

Have You Ever Wondered?

There are times we all get discouraged and wonder what it would be like if we could do what we want. What would it be like if we did not have to work or go to school? What would it be like to have all the money we wanted and could buy whatever we desired? Such wondering is natural but we realize that such is actually wishing and will not happen. In fact, some of the things we would want would not be good for us.

Have you ever gotten discouraged while serving God and wondered what it would be like if you could go somewhere else? Those with children want Bible Classes with lots of children so their young ones will have good companions. Young couples often want to go somewhere that will have numerous young couples for them to go out with. Single Christians want other single Christians nearby as they look for dates. I do not blame anyone for desiring such things. I remember being a teenager at a congregation that had no one my age. It can be discouraging and lonely.

There are times it is tempting to go somewhere else because we want something better. We want to go where the building is full and we will have more people to associate with. However, some will place their desires ahead of God's Word. People may leave a faithful congregation to go to a denomination because it is bigger and has more young people, but they are not placing God but themselves first.

This got me to thinking of what it was like to have been a Christian in the first century. We often read through the Book of Acts and learn of those at Jerusalem, Samaria, Antioch, and other places as they obeyed the Gospel. We read of the riot at Jerusalem that claimed the life of Stephen, Acts 7.57-60. We also read of Christians being scattered due to the persecution at Jerusalem and the spread of the Gospel. Also in this account is Paul's conversion and his various legal and personal trials. It was hard being a Christian in the first century. They had to be convicted by the word of God in order to stand up against such trials and tribulations.

Have you ever wondered what first century Christians wanted for their children? Being a Christian parent could not have been easy in the first century. I doubt if they had classrooms like we do now. Who knows what type of classes the early churches had for their young people? Most likely what the children learned came by way of their parents. Mothers and fathers would have instructed their children in the way of the Lord. "And you,

fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6.4). Many of these parents would face persecution and see their children face similar trials. Some would die at the hands of the Jews as they tried to stop the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Later on, some would face Nero. They would be fed to lions, or have their heads chopped off, or be dipped in oil and burned alive. Domitian and Diocletian would cause the streets of cities to be red with the blood of Christians. I dare to say that many first century Christians would look at parents today that complain because there are not enough young people for their children to be with and wish for such problems. They simply wanted their children to be able to serve God and live. I know some parents don't want their children to make the sacrifices that earlier Christians made in serving God. But it is through those sacrifices that our children learn to depend on God and grow.

I dare to say that some first century Christians would have wished for things to have been different for themselves and their children. They would look at our buildings with padded pews, classrooms, teaching material, and wish they had it so good. - continued