

PROPER ATTITUDES TOWARD THE WORD OF GOD

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What should be our attitude toward the Bible, God's Word? What is YOUR disposition toward it?? When you hear the Word of God read, what feelings do you have with reference to it??? I emphasize once again a point made last week---THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD. It, and it alone, is the only place where we can seek information which will lead to the salvation of the souls of mankind. We referred to 2 Timothy 3:14-16, where Paul states that the scriptures are inspired of God and able to furnish us completely unto every good work. When man fully accepts the Bible as inspired of God (and we will have more to say about this in future lessons) and that is perfect, then a lesson on man's attitude toward it becomes relatively simple.

Perhaps the first or basic attitude needed is that of SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL. Unless we are willing to submit to every principle found in God's Word, we approach it with the wrong attitude. We MUST have the disposition of Cornelius as found in Acts 10:33, "Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast done well that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord." You will notice, this man, Cornelius, was not interested in hearing part of what God commanded; nor just what he wanted to hear; BUT he was desirous of hearing ALL THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN COMMANDED THEE OF THE LORD. Tell us what God wants us to do. Tell us everything God wants us to do. So often today, mankind is ready to accept that part of God's Word which he approves, but willing to overlook the things that he does not like. No so, with one who has the proper attitude toward God's Word. As we scan the Word of God and call to our attention various examples of men of faith as found therein, we find this attitude prevalent. Look at Noah, who, "by faith, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7). Look at Abraham, who, "by faith when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8). View the example of Moses, who, "by faith refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:24, 25). One cannot imagine any of these men of faith arguing with God and what He asked of them, but wholly accepting His word, without quibbling, did what Jehovah asked of them. So often today we hear people speak of their great faith in God---and then they turn right around and refuse to DO WHAT GOD COMMANDS OF THEM.

And while we are on this point just here, may we point out that faith moves people to DO SOMETHING. Faith has never saved a single person until that faith motivated the person to arise and DO what is commanded. Sometimes people today leave the impression that all that is needed is just be religious, just call on the name of the Lord. But listen to the words of Christ, "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 who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23). He then follows these words with the examples of the two builders, one who heard, but did not do, he likened unto the man who built on the sand and great was the fall; but the one who built on the rock stood victorious when the test came. This man had heard, but he likewise did what was commanded. Must man accomplish any works to be saved? Listen to Christ in John 9:4: "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." And again in John 6:28- 29, "They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God" Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath

sent." Even FAITH IS A WORK, for it is something that each person MUST DO. Truly, man cannot of his own good morality, nor of his own devised schemes, work his way into salvation; but to say that man has nothing to do in his own salvation is a flagrant transgression of the words of Christ and His apostles. Yes, man has something to do -- he must DO ALL THAT GOD COMMANDS OF HIM. And unless he does, he simply does not have the faith that will save him.

Jesus showed us this principle by the very life He lived. The Hebrew writer in Hebrews 5:8-9 states, "though he was a son (the context shows clearly the writer is talking about Christ Jesus), yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him." Salvation is offered to whom?? TO ALL THOSE WHO OBEY HIM!!! The only way one can truly obey Christ is by doing the things which He commands, nothing more, nor nothing less. Consequently, if man is to be saved, he cannot add to, nor subtract from a single thing that Christ Jesus commands for us to do.

Where God has spoken, then, man must respond in obedience. Where God has not spoken; where He has remained silent; man has no right to infringe. Man cannot presume to speak for God. Man needs to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent; doing what our expects of us. Christ in John 4:34 states, "My meat (my food, my sustenance, my desire, my enjoyment, my very life itself) ...My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish his work. Surely, this must be our attitude toward God and His Word. What is your attitude toward the Bible? Do you have the attitude of submission and obedience to all that is found therein?? Is it your feelings -- Show me what God requires of men and I am ready to respond. Anything short of this is not the proper attitude toward the Word of God.

We began this study today with the passage, "They that gladly received his word were baptized." What are the contrasting results? What about those who refuse to gladly receive the word, those who refuse to obey it? In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, we read of the coming of "Christ from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction for the face of the Lord and the glory of his might. Thus, from this passage we learn that those who do not have the proper attitude to lead them to obey Christ will suffer punishment, be cast from the presence of the Lord. What a terrible conclusion -- to have so live while in this the flesh, without regard for Jehovah or his revealed word -- and to hear the awesome words, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

We urge you, to develop a proper attitude toward the word of God. Study it!!!! Respect it!!! Obey it!!! Gladly receive it!!! Do what it commands!!! God's Word demands faith in Christ Jesus as the Son of God, Hebrews 11:6: "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." God's word commands repentance upon the part of sinful man, Acts 17:30: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent..." God's word teaches the need to confess Christ before men, Romans 10:10: "and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." God's word requires that one be baptized for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38: "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins...."