

Should God Expect Less? By Paul R. Blake

We as a nation have certain expectations of our government. We pay taxes with the expectation that the government will use those funds honestly. We expect our leaders to protect the civilian population from military oppressors and to render assistance to our friends. We respect and comply with civil law, and expect our government to punish those who do not. We require fairness in government, and we want our judges to render consistent verdicts. We expect our leaders to be examples for the rest of the population, living above reproach and scandal.

However, we have come to the point where we will settle for much less than we expect. We pay taxes knowing full well that some of those funds are going to be misused or given away to undeserving, mismanaged corporations and to persons who refuse honest labor. We witnessed our executive branch of government eviscerate the military and ignore the suffering of our international friends. Though we obey the laws, we know that many others will not, and that our judges will not punish the wicked and violent. Though we treat others with fairness, we continually see judges and political leaders treat special interest groups and outspoken minorities with blatant partiality. To cap it off, we have government leaders who used their office to fornicate, steal from tax payers, cheat in business, and to tell lies. We now expect less from our government even though we have given up much more of our time, money, and rights to it.

But before we get to feeling self-righteous toward civil government, we need to ask ourselves whether or not God has come to expect less of you and me than He once expected in the past. Some professed Christians seem to think so, or at least, they certainly are giving Him less than He expects.

God outlined His expectations for His children in His word (2Tim. 3:14-17). He expects His children to be honest stewards of what He has given them, using their means wisely that they might have somewhat to give to the church and to the needy. He expects His children, in their capacity as the Lord's army, to fight valiantly against sin and to gather in souls for the Kingdom. He expects His children to respect all of His laws without partiality, including the commands to study and assemble. God expects His children to live above the immorality of the world, setting an example of purity and quality of character.

Yet based upon the examples of some, God simply must lower His expectations. We have become addicted to the "good life" of materialism and must work extra hours to pay for it; so, God must expect to see less of us at worship and Bible classes. We maintain high debt and must pay our bills, so God must expect less in the collection plate. We have little time or interest in Bible study at home or at services, and therefore are unprepared to do battle with sin and are poor soldiers in soul winning skirmishes. God will simply have find others more capable and get used to expecting fewer victories on the front lines. We live in an amoral world full of constantly shifting values, and we have absorbed the world's attitudes toward evil. God is just going to have to accept our garments of white with a few yellow stains and dingy gray collars. He really doesn't expect us to be an example that will lead the lost to Christ. God may have to revise what He wants of the 21st century Christian and learn to expect less. Nonsense!

In Psalm 50:16-23, God upbraids His children of Israel by asking, "What right do you have to declare my statutes or take my covenant into your mouth?" He tells them that they have been involved in thievery, adultery, dishonesty, and gossip, and He says, "These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought that I was... like you. But I will reprove you... consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces... To him that orders his conduct aright, I will show the salvation of God." God is not going to accept less, because He said He was not going to accept less (Luke 17:10; 1Peter 4:18; Heb. 12:1-4; Rom. 12:1-2; Luke 14:15-24; 2Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 1:16, 3:8; Matt. 7:21-23; 1Cor. 15:58).

God is neither going to expect less nor accept less from us than our all. May we become wise to this fact before another week passes. May we live up to God's expectations rather than hoping that He will lower His expectations of what He wants of us. Pray for the strength to become more than just a name on a membership roster. Study to develop a head full of Bible knowledge and

a heart filled with the wisdom of God. And then walk, not like the weak and worldly, but rather like our Savior Jesus Christ. (Originally written March 1994)

**A Moments Wisdom:
Oldies, but Goodies**

- Don't let your worries get the best of you; Remember, Moses started out as a basket case.
- Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited -- until you try to sit in their pews.
- Many folks want to serve God, But only as advisers.
- It is easier to preach ten sermons, than it is to live one.
- Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on the front door forever.
- Quit complaining about the local church; if it was perfect, you couldn't belong.
- If a congregation wants a better preacher, it only needs to pray for the one it has.
- We're called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.
- God Himself doesn't propose to judge a man until he is dead. So why should you?
- Some minds are like concrete -- thoroughly mixed up and permanently set.
- Peace starts with a smile.
- I don't know why some people change churches. What difference does it make which one they stay home from?
- 'Stop, Drop, and Roll' won't work in Hell.
- Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous.
- Don't put a question mark where God put a period.
- Don't wait for six strong men to take you into the church building.
- Forbidden fruits create many jams.
- God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.
- God grades on the cross, not the curve.
- God loves everyone, but He probably prefers 'fruits of the spirit' over 'religious nuts.'
- God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.
- He who angers you, controls you.
- Prayer: Don't give God instructions, just report for duty!
- The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.
- The will of God never takes you to where the grace of God will not protect you.
- We don't change the message; the message changes us.
- You can tell how big a person is by what it takes to discourage him.
- The best mathematical equation ever seen: 1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given.
- If joy is not rooted in the soil of suffering, it is shallow.
- No amount of good works, wisdom, and discernment in matters of church discipline, patient endurance in hardship, hatred of sin, or sound doctrine, can ever make up for a lack of love (1Cor. 13:1-3).
- Death is that final separation from all we have worked for, all that we have built up, all that is near and dear to us. It is too bad that dying is the last thing we do, because it could teach us so much about living (Ecc. 9:10).