

## A Series of Fortunate Events Part II: How to BE a great church member!

A reminder that although these are stories from Stuart's life and experience, they are deeply rooted in Scripture and a Biblical and Spirit-Filled model for being disciples.

Some Scriptures from last week: 1Thes. 5:16-18, Acts 16:25, Is. 45:2-3.

Some Scriptures from this week: Ephesians 4:30-32, Micah 6:8, Galatians 5:13-25 – let these verses shape the discussions through the evening.

Stuart did not say his earthly father (unlike his Heavenly Father) was perfect! But there were examples of godly living and being a well-loved member of the same church over many, many years. How do we do that?

**Be Faithful:** Not in fits and starts and flurries but over the long-haul. Reading His Word, Being filled with His Spirit and hanging out with His people. Which of these do you find the easiest/most natural and which the hardest? Why?

Stuart said faithfulness is born out of a daily choice. If you had to make the choice between the following two things in the morning which one would you go for?

- Cup of tea/coffee or a shower
- Cold shower or no shower
- Breakfast or brush your teeth
- Warm/defrosted car or extra 5 mins in bed

We all prioritise things differently, but there are some rocks, spiritually, we need to put in place to Be faithful.

It matters that we finish well. What area of your life do you see is susceptible to you not finishing well (e.g. unforgiveness/bitterness, distraction by other things, broken relationships...)

**Be Forgiving:** Look at Ephesians 4:30-32. This speaks both about our own need for forgiveness and also to forgive others. Both are a work of the Holy Spirit. What is your experience of the Holy Spirit in both of these areas?

Why is forgiveness essential in church life? How does Stuart's dad's story of asking forgiveness into his 70's encourage you?

Stuart also talked about boundaries and changing relationships, saying that just because someone may no longer be my friend does not make them my enemy. How do we decide what boundaries to put in place and maybe when a friendship needs to end? What is your advice to others in this area to do this in a godly way?

**Be Generous:** We are made in God's image so reflect His nature. Where do we see the generosity of God in both the macro and micro?

What is the difference between a gift and what we are all called to do as believer's i.e. Romans 12 speaks about the gift of generosity – do we just leave it to those who have the gift?

It is hard to speak about these stories whilst also being mindful not to be boastful or public like the pharisees, but what are some of the principles of being generous in the church? E.g. you might talk about regular tithing, giving as your feel led by the Spirit (the lady selling fruit, or the person needing transport for Bible college), giving with no strings attached (removing the piano that you paid for!).

It's not about the amount but the heart – so how do we develop a heart of generosity?

**Be Servant-hearted:** There may be different roles for us in different seasons. What have or are some of your favourite areas of service in the church and why? (it might be the team you were part of, a time when you had more free time or an area you felt gifted in).

Should we only serve where we are gifted and good at it?

Stuart ended by saying these 4 Bes can sound like works and that we need to remind ourselves on the Gospel. How do we avoid the pitfall of assessing ourselves by what we do and especially in comparison to others?