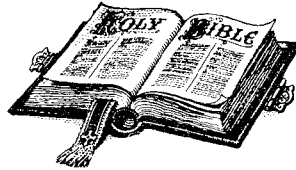


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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"THE GOOD AND THE RIGHT WAY"

(1 Samuel 12:23-24)

When the Israelites realized that they had added another evil to all their sins in asking for a king, they entreated the aged Samuel to pray for them that they not die for it. Samuel, concerned for their souls, encouraged the people to refrain from turning away from God in disappointment over their mistakes. Rather than condemnation, Samuel reprovved and offered correction: **"I will teach you the good and right way: only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you."** His concern extended to the conviction that not to pray for them would be a sin against the Lord.

The Israelites had forgotten God as they so often did. They had forgotten His power, His love and His way. This is so often true of God's people today. It is shameful to forget but it is wonderful to have opportunity to repent and be forgiven. Samuel spoke of a way that was first **good**. Obviously this way was God's way seeing that **"there is none good but one, that is, God. . ."** (Matt. 19:16). Secondly, he spoke of a way that was **right**. One following the right way would be a righteous individual. The Psalmist concluded that righteousness is the commandments of God. (See Psalms 119:172. The way then would be the keeping of His commandments.

"ONLY FEAR THE LORD"

How did Samuel teach them this way? He

began by teaching them to **fear** the Lord. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psalms 111:10). And wisdom results from the keeping the commandments of God. (See Psalms 119:98). To walk in **the good and right way**, one must have a good realization of the nature of God. We are exhorted to **"... serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire."** (Heb. 12:28-29). **"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."** (Heb. 10:31). We can not walk in His way unless we respect the attributes of our God who created the universe and yet is concerned for each creature. The preacher finally discovered **"...the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."** (Eccl. 12:13).

"SERVE HIM IN TRUTH"

There are two ways one must serve God in truth. One, such service should be in all sincerity as will be discussed later. Secondly, in truth refers to agreeing with the word of God. Jesus said, **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."** (John 17:17). Earlier at Jacob's well He told the Samaritan woman, **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."** (John 4:24). One's service to God must therefore in all facets of his duties be authorized and directed by the word of God. There are those, however, who do

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Editorial - -

MARRIAGE: BLESSINGS & RESPONSIBILITIES!

Although often neglected in our teaching, the subject of marriage is a very important one. As we study marriage, we must keep in mind that the Scriptures will completely furnish us what we need to know as husbands, wives, parents and children. (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3 & James 1:25).

As we engage in this study, I trust that we may point out some of the blessings and clarify some of the responsibilities that are involved in the marriage relationship. Our objectives in doing this will be to prepare a way for more harmonious relationships, to inspire improvements of existing relationships and to encourage the spiritual development of all concerned.

Without the vision of the life to come, life consists of an endless circle of working, eating, sleeping, playing—of births, joys—of sorrows, deaths—of striving without success against diseases, sorrows, disappointment, heartaches and the grave. **How dark! How dismal! How gloomy! How hopeless!**

However, if we have the vision of the life to come, in its proper perspective, life is a happy period of devoted service to the Supreme Being, of sharing with loved ones the blessings of God, and of preparing to live with God forever in the world to come. **How**

beautiful! How lovely! How enjoyable! How hopeful!

Man and woman were designed by the God of heaven for a purpose. They complement (i.e. complete) each other. What one lacks, the other can supply. Hebrews 13:4 says: "**Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. . .**"

Although some people do not consider it permanent, **marriage is the most intimate and permanent of all earthly relationships.**

Marriage offers the most complete happiness available from earthly relationships. For various reasons though, it does not always result in happiness for all who are involved.

From the beginning, God intended that there be one husband and one wife. Divorce is prohibited. There is only one exception to this. Please read carefully the following passages and you will see **God's law on marriage and divorce:** Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39 & Matthew 19:1-19.

The marriage relationship should be based on **respect, love, trust, a desire to make the partner happy and a desire to please God.** If any of these traits are lacking, the marriage will not be what it could and should be.

Each partner in a marriage should consider the other worthy of esteem. Each should have a passionate and tender affection for the other. Each should have true concern for the welfare of the other. Complete confidence in each other should exist. The heart of one should safely trust in the other one. Each should desire the genuine happiness of the other. Each one should desire to be near their companion, to truly **belong** to their companion and to be loved by the other in return. Each one should have a true desire to please God and should desire the eternal salvation of the other one.

The happiness that characterizes marriage is "**desired and made**" by those who are joined together. It does not automatically come with the marriage license. It must first be **desired** by both parties. **Both** parties must learn and fulfil their responsibilities. If happiness does not characterize a marriage, it is because those who are joined together have either failed to **desire** happiness or to **make** happiness by fulfilling their responsibilities. If both parties have the proper **attitudes**, they can be genuinely happy in this life and be saved in the world to come.

(CRS)

WHEN IS A PERSON SAVED?

Much discussion has taken place through the years over **when** an alien sinner is saved from his past sins. Many different opinions are expressed which tend to confuse some people. If we desire to **know when a person is saved** from past sins, we must learn what **God's Word** teaches on this matter. Let us consider, in the light of God's Word, **when is a person saved?**

NOT WHEN ONE FIRST DESIRES IT

A person must desire to be saved in order to receive salvation. However, one is **not** saved the moment he first desires it. The Jews on Pentecost in Acts 2 expressed their desire to be saved from their past sins when they heard God's Word preached. Being pricked in their hearts, they asked: "...**what shall we do?**" At this point they were still lost although they desired remission of their sins. In Acts 8 the Ethiopian eunuch heard Philip preach unto him Jesus Christ. He wanted to be saved because when they came unto a certain water he said: "...**See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?**" At this point he was still lost although he was a religious man and desired salvation. In Acts 10 & 11 we learn that although Cornelius was a devout man who feared God, gave much alms to people and prayed to God always, was lost although he desired salvation. He was told by an angel to send for Peter who would tell him words whereby he and his house could be saved. At this point he was not saved although he wanted to be. Saul of Tarsus, a very religious man, said: "...**Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.**" (See Acts 9). At this point he was still lost although he desired to be saved. The Philippian jailor expressed his desire to be saved when he asked: "...**what must I do to be saved?**" (See Acts 16:25-34). It is obvious that he was still lost although he wanted to be saved.

NOT WHEN ONE RAISES HIS HAND, ETC.

Salvation is not promised nor granted when a person raises his hand, signs a card, "goes to the altar," or joins a denomination. A person should never take the word of any preacher who promises salvation on any of these conditions.

NOT WHEN ONE "PRAYS THRU AND FEELS GOOD"

Prayer is not a condition of salvation for the alien sinner, nor do feelings evidence

salvation. Feelings are the result of what we believe whether it is truth or error. A long time ago a wise man said: "**He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool...**" (Prov. 28:26). Our feelings may deceive us. They may give us a sense of well being either physically or spiritually when in reality we are otherwise. Jacob thought Joseph was dead and mourned for him, but he was alive. Isaac thought Jacob was Esau, but he was not. Although Saul "**verily thought**" within himself that he "**ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth,**" he was fighting God in so doing. (See Acts 26).

NOT WHEN ONE FIRST BELIEVES

Those who believe are given "**power**" (i.e., the right or privilege—CRS) to become sons of God. (See John 1:11-12). There is **no** Scriptural evidence that one is saved the moment he believes.

NOT WHEN ONE FIRST REPENTS

It is evident that Saul of Tarsus **repented** while on the road to Damascus, but he was **not** saved until after he arrived in Damascus a few days later. (See Acts 9:1-22; 22:1-16 & 26:9-23).

NOT WHEN ONE FIRST CONFESSES FAITH

Confession of the Lord Jesus is made with the mouth unto salvation. Yet one may make such a confession and still be lost.

WHEN ONE HAS OBEYED THE GOSPEL

We can **know** we are saved and **when** by what is written in God's Book. (See 1 John 5:13). The **gospel** is God's power unto salvation. **It must be obeyed** in order for it to save one. (See Rom. 1:16 & 2 Thess. 1:7-9). One **must meet all** the conditions of salvation from past sins. **He must believe, repent, confess and be baptized in order to be saved.** (See Heb. 11:6; John 20:30-31; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38 & Mk. 16:16).

We learn from Rom. 6:17-18 that one is "**made free from sin**" when he has "**obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine.**" One is saved **when** he has enough **faith to be baptized INTO** Christ. (See Gal. 3:26-27). When one is born again by obeying God's Word, he enters the kingdom (the body, which is the church) and is thus saved. (See 1 Pet. 1:22; John 3:1-5 & 1 Cor. 12:13).

The Jews on Pentecost were saved **when** they received the word and were baptized. So were all others after the cross of Christ. **When** were you saved?

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THE GOOD AND THE RIGHT WAY

many things in the name of religion, even in the name of Jesus that have no foundation in the Bible. Such is not of faith because faith comes from hearing the Biblical instructions. (See Rom. 10:17). Such people are acting without authorization (which is iniquitous) and will not be claimed by Christ as a disciple of **the good and the right way**. (See Matt. 7:21-23).

"WITH ALL YOUR HEART"

Sincere service comes only from a sincere heart. In order to walk in **the good and the right way** one must put his heart into it. Half-hearted efforts are not accepted by God. He requires our all. God, unlike man, looks into the heart—the motive. God is concerned that actions are not empty even if they are "in truth." Paul said to do everything not merely to please men with a show of good works, but to do the will of God (the truth) from the heart. (See Eph. 6:6).

"CONSIDER"

The Israelites forgot their deliverance from Egypt, their journey across the wilderness; God's provisions in battle, for food and water and His law. These things were not literally forgotten, but the people had failed to **consider** them. Christians today do not often literally forget God's commands, His love and the mighty works that are so evident in the world: but they

THE HILL—SUTTON DEBATE

The HILL-SUTTON DEBATE has **not** been re-scheduled yet. The reason for the delay is that neither **Albert Hill** nor the "elders" of the West Hobbs Street Church in Athens, Alabama have given us **any** response either in person, by mail, by telephone or by telegram in over two years.

Please remember that they **promised** to re-schedule the debate in a short time (that was in April 1974) after we were unable to have the debate as scheduled originally due to an injury sustained by **Carrol R. Sutton** in an automobile accident a few days prior to that date. We are still waiting on them.

(Continued from left column)

THE GOOD AND THE RIGHT WAY

often fail to **consider**. It takes time, effort and peaceful surroundings to really ponder the important things of life.

Samuel told the people to consider the great things God had done for them. The Bible teaches us to **consider Christ**, (See Hebrews 12:3)— the greatest thing God has done for all mankind! This will lead to **the good and the right way**.

---Mike Creel, Route 5, Wills Road, Boaz, AL
35957

S e n t e n c e S e r m o n s

A lie has no legs; it requires other lies to support it.

Some people are hard boiled because they stay in hot water most of the time.

Many people know how to make a living, but not how to live.

Voluntary slavery to sin is some people's idea of personal liberty.

Courage is not the absence of fear, but the conquest of it.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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