

## **Passing the Baton**

In his book *Straight Talk*, Dr. James Dobson wrote:

*"According to the Christian values which govern my life, my most important reason for living is to get the baton — the gospel — safely in the hands of my children. Of course, I want to place it in as many other hands as possible, and I'm deeply devoted to the ministry . . . Nevertheless, my number one responsibility is to evangelize my own children. In the words of my dad, everything else appears 'pale and washed out' when compared with that fervent desire. Unless my son and daughter grasp the faith and take it with them around the track, it matters little how fast they run. Being first across the finish line is meaningless unless they carry the baton with them."*

*"This mission of introducing one's children to the Christian faith can be likened to a three-man relay race. First, your father runs his lap around the track, carrying the baton, which represents the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the appropriate moment, he hands the baton to you, and you begin your journey around the track. Then finally, the time will come when you must get the baton safely in the hands of your child. But as any track coach will testify, relay races are won or lost in the transfer of the baton. There is a critical moment when all can be lost by a fumble or miscalculation. The baton is rarely dropped on the back side of the track when the runner has it firmly in his grasp. If failure is to occur, it will likely happen in the exchange between generations!"*

What are we as parents doing to be sure we place the baton of the gospel firmly in the hands of our children? We — especially fathers — are commanded to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). We need to all be like Abraham, whom God said would "command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice" (Genesis 18:19). Are we bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord? Are we doing what we should to teach them to keep His way? As Moses stressed to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 6:6-7, it takes much of our time to pass the baton to our children; yet we allow ourselves to be pulled in so many different directions that it is easy to not dedicate the time required.

Are you running your race in such a way as to be able to one day say with Paul, "I have finished the race" (2 Timothy 4:7), to actually win the race (1 Corinthians 9:24)? How much joy can we truly achieve from the race without successfully passing the baton to our children, knowing that we failed to place it firmly within their hands? Just as physical runners put forth the time and effort needed to make a successful pass and win the race, only to receive a temporal crown, may we put for the time and effort needed to successfully pass the baton to our children, and receive an eternal crown.

- by Troy Nicholson

---

## **A Swarm of Gospel "Be's"**

Have you observed how powerful little words in the Bible are? Take the word "if" for example. Jesus said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). If our mother Eve had been wise regarding what the little three-letter word "not" meant, the old devil would not have deceived her (Gen. 3:4).

The little word "be" is used frequently in the Bible, and the thoughts connected to it contribute to our salvation. Here is a swarm of gospel "be's."

**Be Wise.** "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). Thus the Lord warned the twelve as He sent them on their mission.

**Be Faithful.** "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). The circumstances in which the beloved apostle John was at the time were not very favorable. He was exiled on the lonely isle of Patmos. The incentive held out was "be faithful -- the crown of life." That was all John needed to deepen his faith.

**Be Ready.** The Lord says, "Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44). The Lord could come again at any time. We could pass away and all opportunities to get ready for judgment (John 5:28-29) would be gone.

**Be Unmovable.** In our present day this admonition is just as pertinent to every member of the body of Christ as when Paul wrote it by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

**Be Ye Doers.** "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). It is not enough to hear the word of God, but those who are blessed put it into practice every day.

**Be Baptized.** "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). To be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27) is to be obedient from the heart to that form of teaching (Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18). One is then delivered from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13).

If you have not obeyed the Lord and Master in the primary principles of the gospel, I pray that you will attend to that immediately. If you have obeyed him, Be Faithful, Be Doers, Be Wise, Be Unmovable and you will Be Ready.

- by *Austin Mobley*

---

## ***Election Considerations***

A presidential election year is upon us, and Christians will be challenged to make decisions about voting, not only for president, but also for a host of other important state and local offices. Should we vote? And if we do, what should be some fundamental principles that determine our vote?

First, it is entirely proper for Christians to exercise their rights as citizens. The apostle Paul did so when he was being unjustly treated or threatened by men with evil intent (Acts 16:35-38; 22:24-27; 25:10-11). Voting is not a privilege in all places, but it is here, and we can use it. In fact, it can serve as one means of our being 'salt' and "light" in our society as Jesus taught (Matt. 5:13-16).

So, how should we vote? Here are some things to factor into your decisions:

1) Moral principles must take first priority. Where does a candidate stand on vital issues like abortion and homosexuality? If a political contender supports the killing of unborn babies or defends same-sex marriage, Christians should NEVER vote in their favor. To do would be an endorsement of these grievous wrongs. Find out where candidates stand on such issues and vote accordingly.

2) We've often been told that character matters – and it does! Does the candidate have an established track record that demonstrates high moral values? Is there a strong indication that, should he be elected, he would surround himself with good counselors and appoint worthy people to important positions? For instance, it is likely that the next president will nominate judges to the Supreme Court. Can we trust that such appointments will be made in ways that will lead us in the right direction morally?

Remember, "when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn" (Proverbs 29:2). Your vote is important. Think!