

# Beware the Band Wagon!

Joe Slater

A band wagon was a large, decorated wagon upon which a musical band performed, often at the front of a parade. As spectators applauded the musicians, other people might jump onboard and ride along, hoping to share in the glory. When the music stopped and the applause died down, however, the extra passengers would jump right back off. Thus, the practice of joining any popular trend came to be known as “climbing onto the band wagon.”

In New Testament days, multitudes of people were converting to Christ. They faced the danger of the “band wagon” effect just as we do. Paul taught some of them: *“as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”* (Philippians 2:12). To work something out is to see it through to completion (think of “working out” a math problem – you cannot stop in the middle of your calculations, but must complete the process).

Happily, our brethren in the Jerusalem church were not band wagon disciples. Luke mentions four items (Acts 2:42) in which they continued steadfastly:

**The apostles teaching.** First, they continued to be taught by the apostles. Second, they constantly behaved in keeping with what the apostles taught them. Being a Christian involves life-long learning and growing. When you stop learning and growing, you start dying!

**Fellowship.** The church is a spiritual family. Going it alone is next to impossible. The early church regularly spent much time together, sharing one another’s joys, sorrows, successes, and failures. When fellowship wanes, disciples weaken and may perish.

**The breaking of the bread.** We need constant reminders of Jesus and what He did for us at Calvary. The Lord ordained Communion (the Lord’s Supper) upon the first day of each week (Acts 20:7) for this very purpose. *“Do this in remembrance of Me”* (Luke 22:19).

**Prayers.** Paul wrote to the Colossians to *“continue in prayer”* (4:2). Jesus taught that we ought always to pray and not lose heart (Luke 18:1). Did you pray yesterday? Pray again today! Did you pray this morning? Pray again tonight!

Let us not treat the Lord and His church like a band wagon. When we obeyed the gospel, we committed ourselves to a lifetime of faithfulness. May we continue steadfastly as the early disciples did!

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## Strongest Drive, Except One

Animals operate by instinct rather than logic or reason. Most animals have a parental instinct that causes them to feed, protect, and nurture their offspring. Instinct to migrate in birds and fish is detailed and powerful. The strongest instinct in the animal world is universally recognized as the instinct for self-preservation

However, unlike in animals, in humans made in God’s image, God places a sense of “ought,” a spirit of altruism. The instinct for self-preservation is often overruled by it; human beings risk – often even give – their lives to save others.

That is a factor in the powerful moral argument for the existence of a Good Creator God

-- Cecil May, Jr. (Montgomery, AL) via *Preacher Talk*

# Willing To Share

*“Charge them that are rich in this world...that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate”* (I Timothy 6: 17, 18).

My son recently sent us a video of our grandson who is two and a half years old. My son and his wife were trying to get Kai to share the little bag of candy they had given him. Kai, our grandson, said, “It’s mine.” He shook his head and pushed his mother’s hand away when she asked for some.

That’s how many of us were at Kai’s age. We did not like to share. Hopefully, selfishness is something we have outgrown. When Paul writes to Timothy that we should be *“willing to communicate,”* he does not mean we should be willing to talk. Paul wants us to share.

Christians have so much. Paul tells Timothy, *“God gives us richly all things to enjoy.”* God gives us spiritual riches and blessings that we don’t deserve. But Christians living in the United States have far more than spiritual blessings. We are blessed materially way beyond most Christians living in other countries.

So do we thank God for His care and His goodness? If so, that is good. We ought to, need to. But do we just go happily on our way, thanking God, and forgetting the needs of others? Is that all God expects of us? No. Paul says we should do good and be rich in good works. That means being willing to share. Those who share are *“laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed”* (I Timothy 6:20).

--Donna Wittlif (Denver, CO)