**Praise Your Brothers and Sisters!**

*by Stan Cox*

Upon Paul’s imprisonment in Rome, the church in Philippi, concerned about him, determined to send help to him. They sent a man named Epaphroditus, who was faithful to his task, and arrived in Rome with their gifts for the beloved apostle.

His trip to Rome was an eventful one. He had become ill, *“almost to death,”* causing great concern not only for Paul, but also for the church in Philippi who had heard of his sickness. But, he recovered, and Paul sent him back to his brethren in Philippi, that they might rejoice at seeing him alive and healthy.

Paul had great respect for Epaphroditus, and wrote of him in glowing terms. Of him, Paul wrote, *“my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need”* (Philippians 2:25).

Because of his faithfulness, he was to be praised. Paul wrote, *“because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me”* (2:30).

Paul instructed the Philippians, *“Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem”* (2:29). With this admonition, we note in the phrase *“such men”* that there are others who are worthy of the same praise.

Paul’s writings are filled with commendations of fellow Christians. He commended Phoebe, *“for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also”* (Romans 16:2). Priscilla and Acquila, *“who risked their own necks for my life”* (Romans 16:4). Mary, *“who labored much for us”* (Romans 16:6). Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis *“who labored much in the Lord”* (Romans 16:12). Timothy, *“for he does the work of the Lord”* (1 Corinthians 16:10); *“for I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state…But you know his proven character”* (Philippians 2:20-22). The household of Stephanas, *“they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints”* (1 Corinthians 16:15). Fortunatus and Achaicus *“for they refreshed by spirit and yours”* (1 Corinthians 16:18). Tychicus, *“a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:21). Onesimus *“a faithful and beloved brother”* (Colossians 4:9). Aristarchus, Mark, Justus *“they have proved to be a comfort to me”* (Colossians 4:10-11). Epaphras, *“always laboring fervently for you in prayers…he has a great zeal for you”* (Colossians 4:12-13), *“my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus”* (Philemon 23). Onesiphorus, *“for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain…you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus”* (2 Timothy 1:16-18). Titus, *“a true son in our common faith”* (Titus 1:4). Philemon *“our beloved friend and fellow laborer”* (Philemon 1). A lengthy, but not exhaustive list.

Each of these individuals have been immortalized by the Spirit’s inspiration. Of most we know very little. But, they were faithful to Christ and Paul His apostle, and therefore were worthy of the praise they received.

Paul’s praise not only validated their efforts in the work of the Lord, his words also elevated them in the eyes of the brethren. They held them in esteem at Paul’s urging. This indicates how very important and helpful it is to praise the faithful. Those who are worthy should be encouraged. They should be acknowledged, that others know of their work and appreciate their efforts for the Lord. This one way to endeavor *“to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Ephesians 4:3). **Praise your brothers and sisters!**

**Character Traits of Satan**

*by Marc Gibson*

Satan is not a proper role model for anyone today, but that is not to say that we cannot learn something from his character. We can learn from Satan what not to be, and what character traits not to imitate. Learning the danger of negative character traits is just as effective, and necessary, as pointing out positive character traits. Satan may not be very happy with us examining his bad character, but it is for our own good. If there be any satanic characteristics in you, I suggest that you make some drastic changes.

LIAR – Jesus said that when the devil speaks a lie, “he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). Satan influenced the serpent to lie to Eve in order to deceive her (Genesis 3:4). Satan “deceives the whole world” with his lies and accusations against God and His people (Revelation 12:9-10). Satan opposes God who is pure truth and righteousness. Satan must lie to turn the hearts of people away from God. Those who are habitual liars are the children of Satan today. The sad fact is that “all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). Satan, the father of liars, will also be in this eternal torment (20:10). We are to put away lying, and speak truth to one another (Ephesians 4:25).

COWARD – When faced with the unassailable truth, Satan runs like a coward. He aimed three great temptations at Jesus who was enduring physical and mental exhaustion, and when defeated at every turn, Satan turned tail and left (Matthew 4:1-11). We must not take Satan for granted, for he “walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). But for all his bullying, Satan will not stay and fight if he is resisted forcefully. We are told to “resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). We are to “resist him, steadfast in the faith” (1 Peter 5:9). If we stand as brave children of God armed with divine truth, Satan will turn coward and flee. Satan seeks the cowardly weakling who will fall into his traps, but the true Christian will be bold and courageous.

MURDERER – Satan has no regard for anyone else but himself. Jesus said that the devil “was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). Behind Satan is strewn countless broken lives and reputations. The Christian can be a murderer by hating his brother (1 John 3:15). If this be our attitude, we are the children of the devil (v. 10).

PRIDEFUL – Satan arrogantly believes he can defeat God and truth. Pride is noted as the “condemnation of the devil” (1 Timothy 3:6). If we harbor pride in our heart, we have a characteristic of Satan in ourselves. For this we should not be proud, but ashamed, and seek God’s forgiveness. Taking on the character traits of Satan will put you far away from the fellowship of God and faithful brethren, and put you among bad company.