

Obedience From The Heart

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We engage in various activities on a daily basis for a variety of reasons. There are those things we do because we have to, such as going to work, or school for that matter. A close second are those things we feel obligated to do as a result of a commitment we made, or returning a favor. There also are those things we do simply because we enjoy doing them. We may refer to these as our hobbies, but it could include our jobs. Some love their work and get totally engrossed in the activity. We sometimes refer to these as workaholics.

Our level of enjoyment, but also our level of our commitment, becomes obvious through our actions. It is a pleasure to watch someone who takes pride in his work, who enjoys doing it regardless of how simple the task seems to others. What do people see in those of us who claim to be Christians? Is it obvious that we know God, or do we fall in the category of people described by Paul in his letter to Titus: ***They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.*** Titus 1:16.

We are quick to answer that we are not *detestable* and *worthless for any good deed*. One may even be tempted to argue that God does not make detestable and worthless people. Then you realize that God, through Paul, describes this as a general trend among men. The point is that through disobedience we become that. Is there any person for whom Jesus did not have to die? Yet we will take pride in the fact that *at least did not do what others did*, suggesting perhaps that we did not need His blood as much as others do? In such cases I suggest we look at the opening statements of this warning: ***For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy...*** 2 Timothy 3:2.

Most people seem to think that they are not bad enough to deserve eternal punishment in hell, instead of realizing that no one is good enough to make it to heaven. Each and every individual who reaches the age of accountability (**Romans 1:9; Nehemiah 8:2**) has sinned and is on the same level with *all* others, in desperate need of the grace of God. (**Romans 3:23; 6:23**) Jesus makes it adequately clear that the sinner needs to humble himself before Christ will exalt him. (**Matthew 23:12**)

Consider how this superficial understanding of sin influences people's attitude towards God. It makes for a superficial approach to recognizing and worshipping Him. It causes sinners to hold ***to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power...*** (2 Timothy 3:5) Consider the arrogance of men drawing up their own creeds to instruct fellow sinners how to please God.

Notice that ***the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,*** ¹² ***instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age...*** (Titus 2:11-12)

Most see grace as nothing more than a free gift from God if they would casually recognize Him. The grace of God instructs one ***to deny ungodliness and worldly desires***. This covers anything that is not pleasing to God – those who accept, and submit to the grace of God has to accept this instruction. The statement continues in the positive, they are ***to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age***.

Why do I worship God? Because I have to in order to escape the *fires of hell* – eternal punishment? (**Matthew 25:46**) That should be motivation for the masses, however they use that form of doctrine, adjusted to their desires (2 Timothy 4:3) to lull themselves into a sense of security. Again, we may ***profess to know God***, but deny Him if we will not allow His grace to instruct us to ***deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age***. (Titus 1:16)

Then we may do so to return the favor of His love, motivated by the sacrifice of His Son. We may love Him because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19) This love for God may then act as an inward force making our outward expression meaningful so that we become ***obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.*** ¹⁸ ***and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*** (Romans 6:17-18)