

MAN - A CREATURE OF RESPONSIBILITY

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The Book we call the Bible is the inspired word of God, given by the guidance of the Holy Spirit as He revealed the will of Heaven through those early messengers. It becomes our responsibility to look into that Word and seek to obey its every commandment. One basic fact of God's Word is that man has a responsibility toward God. We are responsible to a Creator to whom every person must answer. Romans 14:12, reads, "So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God." I am responsible for what I do. You are responsible for what you do. Were it not for this, there would have been no reason for the giving of a revelation of His desires for us. There would have been no need to send the Son to die upon the cruel cross of Calvary. If we are not responsible unto God, the whole message of the Virgin Birth and His life was for naught. I wish to emphasize some of the things for which man is responsible-- responsible to Jehovah God.

First, man is responsible for his or her personal influence, be it good or be it bad. You and I, each one of us, is responsible for the way we act, the things we do. The FBI states that a person cannot enter a room without leaving a trace that you have been there. Though our lives are short, comparatively speaking, we shall leave evidences of our having been here. One who denies this just isn't thinking very clearly. Our lives serve as an influence to others, either good or bad. We can influence others to do good things, or we can influence them to do bad things. Jesus said it like this: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before man; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16). What kind of salt are you? what kind of light? Are you reflecting the image of Christ to a lost and dying world? If not, you should be.

Our every deed influences others. We simply cannot escape it. The apostle Paul said, "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2). To those of you who profess to follow Christ-- are you a good influence upon those around you? We can help others serve God, or we can hinder them.

For you to be the kind of influence the Lord desires of you, you must be a child of God, one who has obeyed the primary commands of the gospel. Christ demands of you that you believe in Him as the son of God; that you repent of your sins; that you confess your faith in Him before men; that you be baptized into Christ for the remission of your past sins. Then, and only then, can you be the kind of influence that will lead others to Christ.

Secondly, man is responsible for the words which we speak. Jesus Himself said, "And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37). Ephesians 4:29, reads, "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear." Colossians 4:6 states, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one."

Words are very small, easily spoken, yet, can yield great influence. Look at the Declaration of Independence of this great land of ours. Look at Lincoln's address at Gettysburg. Short but powerful messages. The most powerful message is that contained in the Book we call the Bible. It is powerful because it offers man salvation through Christ Jesus, if we but obey it.

Words can cheer or words can dishearten people. We can be an influence for good by what we say, or we can be an instrument of evil by what we say. Whichever it is, we are responsible for the words we speak. James tells us that the tongue is a very small member of our physical body, but can be very devastating if it is not controlled. Turn to James, chapter 3, and read verses 1 through 12. These things being so, how careful we should be in the choice of words which we use each day. May we all remember, we shall give an account unto our God for the words which we use while here in the flesh. Speak words of comfort, encouraging words, rather than words of discord and discouragement.

Point number three: Man is responsible for the way he or she uses our worldly goods. When David desired to build the temple, he recognized that God desired all goods to be used to His glory. You can read of this in 1 Chronicles 29:10-14. Solomon said, "Honor Jehovah with thy substance. And with the first-fruits of all thine increase" (Proverbs 3:9). We are stewards, pilgrims here on this earth. We are but caretakers of all the Lord has given us. One might be able to build up a fortune, but he better be sure that he uses it for the glory of God. Riches themselves are not a condemnation, it is the way that we use them that becomes so dangerous. I feel certain that most of our listeners are familiar with the parable of the talents as recorded in Matthew 25. The one who had been given 5 talents gained 5 other talents. The one who was give 2 talents gained 2 other talents. The one to whom one talent was given buried his talent in the ground and did not increase it. The Lord rewarded the 5 talent person, and the two talent person, but condemned the one talent man. Not because he had only one talent, but because he did not use it wisely. You and I may be but one talent people, but we had better use that talent wisely and to the glory of our God. Are you wisely using your talents or talent? Remember, the Lord holds you responsible for the use of the material possession you have.

Point number four: Man is responsible for his or her soul. God's word clearly teaches that each one of us is headed for one of two places. Either we are preparing for Heaven or we are headed for Hell. And my friends, you do not want to go there. Where we go will depend upon our conduct while here on this earth, while we live here in the flesh.

It was man who originally rejected the law of God. Jehovah placed man in a beautiful garden with everything needful for a full and glorious life. You can read of this in Genesis three. But, man broke the law or commandment of the Lord and was cast forth from that place of bliss. Also, connected with their being cast forth from the garden, spiritual separation from Jehovah was decreed upon man. Sin brings about a separation from God. Sin is the transgression of God's law. So states John in 1 John, chapter 3. The pathway back to God is through His will, through the offering of Christ Jesus upon the cross for the remission of sins. It is by faith in Christ that sinful man begins the long journey back to God. Without faith man cannot please him. Hebrews 11:6. But, that faith must be connected with obedience. Faith alone, or by itself is a dead faith. So states James in chapter 2. Man has never been saved at the point faith. Faith in Christ demands that we obey Him. Jesus Himself said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark16:15). Surely one must believe. But one must also be baptized if you would be saved.

By trusting and obeying Him we have hope, the expectation of eternal life in the very presence of Jehovah God. You, each one within the sound of my voice is responsible for your soul. No one else can save your soul for you. Others may assist, may help, but you, and you alone, must render obedience unto our God. You, and I, shall one day stand before the judgment bar of Heaven and hear our God say either, Enter in or Depart from me. That choice is yours, it is mine. Yes, you are responsible for your own soul.

Question just here: What is the basis for our responsibility? Why does God hold us responsible? No other creature has been endowed like man. The animal world has no conscience; no responsibility toward God. Man is the only one made in God's image, in God's

likeness. This itself is reason enough for our responsibility to God. We have the ability to know God. We have the ability to know right from wrong. Information is available for us to determine the good or the bad of every situation. That information is found in God's eternal Word. That word or revelation shows us the necessity of obedience to Him.

The Athenians did not know how to worship. Nature told them to worship, but did not tell them how to worship. So they made gods of their own imaginations. They had a god for almost everything. And to be sure that they did not leave one out, they made one to an "Unknown god." In Acts 17:22-31, Paul told them who to worship. He declared unto them the God of this universe. No, man cannot figure out from his own wisdom how and who to serve. That information comes through the revealed message of Heaven. Without revelation man is ignorant of his origin, of his duty and of his destiny.

Evolution brings man DOWN to brute level, equal with the beasts of the field, with no hope nor expectation for anything better. Revelation lifts man UP to the image of God. Revelation tells us where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going when this life is over. And, yet, in spite of this, our colleges are filled with those who parrot the false theory of evolution. They cannot explain where we came from, nor where we are going. They just want us to accept their theories without questioning. I refuse to do that. The evolutionist say that the Christian is following a blind faith. Then they turn right around and offer nothing but blind explanations, based upon nothing more than their guesses. And their guesses often differ by billions of years. You see, evolution and revelation are both systems of faith. But it seems logical to me that intelligence preceded matter. Which can first? Mind or matter? The evolutionist say that matter can first, and from matter developed mind or intelligence. That my friend is not logical.

Our last point. Man is responsible to know God's Will. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). It is very clear that each one can know the truth, that each one has the ability, the capacity to understand God's truth. The one who says, "I just cannot understand the Bible," has deluded himself. Man has no difficulty understanding the newspaper, the sports page, the stock market. Why does he have so much trouble understanding the Bible? Because he just does not open its pages and learn therefrom.

God has spoken through His word. Salvation depends on how you accept that word. What you do about it. I urge you, I plead with you to accept your responsibility. You are indeed responsible for your own soul. Will you accept your responsibility to obey Christ, to make a decision that will effect your eternal destiny. You may refuse to obey Christ, but for that decision you, too, are responsible.