

October 4, 2020

Doing God's Will

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does the will** of My Father in heaven,” Matt. 7:21.*

These words were spoken by Jesus as He neared the conclusion of that famous Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew 5-7. From this verse it appears most evident that, to be saved, one must **do** “the will” of God. Jesus Himself, Who left “*us an example that you should follow His steps*” (I Peter 2:21), was determined to do the will of God. In fact, Jesus said “*I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent me*” (John 6:38). He was so determined to do the will of God that He suffered that cruel, painful, and ignominious death on the cross! And, for us to be saved, we must do the will of God. With that in mind, please note James 1:22: “*Be **doers** of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*” Also please note Rev. 22:14: “*Blessed are those who **do** His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.*” Yes, to be saved, we must **do** the will of God!

However, notwithstanding the plain teaching of the Scriptures, there are many theories of men which discourage one from doing God's will. With this in mind, please note a few **modern theories which discouraged obedience**:

1. The theory of Universalism, or the teaching that everyone will be saved. This theory is clearly disputed by the Bible. With this in mind, please observe what Jesus said in Matt. 7:13-14: “*Enter by the narrow way; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life and there are **few** who find it.*” The number going to heaven are “**few**” in contrast to the “many” who will be lost. The teaching of universalism is false! However, if a person actually believes this theory, he will have little, if any, motivation to do “the will” of our Father in heaven.”

2. The Calvinistic theory of Predestination,” or the teaching that God, from the foundation of the world, has already predestined that certain ones will be saved, and certain others will be lost, and that that number cannot be changed or altered by the decisions of men. If one believes that God has already pre-determined that he will go to heaven, then why bother to do His will. The same conclusion would be reached by a person who believes that God has already pre-determined that he will be lost; if this be the case, then why obey God!

3. The theory of hereditary total depravity, or the teaching that babies are totally depraved at birth! Of course, if a person is totally depraved, then he is incapable of deciding on his own to obey God; hence, he must wait for the direct operation of the

Holy Spirit upon his heart before he is capable of responding in a good way to God's will. If one really believes this theory, then he has no motivation to seek out and do the will of God. Of course, this theory is patently false; babies are not depraved at birth. In fact, Jesus said "*Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God*" (Matt. 19:14). Then, too, we should keep in mind the words of Ezek. 18:20: "*The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.*" Obviously, sin is something which a person **commits**; it is not something he inherits!

4. The no hell theory. It is amazing how many people now-a-days (even religious people!) deny the very existence of an eternal place of punishment, called "*hell.*" They should read Matt. 5:22; 10:28; 18:8-9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43-47; Luke 12:5; and James 3:6! Hell is that place of "*everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt. 25:41), which will also be inhabited by those whose names are **not** "*written in the Book of Life*" (Rev. 20:15). If one knows the Bible, and believes the Bible, he believes there is a place of unending punishment (which Jesus called "*hell*") for the unsaved. However, if one really believes that hell does not exist, then he will probably lack sufficient motivation to seek, learn, and do the will of God.

5. The second chance theory, or the belief that one will have a second chance to be saved after this life is over. This teaching is contrary to the Bible! The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus will judge us "*in the last day,*" that we will be judged by His "*words*" (John 12:48), and that we will "*receive the things done in the body,*" *whether they are good or bad*" (2 Cor. 5:10). Moreover, the lost will "*go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life*" (Matt. 25:46). The results of the judgment will be permanent, as evident by the words "*everlasting*" and "*eternal,*" words that Jesus Himself used. There will be no second chance after death, and after the judgment of that "*last day.*" However, if a person believes "the second chance" theory, he will have little motivation to obey the Lord in this life; he will probably decide to wait for that so-called "second chance."

6. The "once in grace always in grace" theory, or the teaching that once a person has been saved from his alien sins, then, regardless of his later conduct, he cannot be lost. The inspired apostle Paul didn't believe that nonsense; he said "*let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall,*" 2 Cor.10:12. And with this in mind, please note these words recorded in 2 Peter 2:20-22: "*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. (21) For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. (22) But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: A dog returns to his own vomit, and a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*" Herein he likened the conduct of a child of God who has fallen away to the most disgusting habits of unclean animals! The "once in grace always in grace" theory is patently false; however, multitudes believe it, and if one really believes that doctrine then once he has been saved from his alien sins, he will have but little motivation to keep himself "*pure*" (I Tim. 5:22), to "*be faithful until*

death” (Rev. 2:10), or to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet. 3:18).

Many other false theories could be cited which, if believed, tend to destroy one’s motivation to do the will of God. However, notwithstanding what men teach to the contrary, it is obvious that for one to enter “*the kingdom of heaven*” he must “*do the will*” of our “*Father in heaven*” (Matt. 7:21). Yes, Jesus is the “*Savior*” (Acts 5:31), but He is “*the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him*” (Heb. 5:9).

Clearly, one must obey the Lord in order to be saved. But what must one “*do*” in order to be saved? An alien sinner must “*hear*” the word which produces faith (Rom. 10:17). He must “*believe*” the gospel” (Mark 16:16); **repent** of his sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30), **confess** His faith in Jesus as the son of God (Rom. 10:9-10), and be “*baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38). Upon so doing, one is “*saved*” and “*added*” by the Lord “*to the church*” (Acts 2:41,47), which Jesus purchased with His “*own blood*” (Acts 20:28), and of which He is the “*Savior*” (Eph. 5:23),

And having thus obeyed the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9), he must “*walk in newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4), continue “*steadfastly in the apostles doctrine*” (Acts 2:42), “*live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age*” (Tit. 2:12), share the message of salvation with others (2 Tim. 2:2), “*set your mind on things above*” (Col. 3:1), and “*be faithful unto death*” (Rev. 2:10). Those who thus live and serve shall receive “*the crown of life,*” and bask eternally in that heavenly city, along with the redeemed of all ages. We can never deserve the blessings of heaven, but to thus enjoy those blessings we must **do** God’s will! -Bobby Witherington
