

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mr. Hickox's father and grandfather, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Ms. Sowder, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Volunteering for the Lord

By Derek Long

The idea of people volunteering to serve the Lord is something some people find to be an unscriptural concept. It is thought by some that God calls people instead of people volunteering to serve the Lord. Is it a scriptural concept to speak about people volunteering to serve the Lord?

Leviticus 7:16 says, "But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it also may be eaten" (NKJV). God is giving instructions to the Israelites regarding the peace offerings. Peace offerings could be offered for a variety of reasons including as mentioned here as "a voluntary offering." If a person cannot voluntarily choose to do something in service to God, how could a person give a "voluntary offering"?

Deuteronomy 23:23 says, "That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth" (NKJV). God is giving instructions to the Israelites about keeping their vows. God expected them to perform their vows because "you voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God." If a person cannot volunteer to do something in service to God, how is it possible to voluntarily vow to do something to the Lord?

Judges 5:9 says, "My heart is with the rulers of Israel who offered themselves willingly with the people. Bless the Lord!" (NKJV). A song is composed by Deborah and Barak following their defeat of the Canaanites. They speak of the rulers of Israel

offering themselves willingly or of the “willing volunteers” (NIV). Clearly people had a choice in whether to go out to the battle or not and they are speaking well of those who chose to go out to the battle.

2 Kings 12:4 says, “And Jehoash said to the priests, ‘All the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the Lord - each man’s census money, each man’s assessment money - and all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the Lord’” (NKJV). Jehoash is giving instructions to the priests to repair the temple with the money brought in by the people from these various sources. One of the sources of the money is “the money brought voluntarily to the temple” (NIV). It is what “a man purposes in his heart.” How could a man voluntarily bring money to the temple if a person cannot make a voluntary decision to do something in service to God?

2 Chronicles 17:16 says, “And next to him was Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself to the Lord, and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valor” (NKJV). Here appears to be a list of various men who led the men of war in the days of Jehoshaphat. The text makes it plain Amasiah “willingly offered himself to the Lord” or “volunteered himself for the service of the Lord” (NIV). It is hard to see how a person could read a passage such as this one and contend the Bible never speaks of a person volunteering to serve the Lord.

2 Chronicles 35:8 says, “And his leaders gave willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiyah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover offerings two thousand six hundred from the flock, and three hundred cattle” (NKJV). The leaders in the days of Josiah were giving willingly or voluntarily these animals for the Passover. Here again we see people doing something voluntarily in service to God.

Nehemiah 11:2 says, “And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem” (NKJV). People willingly or voluntarily decided to live in Jerusalem. Some people might think it impossible for a person to volunteer for such a task because God must have called them to do it; however, the text speaks of them voluntarily or willingly deciding to do this.

Psalm 110:3 says, “Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth” (NKJV). Here is a Messianic Psalm speaking of the rule of Jesus at the right hand of God (Psalm 110:1-2). Jesus’ people are said here to be volunteers. How can a person claim we do not volunteer to serve God when here is a passage speaking of Jesus’ people being volunteers?

1 Corinthians 9:17 says, “For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship” (NKJV). Paul obviously is saying it is possible for him to preach the gospel willingly or voluntarily (NIV). He could make a willing or voluntary decision.

Philemon 14 says, “But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary” (NKJV). Paul is writing to Philemon about his slave Onesimus whom he is sending back to Philemon. Paul knows Onesimus could help him on Philemon’s behalf but wanted Philemon to help him voluntarily and not under compulsion. Paul felt it was possible for Philemon to make a voluntary choice to either have Onesimus help Paul or not.

In light of these passages and many other speaking about ideas like us having the ability to choose, it is hard to understand how a person can continue to believe a person does not choose to serve God. Any view we take of other passages of Scripture must allow for these passages to be true as well.