

Do We Lay It To Heart?

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Every parent knows the difference in "Do I have to go?" and "Do I get to go?" "Do I have to go to bed?" means the child wants to stay up. "Do I get to go to the show?" means the child wouldn't miss it for anything.

Isn't it strange that some of us will wave those same clear signals with reference to the Lord's services, and not see that we are being just as transparent as our children? "Do we have to go to Bible study?" says the same thing about our desires as it does when voiced by our child. When one asks, "How much must I give?," he is clearly saying, "I do not want to give anything, and would like to know how little will pay the bill." Either that, or he has failed to grasp the most fundamental and essential element in the spirit of acceptable service unto God.

There can be no coming to Christ except we deny or give up self (Matt. 16:24).

Translated into the context of "doing" this means we must first want to do all possible (100% committed) to serve the Lord. The proper spirit must motivate the doing, or it is shallow and empty -- may even be an abomination in His sight (Hos. 6:6). God told the priest of Judaism, "If ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name...then will I send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessing; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart" (Mal. 2:2).

Lay it to heart! That means truly respect God; take Him seriously. The priests had offered polluted bread on the altar (Mal. 1:7); offered blind and lame animals as sacrifice (Mal. 1:8). They said of worship, "What a weariness it is!" (Mal 1:13-14). To make this current, they said, "Do we have to do or give?" "Do it any old way, just get it over with; we want to go home to the TV." And to top it off, when rebuked, they acted so innocent and said, "When did we ever do that?"

"Oh, that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain" (Mal. 1:10). Better to close up shop -- call it off -- than to play at worship, and not "lay it to heart."