

How to Align Your Faith and Make Your Words Hold Weight in the Spirit

I have never been one to focus on the end of the world, but I can attest that we are living in what are called the last days. Now more than ever, Christians need their voices to be heard. But in order to have a legitimate platform to pray out loud, a person must be a true believer.

Ephesians 2:8–9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one should boast.” The Bible makes it clear that our good works don’t save us, and 2 Corinthians 3:5 tells us that we are not “sufficient in ourselves to take credit for anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.” This means we cannot boast in our own goodness.

The world is changing around us, and the church is facing challenges we’ve never encountered before, but what it means to be a true believer has not changed. True believers still have certain characteristics.

True Believers Will Face Opposition

Matthew 10:22 says true believers will be hated for Jesus’ name’s sake, but only the one who endures to the end will be saved. I always say we are not saved; we are being saved. Salvation is a continual process of endurance, and true believers never stop reaching toward the mark. Paul made it clear that he could not sit back and be comfortable in his place in God. He had to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14). The word “press” means to “move or cause to move into a position of contact with something by exerting continuous physical force.”

Often this force must be exerted because of opposition.

One of the main signs of true, born-again believers is that they will have opposition. The reason Paul had to press was because there were obstacles and hindrances between him and the mark. These obstacles and barriers are called distractions, and they are demonically set in place to stop us from reaching the mark. Because there's opposition ahead of us as believers, it is very important that we not walk alongside the opposition.

Second Corinthians 6:14 warns us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. The Word of the Lord goes on to say, "What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"

A yoke is a wooden bar that joins two oxen to each other. It's a connector that can overpower or pull a person in a particular direction. As believers, with all the opposition ahead of us, it will be dangerous to walk side by side with people who can pull us in the wrong direction. I pray this message is getting your attention. Be careful not to connect or yoke up with any person, place or thing that will pull you toward the wrong course. Of course, that begs the question: If you need to avoid relationships in which you are unequally yoked, how can you tell which people, places and things to be yoked to?

True Believers Have Signs Following Them

Mark 16:17–18 (KJV) says, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." This passage of Scripture tells us who believers are. Believers do not run after signs like the Bible says evil men do; instead, signs follow them! Based on the passage from Mark 16,

Believers cast out devils.

Believers speak with new tongues.

Believers take up serpents.

Believers can drink any deadly thing and it will not hurt them.

Believers lay hands on the sick, and they recover.

I've been saved for over 30 years, and one of the most baffling things to me is that people who call themselves believers don't believe Mark 16:17-18!

True Believers Face Persecution

Consider the following verses.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10).

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Luke 6:22).

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18, MEV).

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim 3:12, KJV).

At the end of this article, I include several Scriptures for you to confess out loud, especially during times of persecution. Whenever you do, also take a minute to praise God, because if you are being persecuted for your faith, God is about to bless your boots off. But this blessing is conditional on you blessing those who attempt to destroy you. (See Rom. 12:14.) As crazy as it may sound, you must begin to take pleasure in the arrows that are shot against your life. I

prophecy over your head that no weapon formed against you will prosper, and because you've been reviled for Christ's sake, you will receive "mega-more" and manifold blessings. Your latter will be greater than your former, and eyes have not seen nor ears heard what God is about to do for you.

It is no secret that believers will be drawn together by the persecution they endure from those who hate Christ. The good news is that favor undergirds persecution. Walk out your persecution and walk in favor. Whether you are being persecuted by family members, your job, your community or even everyday life itself, press toward the mark.

I'm qualified to talk about being persecuted as a believer. During my tenure as an elected official, numerous false allegations were made against me. I had to learn to endure the defamations and accusations my enemies leveled against me back to back. I have never been through an election without my opponents involving me in a manufactured scandal. But as I write this book, I am an overcomer and more than a conqueror as I continue to press toward the mark.

The name of the strongman that continually sets its ugly face against me is religious persecution. Political entities, special interests and those with antichrist agendas have hijacked the mainstream media to work against true believers or anyone who supports or associates with them.

By God's grace and favor, I was able to operate as an elected official for nearly a decade. That favor allowed me to write legislation to put prayer back in school in Florida, have "In God We Trust" conspicuously displayed in all public schools, be the prime sponsor of a huge criminal justice reform bill, get \$2,125,000 for a man wrongfully incarcerated for 43 years and allocate millions of dollars to programs run by everyday people for community outreach in my city. Much more was accomplished, but these are the highlights of my four years as a state representative. They are the fruits of my labor, and

they came with a lot of hard times, hatred, and opposition.

I'm sad to say that if you really love Jesus and are a true believer, you must learn to be hated, but be encouraged. As I mentioned previously, Luke 10:19 says, "Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by no means hurt you." And Romans 16:20 (NKJV) says, "And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly." Hang in there. Your breakthrough is about to come.

True Believers Are Known by Their Fruit

In addition to being known by the persecution we face, true believers will know one another by the fruit they bear. Matthew 7:16b–20 (MEV) explains this clearly.

"Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit. But a corrupt tree bears evil fruit. A good tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruit you will know them."

Galatians 5 highlights the fruit of the born-again believer as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (vv. 22–23). I would also like to add that there is a kingdom language whereby believers know one another. We can touch and agree because we speak the same tongue and travel on the same circuit. We can walk together in agreement because we are receiving the glory from the same spout. No longer do we walk according to the course of this world and the prince of the power of the air who rules over the careless, rebellious and unbelieving. We are the children of God, who care, obey and believe.

True Believers Are on Assignment

Another way to know true believers is to look for those on

assignment. Matthew 28:19–20 (KJV) says it best: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” These words are to strengthen you in your calling. God is saying that wherever we go we must take the gospel of Jesus Christ with us.

There is another gospel being preached in the land, one with a different Holy Ghost and a false Christ. There are spirits of seduction in the land, so we must obey the high calling and go forth, speaking truth and walking in discernment. Beware of those who act like believers, look like believers and even try to speak the language of the kingdom. First John 4:1 warns us not to believe every spirit, but to “try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” I like the way The Message puts it: “My dear friends, don’t believe everything you hear. Carefully weigh and examine what people tell you. Not everyone who talks about God comes from God. There are a lot of lying preachers loose in the world.”

Second Timothy 3:5 speaks of those who have a form of godliness but deny the power of God. Timothy teaches that they are not believers, and we must turn away from them. Christianity has split into so many factions that it could be confusing to an everyday person. Acts 11:26 tells us the term “Christian” was coined at Antioch. Christian persecution became so bad that believers had to hide out and use certain symbols to identify one another.

Eventually it was not important whether people called themselves Christians; the question asked to ensure a person was a true believer was, “Do you know the way?” Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6, MEV). As you come to the end of this article, I ask the same question of you: Are you a

Christian in name only, or do you know the way?

Prayer to Affirm Your Identity as a True Believer

Father, in the name of Jesus, I renounce nominal Christianity. I speak the language of the kingdom and no longer walk according to the course of this world under the rulership of the prince of the power of the air. I renounce carelessness, rebellion and unbelief. I am a good tree, and I cannot bear evil fruit. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are my portion. I touch and agree and form a circle with my fellow believers, and together we have power over all the power of the enemy, and the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet shortly. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Confessions for Building Faith in the Midst of Persecution

I am blessed because I'm being persecuted for righteousness' sake; mine is the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:10).

"I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

I know that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. I choose to live godly; therefore, I suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12).

Though the world hates me, I know it hated You before it hated me (John 15:18).

I am blessed when people hate me and when they separate me from their company, reproach me, and cast out my name as evil for the Son of Man's sake (Luke 6:22).

Nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ, not tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword. No, in all these things I am more than a conqueror through Him who loves me. "For I am persuaded that

neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord" (Rom. 8:35–39).

I am blessed when people revile me and persecute me and say all manner of evil against me falsely for the Lord's sake (Matt. 5:11).

No one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for Christ's sake and the gospel's, shall not receive an hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mother and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the world to come, eternal life (Mark 10:29–30).

I will bless those who persecute me; I will bless and curse not (Rom. 12:14).

"My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me" (Ps. 31:15, NKJV).

I will be sober and vigilant because my adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

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