

REMEMBER OUR LEADERS

Hebrews 13:7-8

As the Preacher continues to spell out the practicals of the life of faith he instructs his readers to remember and imitate the faith of their church leaders.

Hebrews 13:7 (ESV)

7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

That they are to *remember* likely indicates these leaders are dead. These leaders may very well have lead them to faith in Jesus. Previously, these folks had been encouraged to imitate the faith of the Old Testament saints listed in chapter 11. In addition they are to remember and imitate the faith of their church leaders.

This morning we are going to do just that. Remember with me these spiritual leaders who have lead us and are now with the Lord awaiting the Rapture.

Glae McDonald When I think of Glae McDonald I immediately think of his deep love for the church family. Glae (and Jean) really understood and valued brotherly love as we studied it last week from Hebrews 13:1. Their home was a constant gathering place for the church family. They practiced hospitality in spades. Glae was one of several elders who provided stability through the stormy years of splits that took place in the mid to late 80's. Those splits cut Glae to the heart because he loved the church family so much.

Let us imitate Glae's hospitality and deep love for our church family.

Cal Roy When I think of Cal Roy two things immediately come to mind: 1) his passion for sound biblical interpretation and teaching and 2) his steadfastness under trial. Cal was a life long student of God's Word and loved to teach the Word whenever he had the chance. As to his steadfastness under trial, after Cal retired and he and Earlene settled in Ramona, Earlene was diagnosed with Alzeheimers. For twelve years, Cal graciously and patiently cared for Earlene at home without complaint until the Lord took her home. He did this while continuing to serve as an Elder and teacher here at Grace. It was Cal who taught me as a young pastor that in times of tragedy my *presence* with the hurting was more important than my *words*. That is wisdom for all of us.

Let us imitate Cal's passionate love for God's Word and his steadfast faith and service in the midst of trial.

John McColm John, like Glae McDonald, loved the church family. He, too, provided steady leadership during the tumultuous 80's and was concerned that the church family heal from the wounds of those splits. Gentle and kind, John loved the brothers and sisters of Grace.

Let us imitate John's gentleness and kindness and his love for the church family.

Jules Van Camp When I remember Jules two things come to mind: 1) his steadfastness under trial and 2) his concern for healthy marriages and families. Jules contracted a rare disease that slowly destroyed his lungs over a four year period. Jules did not become embittered by the disease, but continued to trust God, to serve and to lead his family. Jules was very sensitive to and concerned for the families of Grace

always encouraging us men to lead our families spiritually. A paragraph from his memorial handout says it well:

Jules was an Elder at Grace Community Church, and a counselor to many, encouraging them in their love for their spouses, raising their children and walking in trust of Jesus Christ. During his four year illness from myositis, he remained strong and steadfast in his faith and was truly an inspiration to us all. Jules, we love you and we'll see you in eternity.

Let us imitate Jules' faith in the midst of trial and let us imitate his commitment to healthy marriages and families.

Al Jaggi When I remember Al three things come to mind: 1) his vision to make disciples beyond the four walls of Grace Church and to respond to the opportunities God opened up, 2) his commitment to personally disciple men and 3) his commitment to love others.

It was through Al (and Lyn) that Grace became involved in Shelter Valley and in San Antonio de las Minas, Baja. I don't know for sure, but it seems like every day of the week, Al was meeting with a man or men discipling them in Christ. And on numerous occasions Al and I talked about what love looks like in the various situations we were dealing with.

Let us imitate Al's commitment to discipling wherever and with whomever God gives us and let us imitate Al's love for others.

All these are honorable, hard working, trustworthy men. All were committed to their wives and children. All were committed to Grace Church and served sacrificially to lead and guide this church family. How blessed we are to have truly godly, faithful leaders to remember and imitate!

We are to remember and imitate the faith of our spiritual leaders, but we are never to build our lives on our spiritual leaders. Perhaps that is why the Preacher immediately follows verse 7 with this affirmation of Jesus in verse 8.

Hebrews 13:8 (ESV)

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

We are to build our lives on Jesus. As we run the race of faith we are to do so with our eyes fixed on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Warren Wiersbe writes:

After I had announced my resignation from a church I had been pastoring for several years, one of the members said to me, "I don't see how I'm going to make it without you! I depend so much on you for my spiritual help!"

My reply shocked him. "Then the sooner I leave, the sooner you can start depending on the Lord. Never build your life on any servant of God. Build your life on Jesus Christ. He never changes."¹

Our commitment to a local church should never be dependent upon the pastor. We have built too many churches around the personality of the preacher. Our commitment is to Christ and to our brothers and sisters in the church family.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 328.

Who are those leaders in your church life that have modeled for you a life of faith and commitment to Christ? Take time to think carefully about the fruit of their lives and identify those things you want to emulate in your own. Give thanks for those leaders who have helped you in your relationship with Christ and be inspired by the quality of their lives to continue to follow Him.