

Bible Study and Notes

LOVE IS A DECISION

(APPENDIX 4)

How Should A Christian Act?

1 John 3:22 tells us, “*And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*” We should always be looking to do those things that are pleasing to God.

How do we know what is pleasing to God? Ephesians 5:10 states, “*Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*” Searching the scriptures is how we find these things but duty without love makes it a burden, in fact, without love, everything is worthless (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). It is the little things that really count. I could buy my wife a washer and dryer as a gift, but she realizes that it just means she has to do the laundry. I could buy her a new car, but she knows that I would drive it. But if I were to simply clean up after myself, have eyes only for her, and help her with our children, she would be thrilled. Why? Because she knows that it is out

of love for her that I do those things, which please her.

What does God ask us to do? 1 John 3:18 reveals, “*My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*” God would have us follow in action and follow in truth rather than pay Him lip service. It takes more than talk to be a true Christian. God means what He says and says what He means.

The devil however is a deceiver. He does not want us concerned about little things. He does this by dismissing personal responsibility through clichés like: “God is not particular.” “God won’t punish for a little thing.” It is the same lie he told in the garden of Eden. Keep in mind what God says, “*For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth*” (Proverbs 3:12).

Some people say, “Oh, don’t take life so seriously.” Yet God says “*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*” (Matthew

5:48). In fact, this concept appears frequently in the Bible. But of ourselves, we cannot be perfect. Through Jesus Christ though, all things are made perfect (1 Peter 5:10). However, our personal virtues are often given to rationalize disobedience. “I feed the poor. I give to God. I help with the youth. I...” We must be careful because the devil is the one who places reason above a “*Thus Saith the Lord.*” James 2:10 says, “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one [point], he is guilty of all.*” “Oh, that fourth Commandment, that’s just a little thing...” Not according to James 2:10. And Jesus set the record straight in Matthew 5:17-19, which says, “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach*

men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach [them], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

We are more concerned about man's cares than God's. When we are told to report to work at a certain time and we are there. If we paid as much concern to God as we do to man, we would have a whole different relationship.

Will God Overlook The Little Things?

God is a God of love, but there is also another side of God – one that will move with wrath very soon. God also moves in the little situations. Our first example is Saul of the Old Testament.

1 Samuel 15:3 tells us, "*Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.*" God gave Saul direct orders -- destroy all. That is because these people were so perverse and diseased that God had to not only put them out of their misery but also protect others from their diseases.

1 Samuel 15:7-9 states, "*And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah [until] thou comest to Shur, that [is] over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all*

[that was] good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing [that was] vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." God gave Saul a decisive victory as He promised, but Saul began to rationalize. He thought about other kings who bring the overthrown king back to the people to demonstrate the victory. Further, they brought back the spoils of war.

1 Samuel 15:13-14 tells us, "*And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed [be] thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What [meaneth] then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"* Saul began to rationalize even to the point of convincing himself that he did what God asked him to when in fact he did not. This is what God warns about in Proverbs 16:25, which says, "*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof [are] the ways of death."*

1 Samuel 15:18-21 continues with, "*And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should*

have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal." Again, Saul is totally convinced that he carried out God's orders and even shifts the blame. This is self-deception.

1 Samuel 15:22-23 states, "*And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion [is as] the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness [is as] iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from [being] king."* Sacrifices mean nothing, if we are not obeying His Word. He considers rebellion as the same as practicing witchcraft. Stubbornness is as committing idolatry. I would hate for the Lord to say to me, "Thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, I will reject thee from entering into the kingdom."

There is going to be many like Saul. Matthew 7:21-23 reveals, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* Why are these good people lost? Because they did not obey God's commandments, which is His will (Psalms 40:8), nor did they obey His Word. They could have been saved for 2 Thessalonians 2:10 tells us,

“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

Our second example is through Uzzah in Numbers 4:15, *“And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear [it]: but they shall not touch [any] holy thing, lest they die. These [things are] the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.”* This message was for the Israelites that they should carry the Ark of the Covenant in a special manner. Long wooden poles would be used to balance it. Now the Philistines at one point defeated Israel and stole the Ark and carried it back to their land on an old ox cart (1 Samuel 4:10-11). They did not know of the God of Israel. Sometime later though, the Israelites recaptured it, but they began to rationalize in how to bring it back to the right location. *“If they used an ox cart, why can’t we?”* To ease their conscience, they did something special. 2 Samuel 6:3 tells us, *“And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of Othe house of Abinadab that [was] in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.”* They put it on a new cart.

2 Samuel 6:4-7 continues with, *“And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which [was] at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner*

of [instruments made of] fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth [his hand] to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook [it]. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for [his] error; and there he died by the ark of God.” As the ox slipped on the slate of rock, the cart teetered a little and the Ark was about to fall down the hill. Uzzah went to brace it, and when he did, God killed him on the spot. And this was just over a little thing of which was even for a good cause.

Today’s society has become desensitized to sin where many things once referred to as an abomination are now considered a little thing. This does not happen over night. There are four stages:

- First, they *abhor* it. Take for instance homosexuality. People were disgusted with such a thought.
- Second, they *tolerate* it. People say, “Well, as long as they don’t hit on me, they can live their life and I’ll live mine.”
- Third, they *accept* it. They may even openly talk to others about having friends who are homosexuals.
- Fourth, they *defend* it, which is why so much legislation is in place today protecting various actions of the community.

Now because God does not kill us immediately, we feel like we are getting away with it. We may

forget Romans 6:23, which says, *“For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Payday will come soon.

What Two Kinds of People Will There Be When Jesus Comes?

Matthew 25:31-34 says, *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”* Sheep follow every Word of God. Goats “but.” They have many excuses for not following the Word of God. “I’d follow the Word of God, BUT what are my friends and family going to say?” as if friends and family will be able to help them on judgment day. “I know which day is the Sabbath and that we should keep it Holy, BUT let me check with my preacher” as if some preacher knows better than God does. “I can see who the antichrist is, BUT I want to check what the author of another book says” as if some author knows more than the author of the Bible.

The sheep on the other hand are revealed in John 10:27, which says, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”* Jesus wants

sheep. He wants us to follow, not out of fear, but out of love. 1 John 4:18 says, "*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*"

God Is Love!

Love is expressed in three primary ways. There is the love of DISCIPLINE. Proverbs 3:12 states, "*For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth.*"

Second, there is the love of FEELING, of which Satan has popular Christianity overemphasizing today. Psalms 5:11 tells us, "*But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.*"

Then there is the love of DECISION, which is rarely talked about.

Imagine that in the middle of the night, my dear wife decides to check on our daughter. And when she turns on the hall light, she lets out a panic cry. Boy, I jump out of bed and stand beside her and ask, "What's wrong?" She replies, "There's a thousand-legger." You know something? At that hour of the night, I did not want to do anything but sleep. No one could have made me, but what do you think happened next? Yes, I took care of the creature because I decided to take care of my wife.

What makes a mother wake up 3 times a night to feed her

baby? It is definitely not her love of feeling. It is the love of decision. Why does a father change diapers? Because he decided that he loves his child enough to do such a thing.

Matthew 26:42 says, "*He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.*" Jesus did not feel like going to the cross, but He decided to go for you and for me.

John 14:15 tells us, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*" There are times that people do not feel like keeping the commandments, but they decide that they love God more than anything this world has to offer.

This type of love is like a marriage relationship. I know my wife does not feel like doing the laundry, and I do not feel like taking the trash out. But we do these things because we decided to take care of each other.

Who will you decide to obey? Romans 6:16 says, "*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*"

Jesus has much to offer. Hebrews 5:9 reveals, "*And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*"

May you love God so much so that you would want to obey all that He asks. May all that you do be that which best pleases God.