

Diligence in Love

by Tricia Berg

*God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them. We want each of you to **show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized.** We do not want you to become lazy, but to **imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.** Hebrews 6:10-12*

Many ministries these days like to keep stats on how successful they are based on how many people made a verbal confession of faith (or perhaps they just check a box on a paper or click a button online). There are multiple problems with this—for one, it almost sounds like taking credit for God's work, since only He can give the gift of faith. But assuming that no one means to do that, there is another problem. We were told to make disciples, not believers. Someone who says they believe, but doesn't act upon it by changing their life and following Christ does not have a saving faith. (Jam. 2:14) Perhaps they didn't really believe in their heart or perhaps they are like the seed sown in weedy ground in Jesus' parable of the sower. (Matt. 13:18-23) Just prior to the verses quoted at the top of this page, in the same passage, is a very stern warning not to accept salvation and then turn back. (Heb. 6:4-8) Jesus said that no one who does so is worthy of Him or His kingdom. (Luke 9:23-26, Luke 9:62, Luke 14:33, Matt. 10:37-39, Matt. 16:24-27, Mark 8:34-38, John 12:25-26)

There is also the matter of rewards. If everyone receives the same reward in the end when He returns, then why are we cautioned in the passage at the top (Hebrews 6:10-12) not to become lazy IF we want to FULLY realize what we HOPE FOR, which is to inherit what has been PROMISED? If you recall, the promise is for "those who love Him." (1Cor. 2:9, Eph. 1:18-19) Jesus defined that as the one who obeys His commands. (John 14:15-21) This does not mean we are under the law. We do NOT work FOR salvation—it is FREE, but because we ARE saved, we do as our Master instructs us to do. **He is meant to be BOTH our Lord AND Savior, not just one or the other.** As such, we are to listen to Him, follow Him or serve Him. (John 5:24, John 10:3-4, John 12:26) We were warned numerous times in the parables Jesus told that some servants will receive harsh treatment for their laziness, mistreatment of their fellow servants and lack of trust in God such that they fail to invest the gifts He gives them for the good of His kingdom.

Those who are His and are faithful will be rewarded—however, some will only enter in as through the fire, with loss of reward. (1Cor. 3:11-15, 1Cor. 4:5, Rev. 11:18, Rev. 17:14) If His Spirit is within us, then that means we have genuinely believed in Him, enough to obey Him out of love—so we can be assured that He loves and knows us. If we have His Spirit, then we ARE able to understand and do His will. (Rom. 8:9, John 14:21-24, 15:10, Phil. 2:12-13) We are to be faithful to Him as He is to us—His commands are not burdensome to us BECAUSE we love Him. (1John 5:2-3) He summarized them for us into two, because by doing these two, we will fulfill the rest—not that the rest are not important, but it is not possible to keep these two and yet break any of the others. Love God FIRST, with ALL you are and love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:29-31) Love does no harm to a neighbor, which INCLUDES not sinning with or against them, or leading them into sin. (Rom. 13:10, 1Thess. 4)

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work **out** your own salvation with fear and trembling, for **it is God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13*

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. Romans 8:16-17

Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us. 1 John 3:24

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for **he dwells with you and will be in you**. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. **Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.** And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, **"Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?"** Jesus answered him, **"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever**

does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me." John 14:15-24

God loves those who RESPECT Him and DO what He says. He is NOT pleased with those who hear and disregard Him. (Luke 6:46-49, Jam. 1:22-25) That is how people show Him that He is NOT their Lord and their faith is in (and their love is for) themselves or someone else rather than Him. Obedience, or lack of it, is how faith is proven to be genuine, or not. (1Pet. 1:6-7) See the parables of the servants who were entrusted with minas or talents (both monetary increments symbolizing gifts we receive from God for our use in His service) while their master was AWAY. The ruler in those parables represents Jesus and He is not equally pleased with all of them upon His return, is He? (Matt. 13, 25, Luke 19:11-26) Today is the day to live as though we know our Savior is returning and that His reward is with Him. (John 5:21-24, Isa. 40:10, 62:11)

*Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him **deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.** For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done." Matthew 16:24-27*

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So **run that you may obtain it.** Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I **discipline my body and keep it under control,** lest after preaching to others I myself should be **disqualified.** 1 Corinthians 9:24-27*

*For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. **But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with***

him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-11

There will be repayment for those who disobeyed as well (John 3:36), but it won't be anything to look forward to. (Amos 5:18, Matt. 24:36-51, Luke 13:22-30)

*He will render to each one according to his works: **to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.** There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. Romans 2:6-11*

*"As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will **weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear." Matthew 13:40-43*

Let's remember that our former sins were forgotten. What a relief! We can leave behind our past with its enslavement to sin and live like children of God now that we belong to Jesus. (1John 3:1-10, 2Pet. 1:3-11, 2Pet. 3:7-14) Let's not be ashamed of Him, but remember what He did for us and be more concerned with what will happen to those who are not saved than with our own comfort, both physically and mentally. (Luke 9:26, 62, Mark 8:34-38, Mark 10:21) Let's remember Who is really in control and not live in fear the way those who are in the darkness do. (Jer. 32:27, 1John 4:18)

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your **light shine**

before others, so that they may **see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.**" Matthew 5:10-16

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you **to test you**, as though something strange were happening to you. But **rejoice** insofar as you **share Christ's sufferings**, that you may also **rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed**. If you are **insulted for the name of Christ**, you are **blessed**, because **the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you**. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. **Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name**. For it is **time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?** And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore **let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.** 1 Peter 4:12-19*

*"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. **Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.** Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me." Matthew 10:34-40*

Let's read our Bibles and see how He defines "good," not by joining in with the world to call evil good and good evil. (Isa. 5:20) Let's be honest about our God who is Lord of lords and King of kings. We must not present Him as an "old softy" who has mellowed over time instead of the reality, that He never changes, sleeps, slumbers, tires or grows weak. (Heb. 13:8, Isa. 40:28, Psa. 121:4) If we do that, the world will not be warned that He is returning in wrath against those who despise the truth! (Col. 3, Eph. 5)

*Many will be **purified, cleansed, and refined**, but the wicked will act wickedly; none of the wicked will understand, but **the wise will understand.** Daniel 12:10*

*But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only **to those who are perishing**, among whom the god of this age has **blinded** the minds of those who do not*

believe so they would not see the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

*The **wrath of God** is being revealed from heaven against all the **godlessness and wickedness** of men who **suppress the truth by their wickedness**. Romans 1:18*

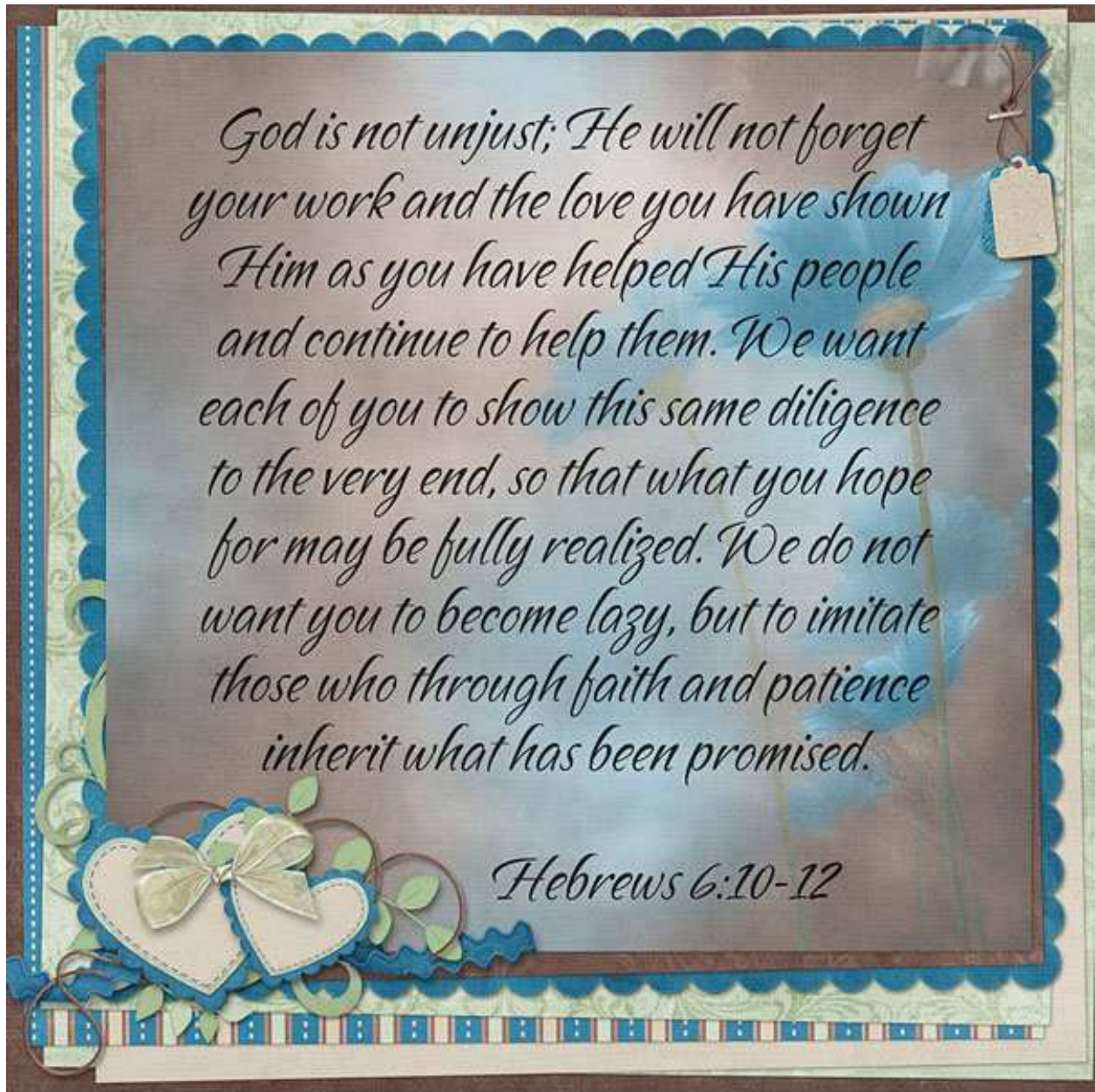
*I am coming soon. **Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown**. Revelation 3:11*

*Then he [the angel] told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. **Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.**" [Jesus says] "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. **Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.** I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony **for the churches**. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." Revelation 22:10-16*

As always, please remember to read a normal Bible. God does not need His perfect Word revised, including re-wording, adding or subtracting. Paraphrases always manage to spin the original intent and needless to say, "special" versions for particular denominations or cults are not the true, pure, holy Word of God. I would recommend comparing several, such as ESV, NKJV, NASB, and others. You can see many translations for each verse at Biblehub.com.

*Do not add to *His* words, or He will rebuke you and prove you a liar. Proverbs 30:6*

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