEOGRAPHICAL** expansion?

- This verse says that the gospel is ALWAYS, CONSTANTLY, and CONTINUALLY penetrating formerly unreached areas of the world.

- The words of Jesus are being fulfilled when He said:

[Acts 1:8: “...even to the remotest part of the earth”]

→ How exciting is the reality of **QUANTITATIVE** expansion?

- This verse says that the gospel is ALWAYS, CONSTANTLY, and CONTINUALLY saving more and more people.

- The words of Jesus are being fulfilled when He said:

[John 4:35: “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest”]

→ How exciting is the reality of **QUALITATIVE** expansion?

- This verse says that the gospel is ALWAYS, CONSTANTLY, and CONTINUALLY bearing more and more fruit in the lives of those who have heard and understood the grace of God in truth.

- The words of Jesus are being fulfilled when He said:

[Mt. 13:23: “The one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty”]

→ Note that Paul clearly references Mt. 13:23 in Col. 1:6:

[“hears and understands” ... “bears fruit”]

- By citing Mt. 13:23, Paul is emphasizing that spiritually healthy Christians and churches BEAR FRUIT.

→ Spiritually healthy churches BEAR FRUIT because Jesus PROMISED to build His church:

[Mt. 16:18: "...I will build my church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."]

= Beloved, Jesus didn't send us to fight a losing battle. He didn't send us on a futile mission. He didn't send us to labor in barren field.

* But let's be honest: We don't believe there will be a harvest of souls in our day, do we?

* A spirit of pessimism and defeatism has permeated the churches, and we have lost the zeal exemplified by William Carey when he said: *"Expect great things FROM God. Attempt great things FOR God."*

→ Instead, we sigh, shake our heads, and bemoan the "fact" that the fields are NOT white unto harvest.

→ When someone suggests a means or a method of sharing the gospel, we dismiss it, because we're convinced THAT particular method of evangelism "doesn't work."

- But do we come up with a better alternative, and then eagerly and faithfully implement it? NO.

- We forget that the WORST method of evangelism is to not do it at all. The MOST ineffective method of outreach is no outreach at all.

→ But far too often, we pessimistically reject method after method, and we apathetically pass up ministry after ministry and opportunity after opportunity.

= And we tell ourselves that our day is a day of spiritual famine, and that there is no harvest to bring in.

= We tell ourselves that "maybe someday" a time of harvest will come, but for now...why waste our time?

* Sadly, the words of Christ in John 4:35 are very true of us:

[John 4:35a: "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and THEN comes the harvest?']

- That is EXACTLY what we think when it comes to evangelism:

- "When the harvest comes, I'll get involved in outreach. But there's still 4 months until the harvest. Might as well just wait around until THEN."

→ But while we're sitting around bemoaning the fact that people in OUR day "simply aren't interested" ...

...Jesus is saying TO US:

[John 4:35b: "Behold, I say to you: Lift up your eyes and LOOK on the fields, that they are white for harvest. ALREADY he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together."]

→ In other words, quit sitting in your pews, telling yourself, “maybe some day, a harvest will come, and when it does, I’ll definitely do my part.”

= **Lift up your eyes and LOOK!** Look at the people in the apartment complexes all around us! Look at the souls right next to you in your office and your neighborhood. **The fields are white unto harvest!**

→ Beloved, let us shake off the defeatist, apathetic attitude which assumes there will be no fruit before we even TRY.

= If our particular corner of the Lord’s field turns out to be barren, let it not be for lack of plowing, sowing, and watering.

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→ Beloved, “in all the world” the gospel is “constantly bearing fruit and increasing.” **So a healthy church bears fruit and grows.**

*****fifth characteristic*****

5) A faithful church understands the grace of God.

[v.6b: “you...understood the grace of God in truth”]

→ Notice that a similar phrase is repeated in vv. 5 and 6:

[v.5b: “which you previously heard”]

[v.6b: “since the day you heard”]

→ Paul is reminding them of the pure gospel that saved them, the foundation of the gospel upon which they had taken their stand.

→ He reminds them of what they heard and believed in the PAST, in order to exhort them to live out their faith in the PRESENT and to reject the errors and heresies they would face in the FUTURE.

- In chapter 1 he points back to the gospel they first heard, and then in chapter 2, he urges them not to be led astray from the power and simplicity of the gospel:

[Col. 2:8-10]

→ Paul is trying to pre-empt the heresies he knew they would encounter by reminding them that they already heard and received the truth.

→ In v.6, when he says they “heard,” and “understood” he uses aorist tense verbs, to signal that they already fully heard and correctly understood the truth.

= So there is no need for the so-called “higher knowledge” the false teachers were promoting.

→ In fact, in front of the word for “understand,” Paul adds a pre-fix which strengthens the meaning:

= They FULLY understood the grace of God in TRUTH!

→ In the book of Colossians, there are MANY references to “knowledge,” learning, truth, hearing, etc.

- That’s because false teachers were promoting a form of proto-gnosticism which claimed to offer to take people to a higher plane of spiritual life through “higher knowledge.”

= Paul’s answer to this challenge is to point out that the gospel of Jesus Christ IS the highest knowledge! There is nothing higher! You don’t get any more “intellectual” than this!

→ The false teachers who were peddling their “higher knowledge” were like the tailors of the “Emperors Clothes” by Hans Christian Anderson:

- Big promises of a glorious product, a lot of noise, work, and movement—producing nothing.

→ Like the tailors of this childhood fable, the false teachers were promising to clothe the Colossians with glorious “secret knowledge,” but were in reality attempting to strip them of the precious garments of the gospel!

→ In our day, there are still false teachers telling you that the Word of God and the indwelling Spirit is not enough.

→ They’re telling you their new philosophical, psychological, or sociological theory has some sort of “secret sauce” that can lift you to a higher plane, solve your problems, and help you to REALLY understand.

= But Col. 2:10 says you are COMPLETE in Christ, and our verse here in Col. 1:6 says that if you heard and understood the gospel, you heard and understood the grace of God IN TRUTH.

* Note also that Paul emphasizes having a CORRECT understanding of what GRACE really is: “you UNDERSTOOD the GRACE of God in TRUTH.”

** There are two opposite errors that can lead to an improper understanding of “grace.”*

*****Legalism*****

1. Legalism (“pharisaism”): When we add to Scripture and try to earn God’s favor by keeping man-made rules.

[Mat. 23:23-28]

[1 Cor. 4:5-7]

[Col. 2:20-23]

= The danger of LEGALISM is that it shifts the emphasis from loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength to keeping a bunch of man-made rules which "are of no value against fleshly indulgence."

*****Licentiousness*****

2. Licentiousness ("antinomianism"): When we subtract from Scripture and use grace as an excuse to sin.

[Rom. 6:2]

[Titus 2:11-15]

→ Sadly, in many American churches, the salt has lost its saltiness. Far too many pastors wink and nod at sin while cloaking their cowardice and compromise in the name of "grace."

→ But according to Titus 2:11-15, REAL grace "instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age."

→ And REAL grace commands pastors: "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you."

= If we want revival, we need to take the shepherd's staff away from cowards and compromisers, and give it to men of gentle courage.

→ So to be a faithful church, we need to understand the grace of God in truth...avoiding both legalism and licentiousness.

*****sixth characteristic*****

6) A faithful church learns from godly teachers.

[v.7]

- Epaphras was a true and faithful servant of Christ who had accurately passed on the apostolic gospel.

= A healthy church seeks the teaching of godly men who are faithful communicators of "the faith once and for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

[2 Tim. 2:1-2]

*****seventh characteristic*****

7) A faithful church walks in the fruit of the Spirit

[v.8]

- Paul says that their love was "in" the Spirit, meaning that their thoughts, words, and deeds were done IN the power of the Holy Spirit.

[cf. Gal. 5:22]

*****7 Characteristics*****

How are we doing? Are these 7 marks true of us? How is our faith? Our love? Our hope? Our fruit? Our understanding? Our learning? Our walk in the Spirit? *Let's Pray

Colossians 1:1-8

7 Characteristics of a Faithful Church

Col. 1:1-8: 7 Characteristics of a Faithful Church

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Col. 1:1-8: 7 Characteristics of a Faithful Church

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Col. 1:1-8: 7 Characteristics of a Faithful Church

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 - **Qualitative Expansion:** [“even as it has been doing in you also...”]

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4. A faithful church bears fruit and grows. (v. 6a)
5. A faithful church understands the grace of God. (v.6b)

Col. 1:1-8: 7 Characteristics of a Faithful Church

1. A faithful church is known for their faith in Christ (v.4a)
2. A faithful church is known for their love for all believers (v.4b)
3. A faithful church has a certain hope and certain future (v.5)
4. A faithful church bears fruit and grows. (v. 6a)
5. A faithful church understands the grace of God. (v.6b)
 - **Avoid Legalism** (“pharisaism”): When we add to Scripture and try to earn God’s favor by keeping man-made rules.
 - **Avoid Licentiousness** (“antinomianism”): When we subtract from Scripture and use grace as an excuse to sin.

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7. A faithful church walks in the fruit of the Spirit. (v. 8)



How are we doing in these 7 areas?

- How is our faith?
- Our love?
- Our hope?
- Our fruit?
- Our understanding?
- Our learning?
- Our walk in the Spirit?