

Major Tests of Our Faith – Lesson Four ***Disappointment in Other Christians***

At times we struggle because of what we see in other Christians. New converts might look to those who have been in Christ for a longer time and think they have everything worked out in life and that they face no struggles. How hard it is on those babes when they come to realize that even mature Christians face challenges in faith. The babes could become disillusioned and disappointed or even give up their faith when they see other Christians stumble.

Sometimes it is the mature disciples who at first are excited and rejoice over one's decision to obey the gospel, but then are disappointed when the babe in Christ seems to struggle with issues of life. It could be that the babes are having a hard time pulling themselves from their entanglements in the world, and in seeing that it can dishearten even the established saint.

Imagine the disappointment, and even the frustration, of Paul when he learned that Peter was not being honest in dealing with some of the Gentile Christians ... that is, he was not treating them the same as the Jewish disciples. Peter knew better but even he got carried away in the hypocrisy of the moment. (**Gal. 2:11-14**)

Disappointment in other Christians can become a major test our faith.

1. Think about Jesus' parable of the sower in **Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23**.
 - a. Of the four types of soil Jesus describes, how many represent people who obey the gospel but then fall away?
 - b. Which are they?
2. Read **Philippians 2:19-21**.
 - a. What did Paul say was generally true of those Christians around him?
 - b. Whom did he name as an exception?
3. Prepare to discuss the difference between the picture one might have of "ideal Christians" compared to the picture he gets as he looks around in the assembly of a local church.
 - a. Why does this difference exist?

4. When we see weaknesses in others, in what ways might we wrongly react?

5. Christians get discouraged when they look around and see disciples that are weak or falling away. Sometimes one might think they are standing alone. Think about this ...
 - a. How many did Elijah think were faithful to God? **1 Kings 19:10**

 - b. What was God's message to encourage Elijah? **1 Kings 19:18**

6. Name some Bible characters that remained faithful in their service to God even when others around them left the Lord.

7. How can we help others who are growing discouraged because of disappointment in other Christians?

SOUL SEARCHER... Think fairly and honestly

Is it possible that I expect more of my fellow Christians than I do of myself?

What Scriptures or principles of truth will help me in this?