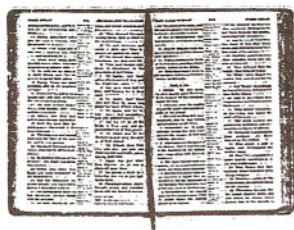


THE INSTRUCTOR



"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)

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DRAWING NEAR TO GOD — (PSALMS 73:20-28)

Read carefully Psalms 73:20-28. We learn from verse 28 that **"it is good for me to draw near to God."** The last part of 1 Samuel 14:36 that the priest said, **"Let us draw near hither unto God."** We learn from James 4:8 that **if** we draw near unto God that He will draw near unto us! A great conditional promise!

1. WHY SHOULD WE DRAW NEAR TO GOD?

A. It is good! The psalmist said: **"But it is good for me to draw near to God..." (73:28).**

B. God commanded it! James 4:8 says: **"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you..."**

C. In so doing, we draw away from self. See & read carefully Luke 9:23; 14:33; Titus 2:11-12; Galatians 2:20 & Romans 6:6.

D. In so doing, we draw away from the things of the world such as the spirit of conformity, the spirit of materialism, sinful pleasures, etc. Read and study carefully John 15:19; Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17; James 1:27; James 4:4; 1 Peter 2:11; Gal. 6:14; Gal. 5:19-21, etc.

E. In so doing, we draw closer to each other. Read &

study Gal. 6:1-2; 1 John 3:17-18; 1 John 5:2; John 13:34-35; etc.

F. In so doing, God will draw near to us. (See James 4:8.)

II. HOW CAN WE DRAW NEAR TO GOD?

A. We could draw near to God in vain, but we should not do so! (See Matthew 15:8-9.)

B. God must draw us. See John 6:44-45.) He will draw us:

(1) Through Christ & His blood! (See Eph. 2:13-18 & John 12:32).

(2) Through the word! (See John 6:44-45).

(3) By "a better hope". (See Hebrews 7:19).

C. The Hebrew writer said: **"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."** (10:22).

NOTE: In order for us to draw near to God we must receive faith by hearing God's Word. (See Romans 10:17). Our faith must be a living, active, obedient faith! We are to **"walk by faith, not by sight"**. (See 2 or. 5:7).

If you are not drawing near to God, please begin today! (CRS)

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Editorial...

DOES GOD REQUIRE OBEDIENCE?

Generally speaking, we are living in an age of disrespect and disobedience. This is true in the home, in the schools and in society at large. This is also true in religious matters. A person does not have to be very astute to observe the conditions that prevail.

How does the Lord answer this question (Does God Require Obedience?) in the Scriptures?

I. WHAT IS OBEDIENCE?
Cruden's Conc. defines obedience as "*Subjection to the authority of another...*" Obedience to God is simply obeying God's will. It is keeping His commandments. It is doing what He bids and not going beyond what He authorizes.

II. OBEDIENCE IS REQUIRED!

A. Only the obedient will enter into the kingdom! In Mt. 7:21 Jesus said: "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 which is in heaven." NOTE: To enter into the kingdom of heaven *a person must do the will of the Father!*

B. One must obey the truth to be purified! the apostle Peter said: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." (1 Pet. 1:22) NOTE: To purify his soul *a person must obey the truth!*

C. One must hear and do to be blessed! James said: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" and "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (1:22, 25) NOTE: To be blessed in his deed, *a person must look into the perfect law of liberty and do it!*

D. One is made free from sin by obedience! In Rom. 6:17-18 Paul said: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." NOTE: To be made free from sin and become a servant of righteousness *a person must obey from the heart that form of doctrine i.e., the gospel that Paul preached.* (See Rom. 1:16; 6:3-4)

E. Eternal salvation is for those who obey Christ! Hebrews 5:8-9 says: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation

unto all them that obey him."
NOTE: To receive eternal salvation a person must obey Christ!

F. The obedient will have right to the tree of life! Rev. 22:14 says: **"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."** NOTE: To have right to the tree of life and to enter in through the gates into the city, a person must do His commandments!

G. Vengeance will be taken on the disobedient! In 2 Thess. 1:7-9 Paul said: **"And to you are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."** NOTE: Those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

H. We must obey God rather than man! In Acts 5:29 we read: **"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."** (Also see Gal. 1:6-12) NOTE: To please God and thus to be saved eternally, a person must always choose to obey God rather than men when there is a choice that needs to be made. QUESTION: Does the fact that God requires obedience to His will in order that a person may be saved, make void the grace of God? Of course not! It is the grace of God that teaches us that

one must obey God in order to be saved. Paul declared that **"... the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us..."** (Titus 2:11-12). This is **"...the true grace of God"** wherein we stand! (See 1 Pet. 5:12).

III. WHAT CONSTITUTES DISOBEDIENCE?

A. Partial obedience is disobedience! Read 1 Sam. 15:1-28. In that passage we have an example of disobedience although Saul did a part of what he was told to do. In verse 3 the Lord (through Samuel) told Saul to **"Go, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."**

Saul took his "army" and went to Amalek and "smote the Amalekites" but **"he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they utterly destroyed"** (verses 7-9).

Later when Saul met Samuel he said unto Samuel, **"...I have performed the commandment of the Lord"** (verse 13). When Samuel said to Saul: **"What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? Saul replied: "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; the rest we have utterly destroyed"** (verses 14-15).

Samuel pointed out to Saul

that he did not obey the voice of the Lord, he also said: **"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."** (verses 22-23) Saul had rejected the Lord by his conduct and he was rejected from being king. Saul confessed to Samuel, saying, **"I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice"** (verse 24). NOTE: Saul did only a part of what God commanded and thus he was guilty of disobedience!

FURTHER NOTE: God expects us do all that He commands us! If we have a right to partially obey God, what part of His will can we reject? No part

of it because *partial obedience is in reality disobedience!*

B. Substitution is disobedience!

(1) Moses is an example of one who substituted for God's will. Read Numbers 20:1-12 & Psalms 106:32-33. **"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water..."** Instead of Moses speaking to the rock as the Lord had commanded he spake to the people and smote the rock twice with his rod. Although water came out Moses was denied entrance into the promised land of Canaan. He substituted speaking to the people for speaking to the rock like God commanded. God did not accept substitution then and He will not accept substitution now! (CRS)

(To be continued)

Money is a good servant, but it is a bad master. * * * *
Our service to and for the Lord is not measured in numbers, but in obedience to His will. * * * *
Most of us have a lot of advice to give, but aren't willing to receive very much. * * * *
Many have multiplied their possessions, but have reduced their moral values.

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