

**Madison Heights Christian Church**  
**(Disciples of Christ)**  
**149 Main Street**  
**Madison Heights, VA 24572**



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***MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER***

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***Open doors-----Open hearts***

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**We Are the Life Savers**

There are several biblical lessons on perseverance. In Matthew 24:44-51 Jesus tells the story of a faithful and wise servant that is found to be diligently working when the master returns and compares him to a negligent servant that abuses his authority and neglects his duty. The lesson is of one of remaining faithful until the end. The servant that is loyal to the end is classified as a faithful and wise servant. While the Scripture cites neglect and abuses, the real problem with the unfaithful servant is that he lacked the discipline to remain faithful until the end. The lesson is on the necessity to always and forever be true to the Master. The faithful servant is blessed by the Lord and the unfaithful servant receives harsh consequences.

Where do we find the motivation to be faithful to the end? Before I answer that question I would like to explain a contrast between two sources of motivation. One is self discipline. It is of the nature of determination and will power, vowing to make it without letting anything get you off track. But then there is life. There are challenges and setbacks and self discipline does not always overrule the temptations of daily living. I am going to reword that for emphasis. For the Christian self-discipline does not always rule over temptation. However, the other source of motivation is love. It is of the nature of care and appreciation. When you are motivated by love and appreciation then the challenges that life throws at you have less of an impact on you. With love as the ruling compass of your life temptation loses its impact. Where we find the motivation to be faithful to the end, is in realizing the extent of God's grace and living out our lives out of appreciation for all God has done for us.

When I was an elder, a co-worker needed a fellow Christian to confide in. There was a lady in her church that was causing some problems because she was not happy with the minister. No one could please her and it seems that all she did was complain all the time. Well, my colleague reached a point of frustration. My advice to her was to not put her frustration on the other person because you cannot control the behavior of others. I told her something like this. "The other person wants to control the behavior of the minister and you want to control the behavior of the other person. Neither one of you is getting anywhere and you are both just building up frustrations. So, you both have virtually the same problem. What you need to do is set the example and lead her into living her life focused on the will of God."

You cannot transpose your morals onto someone else. What you can control is your own faith and character. You have the responsibility to be strong, to be faithful to the end, to trust in God, and to focus your life on doing what God wants God's people to do. Anytime you are focused on the behavior of others you are not focused on God. We have a special responsibility to help others with their faith challenges. I had the Christian responsibility to help my co-worker. She did not see the irony until I pointed out that she was complaining about someone else's complaining. Whereas, she had the responsibility to help her church member. It was simply a failure to understand our divine responsibility. We are to be strong in faith, educate others, lead by example, and be faithful until the end.

We are the life savers. A complaint is a cry. We are to help the other to get back on track, to focus on the life and teachings of Jesus. A complaint is negative emotional energy that needs to be directed towards spiritual nourishment. I sent my colleague on a mission to have a heart to heart talk with her church member to explain to her that what we really need to do is the work of the Lord because we are to be faithful until the end. This means that we cannot afford to get off track. So, don't let the challenges and set backs of life throw you off your game. Stay focused on your mission, focus on your relationship with God and follow the teachings and the living example of Jesus. And when you notice someone slipping away remember we have the ethical responsibility as a faith community to reach out to them because we are the life savers.

*In Christian Love,*  
*George*