

Are Your Expectations Realistic?

➤ = next PowerPoint slide

➤ Intro:

- **illus.:** about 5 yrs. old, expected bike for x-mas, got up early to see if Santa had brought it, didn't see but thought it might be hidden, disappointed when got up and learned didn't receive, other presents were a let down
 - having unrealistic expectations in life can result in disappointment, dissatisfaction, sadness
- Are your expectations (life, spiritual) realistic?

➤ Expectations regarding your place in life – faithful Christian / child of God

- **Matt. 7:13-14** most people won't obey God, be saved
 - as a Christian you've done the most important thing anyone could every do – obey God
 - President USA, astronaut, movie star – Christian
 - judge your success in life based on this fact

- - **Matt. 16:24-26** deny self, take up cross, follow Jesus, lose life, not exchange soul
 - most successful anyone can be is as faithful Christian
 - movie star who's lost v. Christian who's saved – Who is successful in life?

- - **illus.:** 1 Cor. 10:10 not be like Israelites, after saved from Egyptian bondage, grumbled against God, not satisfied – expectations not spiritual
 - success not determined by socioeconomic position in society – not spiritual
 - success not determined by material possessions – not spiritual
 - success determined by whether you're faithfully serving God, content with His blessings – spiritual
 - 1 Tim. 6:7-8 brought nothing into the world, can't take anything out - content with food and covering

- - as a Christian, your expectation is to faithfully serve God, content with His blessings
 - consider yourself to have fulfilled the most significant expectation anyone could have – happy

➤ Expectations regarding **your service to God** – doing your best in God’s service – realistic, doing the best in your situation

- **Is. 64:8** God’s children are as clay in the potter’s (God’s) hands

- **Rom. 9:21** the potter has the right over the clay, to make it how he wants

- **illus.: hymn, we’re clay in the potter’s hands**

- **our expectation (prayer) is to be molded (used) as God wills**

➤ - **illus.: Matt. 25:14-29** parable of the talents – working, diligent, busy

- each given talents (\$) according to their ability – 5, 2, 1

- work for their master till he returns

- the 2 faithful slaves performed to the best of their ability, rewarded, entered into joy of their master

- **our expectation is for God to give to us as He wills, to use in His service, rewarded in eternity**

➤ - **2 Tim. 3:12** all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

- **our expectation is for things to be unpleasant**, trying, rough at times – **not always a rose garden**

- **illus. Rev.: Christians persecuted**, test their faith, prove a point to world and Satan – Christ rules over nations

➤ - **God has placed us in the world which we live**

- **can’t pretend to live in the 1st or 2nd centuries**

- **can’t pretend to live in the 20th century** and try to reach people with what work before, but no longer works today

- **expectations must be appropriate** for our day and age, **according to your abilities**

- **illus.: some Christians suffer from “martyr syndrome”** wanting to be persecuted like apostles or early Christians

- **don’t feel they’re faithful unless suffering**, publically persecuted and humiliated for Christ like apostles were

- **some pick fights** with brethren, always stirring up a fuss, for a sense of self-fulfillment

- **unhappy with the day and age God has given us to live in:** peace, tranquility, for which we pray

- **we must live in the present, not the past**, with **expectations appropriate** for our culture

- **God could change the circumstances** in which we live if He wanted

- **we are doing God’s work today**, in our day and age, **expectations must be adjusted as change comes**

- **we live in a culture of greed and apathy, not longing for God – must adjust expectations**

- **Expectations compared to other Christians** - personal evaluation and expectations
 - natural to compare ourselves to other Christians
 - **Eph. 3:8** Paul compared himself to others, “least of all the saints”

- - **God’s views us as equally important** – expectation
 - **Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12** all equal in the church
 - Christian who was bedridden and unable to do much, is as equally successful and important as the apostles

- - **we don’t do the same work** – have different successes – expectation
 - **Rom. 12:3-8** not have same work, but equally part of body of Christ
 - **illus.: parable of sower (Matt. 13:18-23)**
 - 4 types of soil, Christians “good soil”
 - Christians: **30 / 60 / 100 fold** – fruitful
 - not everyone do same work, have same success
 - **happy to be who you are - God’s blessings, using you, equal to everyone else**
 - **illus.: Peter confessed that Paul given extraordinary wisdom**, some things he wrote about difficult to understand (**2 Pet. 3:15-16**)
 - perhaps given insight no other apostle had - **2 Cor. 12:1-7**

- **our expectations must be realistic**
 - one point in life may be **100 fold** Christian, another may be 30
 - one point in life may live when **gospel rapidly spreads**, another it may not
 - when expectations realistic, we are **happy and fulfilled, doing God’s work in our day and age**

- **comparison of ourselves with other Christians. . . .**
 - am I doing my best, today – God’s work – rejoice
 - set goals, be ambitious, be content with who you are today

➤ Expectations for church growth

➤ - church growth depends on many things out of our control

- Paul not always successful converting people – Felix, Festus, Jews, Gentiles, philosophers

- 2 Tim. 4:7-8 but a success because he never gave up (fought the fight) – expectation

- expectation should be toward never giving up

- Paul was success because he made the best out of every situation – expectation

- may have thought himself a failure because he appealed to Caesar, Roman imprisonment

- taught people around him: guards, brethren who visited

- wrote letters – Bible

- expectation should be toward making the best of our situation in life, redeeming the time

➤ - 1 Cor. 3:6 God gives the increase, it's out of our control – expectation

- God's word doesn't return to Him void, does it's work whether we do ours our not – Esther

- expectation should be toward God giving the increase according to His will – pray

➤ - our expectations about church growth should be toward the things we control

- 1 Cor. 3:6 we plant and water (God gives the increase) – expectation

- we're God's helpers, servants, we don't control the harvest (increase)

- expectation should be toward planting and watering – success

➤ - Heb. 10:24-25 being a faithful church, stimulating to love and good works – expectation

- expectation should be toward worshiping God as we should, being a congregation where people can learn about God, grow – God will use us according to His will

➤ Conclusion / Inv.

➤4 - summary: expectations

- Are your expectations realistic? – happy, fulfilled, realize your importance in the kingdom

- inv.: live up to your expectations today