

## THE MEASURE OF A CHRISTIAN

II Cor. 10:12

(Second) Edition 8th Grade

Read vss. 7-12, 17-18

## Introduction:

Measurements. How we measure length, weight, time

How do you measure a yard? 36 inches

" a mile? 5,280 feet

" a pound? 16 ounces

" a day? 24 hours

How do you measure a baseball player?

-- by his batting average, his offensive and defensive ability.

How do you measure a physician, or a lawyer, or a loyal and patriotic citizen? -- By their record.

So the only way you can measure a Christian is by the record or measurement of his several characteristics as compared with the standards of God's Living and Written Word.

Background of the Passage

I. False Measure. One another, 2 Cor. 10:12

A. It is deceptive to compare yourself to one another.

B. One boasts his ego by comparing himself to someone else.

C. The person you select with which to compare yourself is probably a poor example anyway.

\* D. Dictators always find a way to justify their actions.

## II. Practical Measures.

A. The measure of his faith, Rom. 12:3

1. Faith is necessary for salvation, Eph. 2:8

2. Faith is necessary to please God, Heb. 11:6

3. Jesus spoke of

a. Little faith, Mt. 6:30; 17:20

b. Weak faith

c. Faith as a grain of mustard seed, Mt. 17:20

d. Great faith, Mt. 8:10

4. Faith can be increased, Lk. 17:5

5. Faith is the avenue to fellowship with God.

B. The measure of his LIFE and WORKS

1. You show your faith by your life and works for God.

An empty profession of faith without a changed life is worthless and meaningless.

B. The measure of his works (James) 2:17-18

C. The measure of his generosity Love, Eph. 4:2, 16; 5:1  
(Attitude is reflected in a generous spirit)

1. Generosity in the Lord's work

2. Generosity in treatment of others.

D. The measure of "grace" according to the  
measure of the gift of Christ (Eph. 4:7)

V. The Ideal Measure, Eph. 4:13, b

The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

A. The fullness of His dedication to the will & work  
of God.

B. The fullness of His Sacrifice

B. The fullness of His unselfishness.

D. The fullness of Himself.

(hymn by Toplady)

Measurements of daily life do not measure out.

Measurements of time do not measure out.

Measurements of strength do not measure out.

Measurements of wealth do not measure out.

Measurements of power do not measure out.

Measurements of knowledge do not measure out.

Measurements of wisdom do not measure out.

Measurements of love do not measure out.

Measurements of life do not measure out.

Measurements of death do not measure out.

Measurements of heaven do not measure out.

Measurements of hell do not measure out.

Measurements of the Augsburg Confession do not measure out.

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PRAYER: "O Lord, we have practiced our excesses long enough and followed our fads far enough; grant us grace to help us at last to come back to thy sanity & harmony.

INTRODUCTION: Whenever we study the true meanings of the Christian faith, it takes only a short time to get beyond our depth. Only little minds, unaware of their littleness, are willing to say some silly thing like, "Christianity is just a practice of the Golden Rule."

### I. A False Measure.

All dictators can justify their actions by citing the example of other dictators and lawless men. The German Chancellor made a speech to the Reichstag in 1914. He said: "Gentlemen, we are now in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law! Our troops have occupied Luxemburg, perhaps even have already entered Belgian territory.

Gentlemen, this violates rules of international law...

The injustice---I speak frankly---the injustice which we thus commit we will try to make good again as soon as our military goal has been achieved."

Men can never achieve a noble purpose by ignoring God's moral law. We must abide by it, have faith in it, and practice it.

### II. Practical Measures.

#### Faith.

God desires fellowship with his children.

Faith is the avenue of fellowship.

God has revealed Himself in Christ;

Faith in Christ is the way to fellowship with God.

Faith in human reason or in nature is not enough.

Men desecrate the Lord's Day, instead of attending worship service

(the Ideal measure - Jesus Christ)

We need to stop debating about Jesus Christ and to start believing in Him and following Him.

So much of the theological controversy of the past centuries has centered around defining the person of Christ. Was he God or man or both?

After we have exhausted our mental powers, we know that precise statement and full understanding are impossible. To make Jesus only a deity robs his humanity of any real meaning and makes the example of his life a farcE. But to make him only a good man contradicts the salvation which men find in him and find nowhere else.

We will do well to be content with Paul's word that God was in Christ, with the assurance that when we have seen Jesus we have seen God, and with the confidence that God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son".

When Bertrand Russell was asked, "Do you fully understand the Einstein theory of relativity? Do you go with him all the way?" he replied, "I answer the first question in the negative and the second in the affirmative."

This is what the Christian's faith in Jesus Christ means. Do we understand him completely? No! Can we set the boundaries about his personality? No! Is there any theological statement which entirely describes the person and work of Christ? None! But can we accept him as the perfect revelation of God and the truth about men and their eternal destiny? Yes! Can we find salvation from sin through his sacrifice and realize surpassing peace through accepting his lordship over our lives? Yes! A thousand times, Yes!

"Compared with Christ, in all beside No comeliness I see;  
The one thing needful, dearest Lord, Is to be one with Thee.  
The sense of Thy expiring love Into my soul convey;  
Thyself bestow: for Thee along I absolutely pray.  
Whatever else Thy will withhold, here grant me to succeed  
O let Thyself my portion be, And I am blest indeed.  
Less than Thyself will not suffice My comfort to restore:  
More than Thyself I cannot have; And Thou canst give no more."

-- Augustus M. Toplady.

The background of this passage.

Here Paul exposes the hollow claims of his critics who brazenly try to displace him and assume leadership of the church at Corinth.

These critics were intruders into the church, who came to Corinth claiming to be apostles and to have the right to direct the Corinthian church. In chapter 11, verse 13 he calls them "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" who disguise themselves by Satanic power so as to appear to be ministers of righteousness. That's a rather strong indictment!

They didn't hesitate to speak highly of themselves in a boastful and proud way. They compared themselves with themselves and with others whom they carefully selected, so as to make themselves look good.

This showed that they were without spiritual understanding.

One with true spiritual understanding doesn't do this.

To measure ourselves by one another is to be blind to the true standard of goodness which is found only in Christ. This brings us ALL under judgment.

Comparison with others may be flattering, but it is false, and the fact that we use it shows our blindness to reality. We can always find in even the best of people flaws which feed our self-esteem.

You see, the first thing Christ does for us is to show us all that we are not as good as we think we are.

The Christian ideal is a standard of judgment so far above us that it continually condemns and purifies our own ideals.

The man who finds peace for his conscience in the fact that he is as good as even the best of his neighbors has never seen the glory of God.

You remember that when Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and heard the seraphim saying

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;

the whole earth is full of his glory,"

his reaction was

"Woe is me! For I am undone;

for I am a man of unclean lips,

and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;

for my eyes have seen the King,

the Lord of hosts!"

This is why the true church can never be a mutual admiration society.

The basic note in its worship is contrition. We must confess that our best righteousness is but as filthy rags.

A great theologian of our century has said:

"The church is not a congregation of people who can pride themselves upon their unique goodness.

It is rather a congregation of people to whom the eternal God has spoken and who answer the eternal word in terms of Job's contrition:

"I have uttered things too wonderful for me, which I understood not.

Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

In verse 18 Paul returns to this same theme saying, "It is not the man who commends himself that is accepted (or approved), but the man whom the Lord commends." Paul warns the false apostles in Corinth and people of all ages that man's self-not commendation has no value at all.

On the other hand, it is a spiritual fault. The only verdict on Christian workers that is important is the one that the Lord gives.

Everything depends on his, "Well done, a good and faithful servant."

"Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord."

### Illustration:

No one who looks DOWN for his measurement will ever RISE.

If you would be a good poet, then don't read fifth rate poets and say, "I can write better poems than they do, and therefore I am a better poet."

No! Read Milton.

Read Shakespeare, or Dante.  
Go to the English writers of immortal  
thought,  
whose drums and trumpets have  
sounded clear down through the  
ages and generations to this day;  
Go to the grandest and noblest of  
our thinkers and writers.  
Sit in council with them,  
and then see if you are not a  
dwarf or a pygmy.

It will make you humble to have  
high ideals.

Just so, it will make you humble to have Jesus Christ as your ideal, rather than to have some poor, weak follower of His.

If all other men were but four feet high, a man of five feet would be considered a giant.

If he puts his standard low enough, a man can always judge favorably about himself.