

Just Being Obedient

By Wayne Vasilenko

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Every time I update the Selah Life website I send out an update notice to people I care about. I realize that many people I send these notices to never go to the website and many have never read what is there. This includes many in my own family! So why do I do it? Why do I and some of my associates sometimes spend hours researching the Bible, waiting for the inspiration from God through His Spirit to write to what in some cases seems to be a disinterested audience? The simple answer is Obedience... we are just being obedient! The sad thing about this is that those of you that ignore our efforts may be missing many blessings. Please don't misunderstand what I am saying... I am not putting myself or any of my associates on a pedestal implying that we have attained a perfect understanding of God's Word and we have all the answers. All that we write or say does not "come directly from God," as some might claim; we are just simple men and women just trying to be to do what Jesus told us to do by passing on to others what we have learned during our walk with Him. After all, what good is knowledge or experience if not passed on to others? Many of you reading this claim to be "Christian;" some of you I know personally, some I never met, but whether or not you make this claim, the truth is ultimately between you and God. I confess, sometimes it gets very discouraging spending hours, sometimes days preparing a lesson or article that seems to end up just floating somewhere in Cyber-Space not drawing the slightest bit of attention from anyone, especially those I love and care about the most. What gives me the strength to carry on comes from the words of Jesus Himself...

Mark 6:4 (NKJV)

⁴ But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."

This indicates that even Jesus had to feel discouraged at times, especially among the people that knew him the best, friends and family. But Jesus came to earth for a mission, and before He went back to Heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, he passed the torch to His disciples to continue that mission until He returns again as He promised He would! That mission was to spread the word that God Himself is providing the one and only way we may be reconciled into fellowship with Him. He alone, by His Grace, provided a way for our sin against Him, and the penalty we deserve, to be erased forever! He takes away the penalty for our disobedience simply by us (you and me) acknowledging and accepting His Grace. This is the message that is now up to us to pass on to everyone we come in contact with! And this includes you if you claim to be a Christian. We are not all called to be preachers or teachers, but when Jesus passed the torch to His disciples it is pretty obvious that this would have to be repeated again and again, much like network marketing, in order for us to "make disciples of all the nations," as Jesus commanded us to do.

Are You a Christian or Do You Just Think You Are?

There are only two types of "Christians" in the world; there are "Converts," and those known as "Disciples." Contrary to the popular belief of many, you are not a Christian simply because you are not Jewish! The word Christian means, "Follower of Christ." The word "Disciple" has the same meaning (Follower). However, one can be a disciple of anyone or any philosophy, not necessarily being a follower of Jesus.

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Unless you are following the teachings of Jesus, or at the very least attempting to follow His teachings, it may be that you are not really a Christian at all! So the big question is, "Are you a Christian, or do you just think you are?" If you have to think about that question, that alone is a reason for concern. Are you following, or at least attempting to follow the teachings of Jesus or not? If you are not sure of what the "teachings of Jesus" are, this too is reason for concern! You see... the title Christian is easy to claim but not so easy to sustain. Before I get all kinds of negative responses to that statement about works and self-righteousness, let me explain what I mean starting with a few more questions. Are you one of those people that feel that the Bible or "Religion" as it is often referred to is something you should keep to yourself? Many people feel that the Bible is "too controversial," and bringing it up in conversation is risky in that you may offend someone or end up in a "heated" argument. They say that these conversations should only take place in church among believers or those seeking God. Does this describe you? If this is what you believe then consider this... how does one seek God or come to believe the Bible unless they hear the Word of God, and how does one hear the Word of God unless someone speaks it or conveys it through other means?

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

If you claim to be Christian, at some point in your life a disciple of Jesus either introduced Him to you, or helped you understand what you must do to be saved. That person (or those people) were in fact "Spiritual Descendents" of the disciples Jesus personally addressed before He ascended back into Heaven. The moment you accepted Jesus as your savior, the torch was also passed to you, along with the responsibility to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," see the passage below. Have you done that recently?

Mark 16:15-19 (NKJV)

¹⁵ And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." ¹⁹ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

The next question is one I often ask; "If God were to ask you why He should let you into Heaven, what would you say?" If you do not have an answer to this question, that is *serious* reason for concern! Most people answer that question by comparing themselves to others saying things such as, "I don't Steal or Kill... I try my best not to do wrong." People most always, try to pass themselves off as being a "better than average," or at least "Not as bad as some other people." It is funny how they always intentionally compare themselves to someone far worse than they are, at least in their own eyes. However, getting back to the question as to why God should let you into heaven, there is really only one acceptable answer according to the Word of God! Therefore, if your answers are similar to the ones above, once again, there is reason for concern. I pose all of these questions with the hope that any readers that may have gotten this far in this writing would begin to search their own hearts as to where they stand with God and the Bible. Are you really a Christian or Do You Just Think You Are?

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What are some other indicators as to where you really stand? Here are a few things to consider: What percentage of your daily or weekly routine involves Bible study in some form such as reading the bible itself, or perhaps listening to or watching biblical subject matter via media sources? What percentage of your income do you give to spread the Gospel to others such as donations to a local church or some other Christian ministry? When was the last time you shared the Bible or talked to anyone about God? If you claim to be a Christian, when was the last time you shared your conversion experience with anyone? Do you remember the time or circumstance when you became a Christian? I am posing these questions not to impose a particular standard on anyone. The goal is to get my readers to reflect on their own priorities, and actions to ascertain their true relationship with God. There are many people, who day after day – week after week go through life never even thinking about God or the Bible. They never talk to anyone about God. They have never read more than a verse or two from God's word. If given the choice of going to an event to hear a Christian speaker or evangelist or a ball game, the ball game is always the first choice. Nevertheless these people claim to be Christian... they claim to be Christ Followers! So where do you stand? Are you the "Christ Follower" you say you are? If you got arrested for spreading the gospel as Jesus instructed us to do, would there be enough evidence to convict you? That is something to think about isn't it? It can also be a good indicator as to whether or not you are a Christian, or you just think you are. If you are, Be Obedient... Spread the Word of God!