

TRUTH YOUNG ADULTS' FELLOWSHIP
WATER BROOKS

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Articles in This Issue:
The Christian And Self- Reflection
Personal Sharings -- Following Christ in Year 2015

CONTENT

	PAGE
EDITORIAL	3
<i>By Ho Xiao Wei</i>	
THE CHRISTIAN AND SELF-REFLECTION	3
<i>By Rev Dennis Kwok</i>	
PERSONAL SHARINGS -- FOLLOWING CHRIST IN YEAR 2015	8
-- Sharing from Dn Franco	
-- Sharing from Xiao Wei	
-- Sharing from Sara	
-- Sharing from Joanna	
-- Sharing from Chao Wei	
-- Sharing from Eunice	
-- Sharing from Lukas	



EDITORIAL

By Ho Xiao Wei

Dear YAFers,
Thank God for seeing us through yet another publication of our YAF newsletter *Water Brooks*. Thank God for the sub-com who have labored to produce this issue, and for all who have contributed and helped in one way or another.

This issue's theme is on reflecting how we have been following Christ. This is to complement our YAF Theme for 2015, on being followers of Christ. Through the messages preached at our YAF meetings, we have seen from God's Word how we are to follow Christ. It is good for us to look at our own lives to see if we have truly learnt those lessons for ourselves.

In this issue, we have an article by Rev Dennis Kwok on "The Christian And Self-Reflection". There, from God's Word, he shows us that self-reflection is biblical. Following that, we have personal sharings by YAFers regarding our reflections on how we have followed Christ in 2015.

May the Lord use this issue of *Water Brooks* for our blessing.

God bless.

THE CHRISTIAN AND SELF-REFLECTION

By Rev Dennis Kwok

Self-reflection is nothing new. The world knows it and recognizes the importance of it. More often than not, self-reflection is required when a mistake is made, in order that the same mistake may not be repeated again. Generally, self-reflection is a good thing. It helps us to trace where the problem was and enables us to rectify it accordingly. This is probably a natural step one would take in any matter. However, what does the Bible teach concerning self-reflection? Is it biblical or is it just a normal reaction using our common sense? I submit to you that the Bible does teach self-reflection. You may not find the term 'self-reflection' or the word 'reflect' in the English Bible (KJV). The biblical call to self-reflection is taught and explained by other phrases in the Bible. We shall look at two of them in this article, one from the Old

Testament and the other from the New Testament.

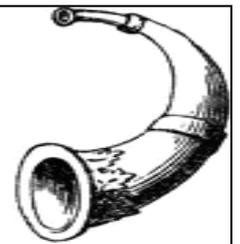
Consider Your Ways

First: Consider your ways

These words are twice repeated in verses 5 and 7 of Haggai chapter one. They are the words of the LORD through the mouth of prophet Haggai to the newly-returned group of Jews back into the Promised Land. The Jews had been exiled to Babylon since 605 B.C. and were there for 70 years. They continued to be in captivity even after Persia conquered Babylon. However, Cyrus of Persia issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to their land and rebuild their Temple. The first return was led by Zerubbabel, and the work on the Temple began. But the Devil will always try to hinder God's work. As such, the Samaritans came and hindered the rebuilding of the Temple. With this opposition, in addition to the dampened spirit of the Jews due to the desolation of the land, crop failure, hard work, hostility and many other problems, they found it easier to stop building rather than to press on in this extremely difficult task.

In the space of two years, they stopped rebuilding the Temple completely and used the excuse that it was not the right time to rebuild the Temple since there were so many difficulties (cf. Haggai 1:2). They chose to focus on building their own homes instead. It was in this context that God called Haggai, and the prophet Haggai preached fiery sermons to stir up the spiritually lethargic Jews to finish rebuilding the Temple. How long did they neglect the work of rebuilding the Temple? 16 years! No wonder God was angry with these Jews. It was high time for them to wake up! And God called upon them to "Consider [their] ways!" (cf. Haggai 1:5, 7)

Haggai 1:5
 "Now therefore
 thus saith the
 LORD of hosts;
 Consider your ways"



Was there anything wrong with their ways? Surely, there was. Haggai was showing the Jews how they had focused on their physical needs more than their spiritual needs. They had put God in the backseat and they had been driving their own life. Their own houses were built but God's

house was left unbuilt. All these nonsense had to stop. They had to reflect on their priority and commitment to the LORD. Haggai reminded the Jews why they left Babylon in the first place and how they were given a commission to do the work of the LORD. God Himself had provided the materials through Cyrus for the Temple to be rebuilt (cf. Ezra 3:7). All the Jews had to do was to go and bring the wood from Lebanon. And this work of going and bringing the wood had never stopped. What had stopped was the rebuilding of God's house. What kept them going was the building of their own houses. Their personal desire had become more important than the primary reason for their leaving Babylon, which was to rebuild God's house. That was why the LORD withheld His blessing upon His people (cf. Haggai 1:8-11).

Why did the Jews not realize that by now? Indeed they needed the "wake-up" call. They had allowed their own personal interest to override God's commission. God, therefore, called upon them to consider their ways; and to do their own self-reflection. It was, after their self-reflection, that they repented

and "obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD" (Haggai 1:12b).

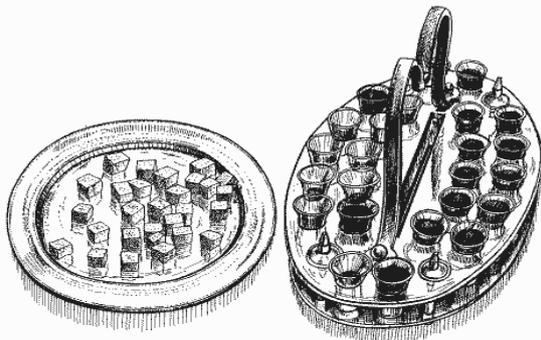
Self-reflection helps us to see where we have gone wrong so that we may turn back to the right path again. I pray that we would repent of our sins quickly and not be like the Jews who wasted 16 years of their lives, before they 'woke up' and repented of their sins.

Examine Your Faith

Second: Examine your faith

The Lord's Supper is one of the two sacraments that the Lord Jesus Christ has instituted for His church to keep until He comes again. The minister will usually read a portion of Scripture on the Lord's Supper, taken from 1 Corinthians 11:23-32, to prepare the hearts of the congregation as they come before the Table of Remembrance. This passage does not only show the symbolic nature of the Lord's Supper (since the elements do represent the body and blood of Christ), it also shows that it is a spiritual exercise that is to be taken seriously, for those who partake

of it unworthily will be subjected to God's judgment. Some believers in the New Testament churches had indeed experienced weaknesses and sicknesses in the flesh because they had taken the Lord's Supper lightly. That is why the Apostle Paul says, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). We are not to take the Lord's Supper lightly, and are called to examine ourselves before we partake of the Lord's Supper. The word 'examine' means to test and prove. We are to test and prove our faith.



"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28)

There are several questions that we must answer when we examine ourselves. Do I really believe in Christ as my Lord? He is my Saviour definitely, but is

He my Lord? To acknowledge Him as Saviour is to accept what He has done on the Cross to save me for my sins. There are those who have no problem accepting Jesus as their Saviour, but it becomes a problem when they do not acknowledge Him as Lord. If I say He is my Lord, has my life failed to prove He is my Lord? If so, then I must do more self-reflection. We must find out where we have gone wrong. Is there any word that I have spoken, any thought filling my mind, or any action that I do that does not reflect Christ? There is a lot of self-reflection to do when we examine our own faith. And we must be honest with ourselves and before God. If we ignore the problems that exist in us, then this self-reflection has not helped us and is not effective at all. There are those who have done their self-reflection but did not choose to repent. They felt unworthy to partake of the Lord's Supper, as they come before the Table of Remembrance, and thought it is alright to hold on to their sins, and refrain from taking the holy elements when they were passed around. However, is such an action commendable? Will the Lord be pleased with such a spirit?

Repentance is the only way out after self-reflection. And there should not be any procrastination since this is what God desires of us.

Self-reflection should be done regularly, either at the end of the day, week, month or year, or as and when it is needed. There is no hard and fast rule on this. I believe we should have self-reflection as often as we can so that we can ensure we are walking right with God and that we are doing His will, bringing glory to His Name.

How should we go about in our self-reflection? The two most important elements that must be found in self-reflection are the Holy Spirit and the Holy Book (Bible). The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray as well as gives us discernment in every matter. The Holy Book builds up our knowledge and makes us wise unto salvation.



Self-reflection can be done anywhere, at any place where we can pray and meditate upon God's Word without any distraction. We may also do it during our Quiet Time. Self-reflection is more specific to the problem that we want God to help us overcome. This is biblical self-reflection, which is different from the world's. The world has no god in their practice. But we have.

Remember the two elements: the Holy Spirit and the Holy Book. Take your time in self-reflection. Do not rush through it. In quietness, you will hear God's still small voice speaking to you through His perfect Word. Let us consider our ways and examine our faith as often as we can. Self-reflection can take us a long way in becoming better Christians, growing closer to God, and staying on the path which God has paved for us all the way to the end faithfully. Let us do it, with God's help.

May God help us. Amen.





PERSONAL SHARINGS -- FOLLOWING CHRIST IN YEAR 2015

Sharing from Dn Franco

It was a difficult year. So many things demanded attention and time. It was a year to really measure what is important and what is urgent.

I thank God that it was a year God showed me He is always in control, especially when I felt I was not in control. That is a very hard lesson to learn, and I thank God that He chose to humble me in His good time.

My greatest joy was that I was able to have family worship with the family most of the days, which is a most precious thing for me. It is at these times I realise that I have to share with conviction and burden for my family, and those were times that I was built up more in His word.

Finally, I have to thank God for Sara who has been supporting me through it all. May God have mercy on all of us to learn to wait on Him and let Him lead.

Isaiah 26:3 "Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee."



Sharing from Xiao Wei

2015 was a relatively stable year for myself. There was no major decision to be made or big event happening. Nothing very exciting or life changing happened that would challenge my loyalty to Christ or whether or not I would still follow Him. I guess that for myself, in 2015, following Christ was more of a day-to-day and day-by-day thing. Every day, I just serve God and try to do my best wherever He places me, and at whatever work He calls me to do.

To speak of but one area where I have not followed Christ well, I know there were definitely times when I was not consistent in my daily Quiet Time. I have failed Christ in that regard. If I cannot be faithful in this area of keeping my daily Quiet Time, then how can I expect myself to be faithful when bigger tests come?

I thank God for His grace in granting me a generally smooth-sailing year, and for helping me to meet various situations. I believe I could have done more for Christ and could have been a better channel of blessing to others if I had been more faithful to God. By my failures, I have limited my effectiveness in service. May the Lord have mercy on me and help me to love Christ more in the year ahead.





Sharing from Sara

How have I been following God in the year 2015? I struggled with this topic very much. What I remembered of year 2015, are the many instances when I have not followed God. It has not been an easy year, both individually and as a family. But I do have thanksgiving, much thanksgiving.

Lamentations 3:22-23 "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

There have been instances in my private moments, and during service for the Lord, where I have not trusted in the Lord but depended on my own wisdom, judgment and strength. The consequences were instant and unpleasant, even causing hurt. Through all these, I saw my weakness and total need for Christ every moment; and the greatness of His love and patience with me. I have learnt that denying self, taking up the cross and following Him very closely is absolutely necessary for myself and others around me, if I want to be a blessing.

It is also through such times, that I realized anew that Romans 12:1-2 is so true... that our mind really needs much renewal from God's Word. Even our good deeds, if it is not according to God's Word and His will and His way, will be futile and not pleasing to Him. I thank God for His patience and grace.



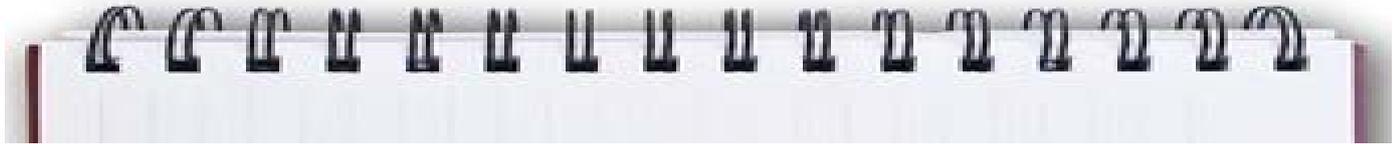


And the times when we do follow Him, are all purely by His grace alone. ☺ I thank God for a more consistent Quiet Time with Him, Bible-reading time with the kids, and the regular family worship we have as a family. And I do thank God for the night classes that we could attend, besides the Bible studies, prayer meetings, other meetings and of course, Sunday service. Most of them, among the above, are our "non-negotiables". To say that it was an easy decision to try to attend as many as we can, is not really the truth. We did miss some meetings, but we are thankful that when we did attend, there were always blessings received, especially from His Word and from His people. Yes, we have to forgo a lot of things, but looking back, we did not miss out at all. All that we really need, God provides. Indeed, I thank God for His Word and for the YAF theme that is based on Luke 9:23. The series of exhortations based on this theme last year has helped me, numerous times, to go back to Him, and to just do what He says for as a speaker reminded us - when we follow Him, we can rest on Him for the result of the decisions we made.

Luke 9:23 "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

I thank God for the year 2015.





Sharing from Joanna

It is important to take time to reflect on our lives and how we have been a Christian in this world. As I begin to type this sharing, my heart is filled with thanksgiving and joy. God's faithfulness never fails in our lives and His mercies and compassions toward us are new every morning. It had been a blessed 2015 in the different areas of my life – 12 family, work and church.

I had a new role in the family in 2015 – leaving the comforts of my parent's home, I began a new life as a helpmeet to my husband. Learning to be a godly wife and helpmeet to my husband was my ministry in the home. As Christ is the head of the church, so is the husband the head of the wife. God's Word is the 'instruction manual' for my new role as a wife. Thank God also for good Christian literature that some sisters have shared, they have been very encouraging and useful.

In the workplace, 2015 was a year of change as well. I had to take on additional workload at work due to the departure of a colleague. Initially I felt bitter and grumbled at the additional responsibility, but God is gracious. Through the YAF messages and reminders from His Word, I managed to cope well with the changes at work. May the Lord help me to shine for Him and bear a good testimony for Him in my workplace.



Lastly, I thank God for a blessed 2015 in the area of church service. Serving God together in the church as husband and wife brings much joy and blessings. Thank God for the opportunity to serve in the choir ministry together, and in the ministry of hospitality to fellow brethren-in-Christ. I especially thank God that we were able to host Pr Ngoc Chan and his wife in our home when they visited Singapore last year. We had a blessed time of fellowship and encouraging one another in the Lord. It is our prayer that we will be able to serve God together with the blessings that He has given us, and to be a blessing to the people around us.

Sharing from Chao Wei

Thank God for His grace and mercy in seeing me through year 2015.

Following Christ in My Workplace

In 2015, I had to take on additional workload due to business restructuring and two colleagues' resignation. One area that I failed to follow Christ was that I often found myself complaining about the workload and my boss for not being understanding. This has always been a constant struggle for me and I pray that in 2016, I will be mindful of my attitude at work and bear a good testimony for Him in my workplace.

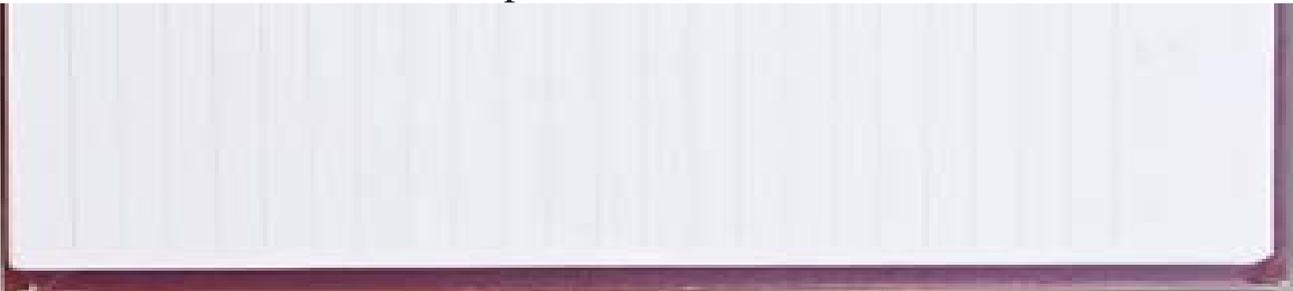


Following Christ in Church

As I reflect on my service in church, I would like to share from Matthew 25:14-30 on the Parable of the Talents. It tells of a man who gave his servants different amount of talents according to their ability, to see how they would use it. What I would like to focus on is the servant who was given two talents. He was able to use his two talents to earn two more talents. Though this was less than what the servant with five talents had earned, yet he received the same commendation from his lord - "Well done, thou good and faithful servant". His master recognized that he only had two to start with, and so his effort in earning the two more talents was just as commendable as the first servant. Ultimately, what his master was looking for was not how much he was able to earn, but whether he had been a faithful servant. Service is not about whether or not we are able to achieve great and glorious things. Rather, what the Lord requires of us is that we are faithful in service. I pray that I will always seek to be faithful in my service to God for this year.

Following Christ at Home

As I reflect on my role as a husband for the past one year, I had to ask myself if I had helped Joanna be more ready to meet our Creator than she was a year ago. Surely I have impacted her in a great way but I realized a lot of that influence and shaping have not been all good and I have lacked in working on presenting her more sanctified before Christ. It is my prayer that I will continue to lead not only in physical needs but also more in her spiritual needs.





Sharing from Eunice

2015 was an eventful year for me. It was a year which I had increased work load at work, and also took up more responsibilities in the Pre-School Sunday School ministry in church. But thank God for how He saw me through the year and enabled me to keep close to Him and follow Him.

At work, sometimes it was tempting not to follow Christ. A recent experience was a few weeks back, when my colleagues suggested to spend the Labour Day weekends in Vietnam as a get-together holiday with their partners (some of them are unmarried and one a Christian from a Presbyterian church). On first thought, I thought that it would be fun going on a short holiday and having a time to get to know my colleagues better. However, thank God that through prayer and the reading of His Word, it was evident that I should not go. Thank God for the courage to reject and even to make a stand on my beliefs to my colleagues when I was asked of a reason. Thank God that through this it also reminded me that this world is not our home and we are but sojourners here to live a godly life to bring others to Christ.

As for my service in Church, it was also difficult during the time when I was asked to step up as the superintendent for the Pre-School Sunday School department. But thank God that with much prayer, I accepted the calling to serve as an assistant superintendent.





Thank God that through this service, when following Christ and heeding His call, I was greatly blessed and encouraged by the teachers as well as the children.

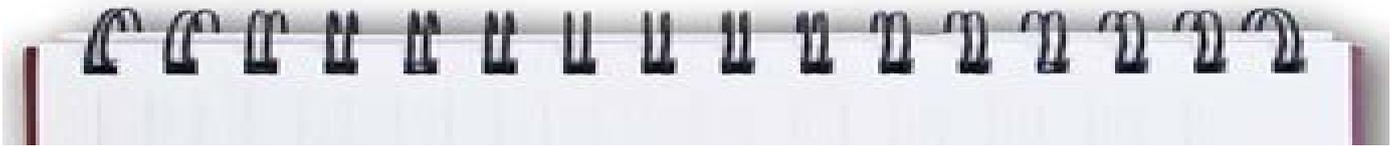
May we continue to deny self, take up our cross and follow Christ!

Sharing from Lukas

Matthew 16:24 “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

I would like to start by giving thanks to God. Reflecting on what had happened in the year 2015, following Christ has never been easy. Difficulties may come! Problems may occur! Trials and temptations will never stop attacking us! Nevertheless, the Lord is my strength and He watches over me every moment of my life and He is always faithful to me although there were times I feel like giving up.

Following Christ means a great sacrifice of myself. I learned to leave my comfort to follow Him. Thank God for giving me the opportunity to serve Him in the church. Although my service may only be a small part, it is still my responsibility as a follower of Christ. I thank God for enabling me to teach the young people in my church. Although there are only four to five people attending the class, their knowledge of God and spiritual growth are most precious.



I thank the Lord also for enabling me to be the example among my siblings, to encourage them to bring at least one soul to Christ in the coming year. The Lord had also given me the privilege (during my semester break) to encourage my siblings to study God's Word for the ministry in the future, so that they may serve Him well as a good servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The last reflection that I will like to share is regarding my relationship with my friends. Taking this step to follow Christ by enrolling in the Bible College and abandoning the secular life has never been easy for me. I knew that once I stepped into this path I would straightaway lose many friends. Did I lose my friends? Yes, it happened. Hurt and pain I may feel but they have never been an obstacle for me to quit my studies here.

**"I will follow where He leadeth,
I will pasture where He feedeth:
I will follow all the way Lord,
I will follow Jesus every day."**

(Lyrics: Charles F. Weigle)



Following Christ as YAF



"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

OBJECTIVES OF NEWSLETTER



For the EDIFICATION, EDUCATION
& ENCOURAGEMENT of our members

TYAF BIBLE STUDY

COME JOIN OUR

BIBLE



Study

Topic: Book of Proverbs
First and third Saturdays of the
month when there are YAF
meetings

Time: 6pm Venue: Room 03-06