

He says he knows they were

- 1) Chosen by God (v. 4) because of the way they...
- 2) Initially Received Christ (v. 5) - with full conviction and in the Holy Spirit and power, and by their
- 3) Ongoing Response to Christ (v. 3) – works of faith, labors of love, and perseverance in hope.

At first they were the “imitators”, and then in v. 7 they became the example to others

Hiebert again...
“It is proof of a healthy Christian life when they begin by following the example of other Christians. They themselves develop into worthy and attractive example for others. Such an achievement is not a matter of the mere length of life as a professional Christian but the outcome of a vital inner expression consistently expressed in consecrated Christian conduct.”²

B. Example to other Believers

First they became imitators... v. 6

But notice exactly who they began imitating...

“imitators of us and of the Lord...”

Acts 5:41

I like how D. Edmond Hiebert puts it...

Heb 10:32-34

“The order may at first strike us as startling, but it is... the natural order in the experience of converts [in any] mission field. Even before the message of a missionary is fully understood or personally accepted, the hearers will observe the outworking of that message in the life of the [witness]. And when the
Christians have 3 things (joy-inducing things) that who are not in Christ do not have...
1) Superiority of our Relationship with Christ

b) The Nature of our Relationship

2) Certainty of our Hope in Christ

John 15:10-11 – *If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.* Romans 8:18 – *I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed.*

c) Shared Experience with our Loved One(s)

2 Cor 4:17 – *For momentary, light affliction producing for us an eternal weight of glory in comparison...*

John 15:18-20

1 Peter 4:12-13 – *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*

3) Trials Validate Personal Faith

1 Peter 1:6-7

Matthew 5:11-12 – *Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice!*

Reflect on the importance of joy by considering what happens / d

