

A Better Man

Jude 20-23

Introduction: Benjamin Franklin once said, “Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man.” With the new year upon us, it would be appropriate for us to reflect upon our character to determine if we will be a better person this coming year than we were last year.

I. The Lord expects us to build ourselves up (Jude 20-23).

A. In faith, love, and compassion.

B. Doing so through prayer and fear.

C. In the process we keep ourselves in love. Saving others from Hell’s fire while looking for mercy from our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life!

II. God expects us to be built up by His word (Acts 20:32).

A. God’s word will give us an eternal inheritance.

B. Study of His word will present ourselves favorably to God (2 Tim. 2:15).

III. The Lord expects us to be doers of His word (Jas. 1:22-25).

A. If all we do is hear, we deceive ourselves.

B. Such a person is like one who only remembers what he looks like when he sees himself directly in a mirror. When he walks away from the mirror, he forgets his image. “*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*” (Gen. 1:27).

C. Does our image reflect the image of Christ? For that to happen, we must look into God’s word, “*the perfect law of liberty,*” and continually do His will.

IV. Nehemiah might serve as an example.

A. Nehemiah was a cupbearer under Persian King Artaxerxes. He had a strong desire to do God’s will. That desire led him to rebuild Jerusalem after the 70 years of captivity (Neh. 2:17-18).

B. Nehemiah could not go it alone. Everyone had to work together (Neh. 4:6).

C. However, his desire to serve God was met with opposition (Neh. 4:7-18).

D. They worked on the walls 24 hours a day while wearing armor and completed the wall in 52 days!

V. Likewise, the Lord expects us to suffer.

A. “*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (2 Tim. 3:12).

B. Poem, “Am I a Builder or a Wrecker?” by Edgar Guest

I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a ho-heave-ho and lusty yell,
They swung a beam and a sidewall fell.

I asked the foreman, “Are these men skilled,
The men you’d hire if you had to build?”
He gave me a laugh and said, “No indeed!
Just common labor is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken a year to do.”

And I thought to myself as I went my way,
Which of these two roles have I tried to play?

Am I a builder who works with care,
Measuring life by the rule and square?
Am I shaping my deeds by a well-made plan,
Patiently doing the best I can?

Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,
Content with the labor of tearing down?

VI. The Lord expects us to serve Him (Jn. 15:5-6).

A. Our decision to serve God is optional. But notice what happens to those who do not abide in Christ. They are cast into Hell’s fire.

B. The Israelites of Joshua’s day were conflicted with whom to serve. They had a problem worshipping other gods. Their allegiance was divided. Joshua tells them that serving God was a matter of choice (Josh. 24:14-24).

Conclusion: Time will tell if we will be a better person next year than we were this year. Let us pray we will be that better man!