January 2019 Blog 38

Having a Healthy Relationship With God

The question is: How can we have a healthy relationship with God?

This blog is dealing with the importance of obedience to God as it relates to our assurance of salvation which will lead to a healthy relationship with Him.

Obedience is a key relation-issue with God. Eve/Adam had a problem with it. In my readings I came across this verse from the exodus and thought it good to review.

“Num 15:38 Speak to the sons of Israel and command them that they make fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue.

Num 15:39 And it shall be to you for a fringe, that you may look upon it and remember all the commands of Jehovah, and do them; and so that you do not seek after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you prostitute yourself,

Num 15:40 that you may remember and do all My commands and be holy to your God.”

Here is ~~a~~ key passage on this question, spoken by Jesus:

*John 14:21-23*

***21  “****He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”****22****Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, ‘Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?’****23****Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.****24****He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Fathers who sent Me.’”*

In any discussion on a “good relationship with God”, the first question is, “Who gets to decide right and wrong?”

It was the issue in the Garden of Eden, and it is the issue today. Man has always wanted the control of deciding the answer to that question. However, as followers of Christ, a key distinction is that we affirm the fact that God alone gets to decide what is right and wrong and we in turn must obey.

An example in the world today:

Tim Cook, Apple CEO, recently said at an awards ceremony, “I’m proud to be a gay”, making him the first openly homosexual CEO of a Fortune 500 company. Cook went on to say: “We believe the future should belong to those who use technology to build a better, more inclusive, and hopeful world. I believe the most sacred thing that each of us is given is our judgment, our morality, our own innate desire to separate right from wrong. Choosing to set that responsibility aside in a moment of trial is a sin.”

As followers of Christ we must not succumb to the pressure to ignore or manipulate a standard that God has clearly set forth in His Word. When tempted to do this, let’s think about answering the question that Jesus asked in *Luke 6:46, “Why do you call me Lord, and not do what I say?”*

As followers of Jesus Christ we must be committed to at least these three principles:

First, we must be committed to the Bible as our only Truth System.

Second, we must believe the Bible is inerrant and that the Bible, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit, is all the instruction we need for our time on earth.

Third, we must have a heart and commitment to obey what it says. A genuine motive, intent and desire to “do the will of God from the heart”. Ephesians 6:6

Is this way of life a challenge? Sure! And if we try to live it in our own strength it is more than a challenge, it is impossible. On our own we will fail miserably. Our only hope of success is to surrender, submit to the Lordship of Christ, see ourselves as His obedient slaves, and look to Christ to live out the life that we cannot accomplish apart from our ongoing abiding in Him. This is the Holy Spirit plus the Word.

*"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5*

I believe that our honest and genuine motive, intent and desire to obey God is very important to God and is directly related to our ability to enjoy a healthy relationship with God.

*“Therefore, we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:9*

Assurance of a healthy relationship with God, and in turn our salvation, comes from our commitment to the Word and a genuine desire to obey what it says.

A person should hold their salvation suspect if they are not committed to the Bible as their truth system and to obeying what it says.

Questions for consideration:

1. Can anyone evaluate my obedience other than me and the Holy Spirit?
2. Do I get to decide what commands to follow?
3. How valid is it to decide a command is “cultural” and then not obey it?
4. Can I judge the quality of anyone’s relationship to God?
5. At what point do I run the risk of taking my relationship to God for granted? Why can it be easy for that to happen?
6. Why is it important to understand how to properly study and interpret the Bible? 2 Timothy 2:15
7. What grade would I give myself on knowing how to study and apply the Bible?
8. What are the implications of being a willing “slave of Christ”? 1 Corinthians 6:20; Ephesians 6:6

Applications:

* 1. Connect with a person who is more mature than you in the Word and learn the scriptures and how to study and interpret them.
  2. Have a man or men in your life who are willing to hold you accountable in your walk with God and commitment to the Word.
  3. Be involved with a group of men who are committed to encouraging one another in their walk with God. Hebrews 10:23-25
  4. How would you grade yourself on these areas of sin slippage?

1. My handling of relations with the opposite sex?
2. My handling of financial matters such as giving, IRS, paying bills on time, tips, etc.?
3. My telling the truth the best I know in business, spousal relationship, and others?
4. My vocabulary, i.e., cursing?
5. My management of my temper used to get my way?