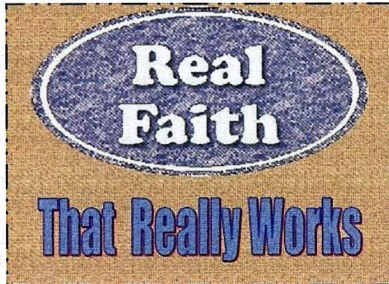




Is YOUR Faith Real



In the book of Acts, we witness the church growing at what seems an almost an exponential rate (Acts 2:42, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:9; 8:11-13; 12:24; 19:20). All this growth, in spite of the devil's best attempts to thwart it through men who gave false witness (6:11), lied (5:1-11), stirred up strife and contention (15:1-2; 19:5-8), committed murder (7:59; 12:1-2), impugned motives (16:20), maliciously slandered and persecuted Christians (8:1-5; 14:19; etc.).

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The opposition from without was to be expected, and the early disciples "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name" (4:41). Nonetheless, the pain inflicted by the carnal attacks of the opposition from without could not compare with the emotional pain of the carnal tactics from within by those professing to be brothers. When Paul listed in 2 Corinthians 11:25-26, the dangers he had faced in serving God, I have often wondered if he didn't save the worst for the last - "in danger of false brethren." That had to hurt in a way that no beating with rods could compare. It had to be more emotionally distressing on one's heart, than being shipwrecked and adrift in the sea for a night and day (vs. 25).

Don't you wonder, in the midst of reading Acts, why Paul didn't just give up?

There are two things that kept him going. The first and foremost is that he believed in the One whom he preached (2 Timothy 1:12). The second is he believed in those brethren whose faith was real and for whom that faith had made a difference in their lives (read the letter to Philemon).

Let your faith in the Lord be real and your let will light shine. *Bill Robinson*

