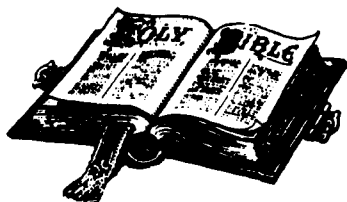


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

Volume 28

JUNE, 1991

Number 6

IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD "WORKS?"

When a person obeys the commands of the Lord is he **working**? Are the **actions of obedience** considered "**works**?" Of course, we recognize that such acts of obedience are NOT "**works**" of the law of Moses, "**works**" of man's wisdom, "**works**" of disobedience, nor "**works**" of merit, but are they "**works**?" When "**works**" are commanded or praised in the New Testament, what are they? They are "**works**" of obedience to God, aren't they? They are "**works**" of **righteousness** that God has commanded (or in some way required) and thus are **essential** to pleasing God and to receiving eternal life. Obviously we do those "**works**" when we obey God.

Please consider the following questions:

1. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what are the "**good works**" of 2 Timothy 3:16-17?

2. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what are the "**works**" of James 2:24?

3. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what are the "**good works**" of Matthew 5:16?

4. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what are the "**works**" of Rev. 2:5, 19?

5. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what are the "**works**" of Titus 2:14?

6. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what are the "**works**" of Hebrews 10:24?

7. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what is the "**work**" of James 1:25?

8. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what is the "**good work**" of 2 Timothy 2:21?

9. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what is the "**good work**" of Hebrews 13:21?

10. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what is the "**good work**" of Col. 1:10?

11. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what is involved in "**your work of faith**" in 1 Thess. 1:3 and 2 Thess. 1:11?

12. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what is involved in "**the work of the Lord**" in 1 Cor. 16:10?

13. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what is involved in **doing "good"** in 3 John 11?

14. If obeying God's will is not "**works**," then what is involved in **working "good"** in Romans 2:10?

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THE INSTRUCTOR

(USPS # 581680)

Published monthly in the interest of truth and righteousness by the congregation of Christ, meeting at 4777 U.S. Highway 431, Albertville, Alabama.

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Second-class postage paid in
Albertville, AL 35950

Editorial . . .

Remember NOW Thy Creator . . ."

Solomon, a man of accumulated wealth, varied experiences and great wisdom said: **"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, . . ."** (Eccl. 12:1). This is an admonition for those who are **young** to remember God while they are still young. To **"Remember God"** suggests that God should be in one's thoughts. Not only should God be in one's thoughts, but **God's Word** should be **studied** and **learned**, and His Will should be **obeyed**! If one **remembers God** as he should, he will **"Fear God and keep his commandments. . ."** (see Eccl. 12:13) and he will be mindful of **"the words of the Lord Jesus Christ."** (cf. 2 Peter 1:12; Acts 20:35).

In this study we want to emphasize the fact that Solomon said, **"Remember NOW thy Creator. . ."** The idea involved in **"now"** is present tense. It is not last year, last month, last week or even yesterday. It is NOW! It is **not** next year, next month or tomorrow. It is NOW! In Luke 14:16-17 we read that **"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come: for all things are NOW ready."** In John 16:31 Jesus answered his disciples, **"Do you NOW believe?"** Paul told the saints at Ephesus, **"For ye were sometimes**

darkness, but NOW are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." (Eph. 5:8). In speaking to the saints at Colosse Paul declared, **"But NOW ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, . . ."** (Col. 3:8-9). The apostle Paul also said, **" . . . And the life which I NOW live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."** (See Gal. 2:20). We read in 2 Cor. 6:2, **" . . . Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation."** The psalmist said, **"And NOW, Lord, what wait I for? my hop is in thee."** (Psalms 39:7). The apostle Paul declared that **"we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this PRESENT WORLD."** (See Titus 2:11-12).

In the above passages (& others) emphasis is placed upon the **present** — NOW! The things we did years ago, last year, last month, last week or even yesterday are **all** in the **past**. They may have been important or unimportant, good or bad, righteous or evil, but we did them. They are in the past! NOW is the present! However, what we did in the past has influenced the present. What we do NOW will affect the future and may well determine our eternal destiny!

WHY REMEMBER THE CREATOR NOW?

There are a number of reasons why the Creator should be remembered NOW. Here are some of them.

1. **Because of the uncertainty and brevity of life!** A reading of the following passages should impress all of us with the fact that life on earth is **uncertain** and is **brief** even at the longest.

A. In 2 Sam. 14:14 the woman of Tekoah declared, **"For we must die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered again; . . ."**

“Remember NOW Thy Creator . . .”

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B. 1 Peter 1:24 — **“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.”**

C. In 1 Chron. 29:15 David said: **“ . . . Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.”**

D. In Job 8:9 Bildad said: **“For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.”**

E. In Psalms 102:11 the psalmist said: **“My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.”**

F. Job 7:6 — **“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, . . .”**

G. Job 9:25-26 — **“Now my days are swifter than a post [i.e., a courier, runner, racer, messenger — CRS]: they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagles that hasteth to the prey.”**

H. Job 14:1-2 — **“Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.”**

I. James 4:14 — **“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”**

2. **The power of sin gets a firmer hold on one as he gets older.** We can learn from observation that as a person gets older he tends to become more set in the ways of sin. Jesus declared: **“ . . . Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin”** (John 8:34) Solomon tells us that, **“His own iniquities shall take the wicked him-**

self and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.” (Prov. 5:22).

3. **A longer period of service to God.** If we serve God NOW we will have a longer time to serve Him before death. The psalmist said, **“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”** (Psa. 90:12). The longer we serve God the nearer we should be to him and the stronger we should become. It takes time to grow and develop into spiritual maturity. The sooner we begin to serve Him the longer we will have to grow and develop as a Christian.

4. **A happier life!** The following passages suggest that if one **fears God, trusts in God and obeys God** he will be happy.

A. Proverbs 16:20 — **“ . . . Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.”** Do you want to be happy? If so, then put your complete **trust** in Him.

B. Proverbs 28:14 — **“Happy is the man that feareth alway: . . .”** Do you want to be happy? If so, then **keep God’s law.**

D. John 13:17 — **“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”** Do you want to be happy? If so, then do the things that you know that are right.

E. 1 Peter 4:14 — **“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; . . .”** Do you want to be happy? If so, then you should do what is right as a Christian although you suffer reproach.

5. **Death is sure!** Heb. 9:27-28 says, **“And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment: . . .”** In 1 Cor. 15:22 Paul said, **“For as in Adam all die, . . .”** Death is an “officer” that cannot be bribed. It is a fact that we must face. It is a reality that we must accept!

What are you doing NOW to prepare to meet God in judgment? NOW is the time to trust in and obey God!

(CRS)

IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD "WORKS?"

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15. If obeying God's will is not **"works,"** then what is involved in **working "out your own salvation"** as mentioned in Phil. 2:12?

In John 6:27-29 Jesus said: **"LABOUR . . . for that meat that endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he hath sent."** In this passage believing on him whom God hath sent is spoken of as **"the work of God."** How is it **"the work of God?"** It is **not** God's work because God does the **believing.** It is **"the work of God"** because God **planned and willed** that **man believe on Jesus Christ.** But it is **man** that **does the believing.** It is **"the work of God"** although **man believes!**

Since it is **"the work of God"** when **man believes** it should not be difficult to see that when God commands (or teaches us in some other way his requirements) and we obey them, they are **"works"** of God! So, when God commands **repentance and baptism** and we do them, **we are working the works of God!** (Cf. Acts 17:30; 2:38).

Yes, obedience to God certainly involves "works!" One cannot be saved without such **"works."** (CRS)

CORRECTIONS (Instructor, May, 1991): On page 2, par. 2 "conintune" should be "continue"; par. 4 "i.i." should be "i.e."; par. 13 "meant" should be "mean." On page 3, par. 1 "siad" should be "said"; par. 4 "Howver" should be "however"; par. 6 "gaermane" should be "germane"; par. 12 "This would only ONE elder in each congregation." should be "This would allow only ONE elder in each congregation." On page 4, par. 2 "Howver" should be "However". Front page should say "Number 5".

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SENTENCE SERMONS

Truth often angers those whom it does not fully convince.

* * * * *

Trouble in marriages often start when a man is so busy earning his salt that he forgets his sugar.

* * * * *

A person is never what he ought to be until he is doing what he ought to do.

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