

The Terre Haute

SPEAKER

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." (1 Peter 4:11).

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THE NEW NORMAL

John Edwards

We are hearing a lot these days about “the new normal” with reference to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This describes the current state of being after some dramatic change has transpired. I’m making spiritual application of this expression to think with you about the new normal when one becomes a child of God in Christ, as old things pass away and all things become new (2 Cor. 5:17). This new normal is set forth in the third chapter of Paul’s Colossian letter.

BOWELS OF MERCIES

(v. 12). In putting off the old and putting on the new man, “*bowels of mercies*” is the new normal. This is tender mercies, a heart of compassion. Our God is “*full of compassion*” (Ps. 78:38). This is often seen in the life of our Lord. Blind receiving their sight (Mt. 20:34), lepers cleansed (Mk. 1:41), and a widow’s son raised (Lk. 7:13) all show a heart of compassion. Such is illustrated by a certain Samaritan in Luke 10:33 and expressed by the father of the prodigal son in Luke 15:20. Peter penned, “...*having compassion one of another...*” (1 Pet. 3:8). John asked about one who “*shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*” (1 Jn. 3:8).

KINDNESS (v. 12). God is a God of “*kindness*” (Lk. 6:35; Eph. 2:7; Titus 3:4). Kindness is goodness in action, goodness expressing itself in deeds! Romans 12:10 says, “*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.*” The love chapter reveals that love “*is kind*” (1 Cor. 13:4). The Ephesians were instructed, “*And be ye kind one to another...*” (Eph. 4:32). Peter taught first-century Christians to add “*kindness*” to their faith (2 Pet. 1:7).

HUMBLENESS OF MIND (v. 12). This is the having a humble opinion of oneself; a deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness; modesty, humility, lowliness of mind. It is written, “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves*” (Phil. 2:3). The apostle Paul set a good example of humbleness of mind, “*Serving the Lord with all humility of mind*” (Acts 20:19). We walk worthy of the Lord “*with all lowliness*” (Eph. 4:1-2). Peter said, “...*be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*” (1 Pet. 5:5).

MEEKNESS (v. 12). Meekness is gentleness or mildness that causes one to suffer. Paul besought the Corinthians by “*the meekness*

and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1). He reminded the Thessalonians that he was “*gentle*” among them “*even as a nurse cherisheth her children*” and “*as a father doth his children*” (1 Th. 2:7-8, 11-12). That shows meekness! The fruit of the Spirit is meekness (Gal. 5:23). A spirit of meekness is needed in restoring one overtaken in a fault (Gal. 6:1). This too is included in the worthy walk of Ephesians 4:1-2. Paul called upon Timothy to follow after meekness (1 Tim. 6:11). Such is needed in instructing those that oppose themselves (2 Tim. 2:25). We need to be reminded, “*To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men*” (Titus 3:2). James taught that God’s word is to be received “*with meekness*” (Jas. 1:21). James 3:13 asks, “*Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*” Peter taught to answer “*every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*” (1 Pet. 3:15).

LONGSUFFERING (v. 12). One who is longsuffering is patient, slow in avenging wrongs. One of the characteristics of God is “*longsuffering*” (Rom. 2:4; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:9, 15).

Among other things, ministers are approved of God “*by longsuffering*” (2 Cor. 6:6). The fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering (Gal. 5:22). And to walk worthy of the Lord’s calling is to be longsuffering (Eph. 4:1-2). Paul charged Timothy, “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (2 Tim. 4:2). Preachers need a good dose of longsuffering, like everyone else.

FORBEARING (v. 13). To be forbearing is to hold up, to hold oneself erect and firm (against any person or thing), to sustain, to bear, to bear with, endure. Ephesians 4:2 says, “*Forbearing one another*”. It may be that you didn’t have much forbearance before you became a Christian. This is the new normal, now that you are a child of God!

FORGIVING (v. 13). Many are unwilling to grant forgiveness, to pardon. A companion passage, Ephesians 4:32, points out: “*...forgiving one another; even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you*”. We need to be very

generous in this department, seeing how forgiving God is of us! Jesus taught in the Model Prayer section of the Sermon on the Mount: “*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*” (Mt. 6:14-15). Peter asked, “*Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?*” The answer: “*I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven*” (Mt. 18:21-22).

CHARITY (v. 14). This is another word for love. Charity edifies (1 Cor. 8:1). The first three verses of 1 Corinthians 13 show the importance of this quality in our lives. Without it, “*I am nothing*” and everything I do “*profiteth me nothing*.” There is no more beautiful description of charity than the words penned in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8: “*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity,*

but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth...” Is your name Charity? 1 Corinthians 13:13 says, “*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*” Paul appealed to the Corinthian Christians to “*Follow after charity*” in 1 Corinthians 14:1. He went on to say, “*Let all your things be done with charity*” (1 Cor. 16:14). The young man, Timothy, was exhorted to be an example of the believers in charity (1 Tim. 4:12) and to follow charity (2 Tim. 2:22). Peter penned, “*And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins*” (1 Pet. 4:8).

When you are buried with Christ in baptism, “*wherein also ye are risen with him*” (Col. 2:11-12), put off the old man of sin (Col. 3:8-9) and put on the new man of righteousness (Col. 3:10-14), this is the new normal. What a dramatic change brought about by the gospel of Christ, “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom. 1:16). Let it transform your life!

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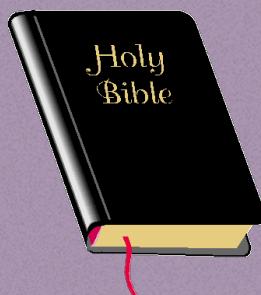
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