

Rom. 14:19
So then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things
whereby we
may edify one
another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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John 8:32 And
ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

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HOW FAR MUST I GO?

by Jim Stauffer

As we consider the messages conveyed in the articles this week, we are to avoid going beyond the Scriptures for our authority and at the same time obey the words contained therein in order to be saved. The process of doing this is to seek first the kingdom of God. Yet in the process of that search, we must hold fast to the sound words of Scripture with love in our hearts for both God and His creation, mankind.

The question then becomes, how far must I go to achieve these things God has required of me if I wish to spend eternity with Him?

Jesus gives the answer in many of His lessons while He was on earth. There is the case of the rich man who came to Him in **Matthew 19**. Jesus, Who as God, could read the hearts of men, told him to *.....go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*"

Those words were spoken by the One who died to save us. They were the truth spoken in love. That is, however, the definition of seeking first the kingdom. His riches stood between him and submission to the reign of Christ.

The apostles were told not to preach the message of Jesus anymore after they had been jailed for it once already. Their response was to explain why they could not comply with this request from the officials. *"But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.""* (**Acts 4:19-20**) When that did not satisfy the rulers, they explained further, *"But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.""* (**Acts 5:29**) You see, Jesus said to, *.....render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are*

God's." (**Matthew 22:21**)

The answer to our question is, I must do whatever it takes to obey my God. I must hold fast the sound words He and the apostles have authored for me. I must not turn aside from those instructions. And the way that is done is to have a change of heart and truly seek Him and His kingdom first as I allow Him to rule in my heart.

Every problem man has in this world is overcome when he submits to the will of God. Jesus is our example as He was in anguish as He anticipated His death. Yet as he suffered with the thought of what He would undergo, He prayed, *...."My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."* (**Matthew 26:39**)

Are Strict Teaching and Love Mutually Exclusive?

Many in the religious world today stress that we need to use caution in what we teach and preach from the Bible. Some tell us that we need to avoid teaching about controversial subjects and instead focus on our love for one another and Jesus' love for us. They contend that we lack love for others if we teach and demand a strict, conservative interpretation and application of the scriptures. Is this proposition valid? Can we demand strict adherence to the teachings of the Bible and still possess love for one another? Or, as many claim, are the two mutually exclusive?

To find an answer to this important question, let's look at the instructions Paul gave to Timothy. In **II Timothy 1:13**, Paul instructed Timothy to *"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in*

faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Here Paul commanded Timothy to "*hold fast*" to the form or pattern that he had given him. Many in the religious world today would put a large number of the things that Paul had taught Timothy in the "controversial", "taboo" category. What, then, did Paul mean by this instruction? Did Paul expect Timothy to disregard the controversial "*sound words*" that he had heard of him and only "*hold fast*" to the non-controversial "*sound words*"? Maybe Paul wanted Timothy to just use the "*sound words*" as a general "guideline" for the things that he would believe and practice, modifying the "*sound words*" if they got too controversial? Obviously not! Paul wanted Timothy to hold on to the things that he had taught him, controversial or not.

Some would contend that this interpretation places Timothy in a position that would cause him to be devoid of any love. After all, they would claim, if Timothy were to be inflexible and strict about something he had been taught from Paul, think of all the controversy that he would cause. The answer to this objection is found in this verse. Paul tells Timothy to "*hold fast*" to the things that he had been taught "*in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*" Clearly, then, demanding a strict adherence to the things that Paul had taught him would not cause Timothy to lack any love for others. Rather, Timothy was to possess love as he held on to the things he had received of Paul. We can "*hold fast*" to the teachings of the scriptures and still possess love.

While some would agree with our conclusions drawn from this verse, they might argue that this instruction was just applicable to Timothy's personal life. Paul had taught Timothy some things that would cause trouble or controversy if taught to others. They might go on to say that Paul was concerned that Timothy would hold on to the pattern that he had learned, but didn't want him to teach this pattern to others. This, however, was not the case. In **II Timothy 2:2**, Paul told Timothy, "*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*" We see that Timothy was not only to "*hold fast*" the pattern that he had received of Paul in his own life, but that he was also to teach this pattern to others. These individuals, then, would "*hold fast*" to the pattern in their personal lives and "*teach others also*", all the while possessing the "*faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*"

Clearly we can teach and demand a strict adherence to the teachings of the Scriptures and still possess love for others. We need not allow the rhetoric of the "religious" world to keep us from following the

Divine pattern that Paul delivers in **II Timothy 1:13** and **2:2**.

by Jacob Gwin; THE BEACON-Electronic Edition

Turn Not Aside

Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

We have in this passage a most powerful statement that emphasizes and stresses that soul saving obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ must be according to His will without additions, subtractions or substitutions on the part of those who would be saved. I think of those three passages that admonish us to never add to or take away from God's word (**Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18**). Strict obedience to God's will has always been one of the cardinal principles set forth in God's word (**Gen. 3; Num. 20:8-12; 1 Sam. 15; 2 Kings 5; Acts 5:29; Gal. 1:6-10; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Heb. 5:8; John 14:15**). There has never been an age in which a man could please God without a very strict obedience to His will--no if's, and's, but's or maybe's about it!

In the **5th chapter of Deuteronomy**, Moses summons the people and delivers to them a message from God. A part of that message simply but powerfully says. "*So you shall observe to do just as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left.*" This is a message that calls for, yea demands, a strict obedience to God according to His will. I often think about this passage from **2 John 9** which tells us in no uncertain terms that God is not with the individual who transgresses and abides not in the doctrine of Christ. God has given us a pattern to go by and if we are to please Him, that pattern must be followed without turning aside to the right hand or the left.

We live today in an age of disrespect for authority. Sadly this is seen all too often in our schools, our homes, and society in general as evidenced by the social and political unrest occurring daily. But, perhaps, nowhere is this curse of disrespect seen or pose so great a danger than in the disrespect shown by multitudes toward the commandments of God. Throughout the realm of religion men are perverting the

word of God by inserting their own opinions, think so's or philosophies and tragically we are seeing this more and more even in the Lord's church. Friends, you can study your Bibles from cover to cover and you will not find an age of man in which man could please God without a very strict obedience to God's will! I, for one, do not believe that we have any margin to play with--it is His way or else (**Jer. 10:23; John 2:5; Matt. 7:21-23; Matt. 15:7-9; Luke 6:46-49; James 2:10-13; Gal. 1:6-10; Acts 5:29**).

Walking in the way God commands without turning aside to the right or left will often be a difficult course to pursue but rest assured that doing so will give to us an abundant life in which all will be well with us and one day bring to us the greatest joy imaginable (**Rom. 8:28; Matt. 25:21, 23, 31-34; Rev 14:13**). To God be the glory forever and ever!

Charles Hicks, White House Tennessee
swabbie5256@gmail.com

IS OBEDIENCE NECESSARY?

Do you have to obey God to be saved and go to Heaven? This question affects everyone's daily existence. It affects how we treat others, and it affects how we react when things go wrong. It affects how intense or lax we are about living for God and whether we should repent and be baptized for the forgiving of our sins into Christ's death. In short, if God doesn't require us to obey, we don't need to be that concerned about making sure we remain in his grace. **Galatians 5:4** makes it clear that Christians can fall from grace: *"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."*

When these Christians looked away from Christ for their salvation, they were no longer able to be forgiven for sins they committed. So, when we look to Christ for salvation, can we be saved without obeying? In **Luke 6:46**, Jesus said: *"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"* **Romans 2:13** says *"for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified,"* If we don't obey God, we will not be justified, if we are not justified, we are still in our sins and cannot be saved in Heaven. I pray you will consider these things carefully and be saved. We would love to study anytime.

Matt Hodge

Seek first the kingdom of God. What does that mean?

This statement is found in **Matthew 6:33**, in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The last half of chapter six is dealing particularly with right attitudes about material things. First, in **verses 19-21**, there is His warning about seeking treasures on earth. They are temporary and will be lost, one way or another. Our treasure is in heaven! Do not trade that for any amount of wealth on earth. Second, in **verses 22-24**, we find a warning against trying to pursue *both* earthly and heavenly things. One will dominate the other, and trying to hold on to worldly things while serving God, cannot be done. Third, in **verses 25-32** we are even warned about *stressing* over material necessities, like food, clothing and housing. Excessive concern, even in these areas, will draw us away from God. Don't worry ... God will provide.

That brings us to **verse 33**: *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."* (But...) In contrast to materialistic treasure-seeking, compromising allegiance to God and money, and anxious fretting over the things of this life, seek first the kingdom of God. The command to seek first is not talking about chronological order. (Do the spiritual thing *first* then you can seek the other. No!) First means first place. Give precedence, priority and preeminence to seeking the kingdom of God. So, we are seeking first the kingdom in every moment of every day of every year.

Seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness means seeking the "rule" of God. God rules in His kingdom and we are seeking *that* kingdom. Seeking God's rule is to seek righteousness because His rule leads us in all righteousness. Seeking to be right with God takes precedence over every other interest or inclination. Nothing else matters. The promise is that, if we seek first the kingdom of God, ... everything else falls into place farther down the list of concerns.

Don Bunting

God helps those who help themselves. That's not Scripture. It's Ben Franklin in one of his "Poor Richard" proverbs. It's true. But it's not the whole truth. The whole truth is a lot better than that. The good news is that God helps those who are unable to help themselves. That's mercy. He helps those who do not deserve to be helped. That's grace. The thing I cannot find in God's word is that God helps those who are not willing to help themselves.

Ken Green

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-620-0563

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George Root, Tracy
Richardson, Gerry Sandusky,
Randy Harshbarger, Jordan
Moody, Don Craig and Tina
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Bible Classes:

Sunday Morning - Proverbs -
Bill Miller

Wednesday Evening -
Hebrews - Jim Stauffer

Sunday Sermon:
Establishment and Beginning
of the Lord's Church



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10