

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Ephesians 5:1-10**.
- B. Gus Nichols wrote a short bulletin article many years ago entitled, "Lessons to Learn from a Postage Stamp."
- C. He lists seven similarities between postage stamps and living the Xian life.

I. FIRST, STAMPS BEAR THE IMAGE OF DIGNITY.

- A. Aside of Bugs Bunny, Elvis, etc., stamps will bear the image of one of our past presidents, a great event of history, or some other person who is noteworthy.
- B. Stamps, to my knowledge, are never racial, questionable, or give an impression of evil, slander, or show any kind of un-patriotism.
- C. Likewise, Xians are made in the image of God (as all men are), but we as chosen vessels should always look and act like a child of the heavenly Father (Phil. 1:27; 2:3).
(Phil 1:27) Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
(Phil 2:3) Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;

II. SECOND, STAMPS ARE NOT ALL ALIKE.

- A. This fact is obvious, and is the very reason for stamp collecting.
- B. Not only do the pictures differ, but the monetary value as well; there are 1-cent, 2-cent, etc.
- C. The same is true in the kingdom. There are many Xians each with differing talents. Some can do more than others, but everyone can do something (see 1Cor. 12:14-25).

III. THIRD, STAMPS CO-OPERATE; THEY WORK TOGETHER.

- A. A 5-cent stamp will work with a three, four, or a dozen other stamps the same as if alone.
- B. A stamp will work with other stamps to get the job done, and the stamp will work if it is the only one doing what needs to be done.
- C. Xians are to work together for the common cause of building up the body of X (Eph. 4:6).
one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.
- D. There should be no divisions or factions within the body of X, every Xian should work with every other Xian, and to be able to work alone if need be (Phil. 2:14-15; 2:12; 1Cor. 1:10).
(Phil 2:14-15) Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,
(Phil 2:12) So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;
(1Cor 1:10) Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

IV. FOURTH, A STAMP'S RAGGED EDGE IS NO HINDRANCE TO ITS WORK.

- A. Stamps have ragged edges; they are not smooth or perfect, yet deliver the letter just the same.
- B. Xians may lack education, money, good looks, and have a rough personality, but these should not keep them from doing the Lord's work (Gal. 3:28).
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

V. **FIFTH, A STAMP MUST BE “LICKED” TO BE ANY GOOD.**

- A. Brother Nichols wrote this before self-adhesive stamps; but we still have stamps to be licked.
- B. This is a play on words. The stamp must be fastened to the letter to be able to do its job.
Without being “licked” the stamp cannot do its job.
- C. A Xian must also be “licked” from time to time to be able to grow and mature. God disciplines those He loves (Heb. 12:9-11).
Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
- D. Only a faith refined by fire will last, and be purer than gold (1Pet. 1:7).
that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

VI. **SIXTH, A STAMP IS NOT READY TO GO UNTIL IT IS CANCELED OUT.**

- A. We know that when the letter is ready for mailing and has the proper postage that the stamp(s) are canceled out and then the letter is mailed.
- B. We too must “cancel out” our old life, to live a new one (Lk. 9:23; Rom. 6:3-5).
(Lk 9:23) And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”
(Rom 6:3-5) Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection,
- C. This is a continual process (Gal. 2:20).
“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.”

VII. **SEVENTH, A STAMP WORKS UNTIL IT REACHES ITS DESTINATION.**

- A. This goes without saying. The stamp is good until the letter is received at the appropriate address.
- B. Xians are to strive each day for heaven (Phil. 3:20).
For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;
- C. We are to continue until we reach our destination (Rev. 2:10).
‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.’

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. These lessons are for our benefit, that we might learn how to better live the Xian life, work in the church and be on the road to our destination--heaven.
- B. Are you ready to:
 - 1. Bear the image of dignity?
 - 2. Use your unique talents?
 - 3. Co-operate with others?
 - 4. Accept your ragged edge?
 - 5. Be “licked” from time to time?
 - 6. Be canceled out?
 - 7. Work until you reach your destination?then... you are ready to be a “postage stamp” Xian.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.