

Is God Your Friend?

You can have no better friend than God. But do you meet the qualifications of His friends?

1. Believe Him (James 2:23): "... 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' And he was called the friend of God."
2. Obey Him (John 15:14, 17): "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ... These things I command you, that you love one another."
3. Live according to Him (Proverb 22:11): "He who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips, the king will be his friend."
4. Forsake worldliness for Him (James 4:4): "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Is God your friend? – Daniel E. Parks

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

23. Q. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (Eph. 1:4, 5), did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer (Rom. 3:20-22; Gal. 3:21, 22).

24. Q. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5, 6); who, being the eternal Son of God, became man (John 1:14; Gal. 4:4), and so was and continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person for ever (Rom. 9:5; Lk. 1:35; Col. 2:9; Heb. 7:24, 25).

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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HIS WORKMANSHIP

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

This text, along with the two verses preceding, is creedal with regard to declaring the truth that salvation is by grace alone. Many have made the attempt to pollute, corrupt and dilute the fact of God’s sovereignty and the faith that is His gift. Many will agree that salvation is by grace only to deny it with some statement such “but you have to...” Obviously that would mean grace plus works for salvation which idea Paul expressly denies. See Romans 11:6. In fact, salvation includes good works and even they are the provision of God. That which God requires, grace will always provide!

Whatever we understand about good works we may be certain that they do not merit salvation nor make any contribution in any way to fitting one for cohabitation with God. It is obvious that the design of God is that good works appear where salvation has occurred. A. R. Faussett wrote: “Works do not justify, but the justified man works.” So it was that James made much of good works and their connection to being justified. See James 2:17-26. James does not suggest efficacy in the matter of bringing salvation. He rather submits that good works are the validation of a claim of justification. He used the example of Abraham who believed God and prepared to offer his son, Isaac. According to James then, faith without works is not faith at all and therefore neither could there be justification.

Paul powerfully wrote: *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for*

they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:14. In that same passage Paul referenced the idea of “revelation” in regard to receiving truth. The tendency among men is to separate the ideas of such things as duty and works from the realm of the spiritual. The fact is that if they are not spiritual they are not good works. See Galatians 5:22-26. In referencing good works here the Apostle declares them to be a work of creation. This takes not only salvation but also the good works that ensue completely and emphatically out of the realm of human endeavor. Good works are not done to earn salvation; they are part of the creation that is salvation. Consider again: *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

We rejoice in the fact that true believers are chosen in Christ (Ephesians 1:4), but also, in the fact that we are created in Him. That is we are created in His image, made partakers of His nature and are thus compelled to act as He acted by virtue of who we are in Him. Of Him it was said, “...who went about doing good...” So it is often recorded of true believers. We are reminded of Tabitha: *Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. Acts 9:36.* This is the outcome for which the writer prayed: *Now the God of peace, that*

brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21.

Thus we understand that the believer, his nature, his inclinations and the manner of his devotion to the Lord is the creation or handiwork of God. It is not of human design or capability. It required the divine image and superscription upon it all. The finished product was not set forth with a list of options left to the discretion of recipient. Even the works are ordained or prepared of God. It is with divine purpose that these things were so ordered – “that we should walk in them.” There can be no separation of these things from salvation. Consider then that the source of good works is divine creation, the design of good works is of God and the purpose of good works is that we should so walk. *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Galatians 5:16.*

What then is a good work? We can easily discover what it is not. “...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Romans 14:23. Even the plowing of the wicked is sin. Proverbs 21:4. The

scriptures declare that “the just shall live by his faith.” Furthermore we are taught that faith is essential to pleasing God. Then that which is done as we walk by faith and in the presence of Christ Jesus our Lord and led by the Spirit, is good. There are some things that are specifically named as good works (such as almsgiving) but even this in the absence of faith is disqualified. One might ask, “How shall we know?” Perhaps we will not know. Those depicted by our Lord in Matthew 25 did not know that they had done anything special.

It is evident that good works should be desired. This is the terminology used in reference to one desiring the office of Bishop. The mandate to give diligence to show approval unto God is that we might be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” But, we would reiterate that such things are of both divine creation and design. Those redeemed by the blood of Christ have a predicted way of life. It is a life for which they were created. *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Titus 2:13-14.* Truly, that which is required of God is the believer’s delight. *bhs*

God’s Purpose or Mine?

He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side . . . —Mark 6:45
We tend to think that if Jesus Christ compels us to do something and we are obedient to Him, He will lead us to great success. We should never have the thought that our dreams of success are God’s purpose for us. In fact, His purpose may be exactly the opposite. We have the idea that God is leading us toward a particular end or a desired goal, but He is not. The question of whether or not we arrive at a particular goal is of little importance, and reaching it becomes merely an episode along the way. What we see as only the process of reaching a particular end, God sees as the goal itself.

What is my vision of God’s purpose for me? Whatever it may be, His purpose is for me to depend on Him and on His power now. If I can stay calm, faithful, and unconfused while in the middle of the turmoil of life, the goal of the purpose of God is being accomplished in me. God is not working toward a particular finish— His purpose is the process itself. What He desires for me is that I see “Him walking on the sea” with no shore, no success, nor goal in

sight, but simply having the absolute certainty that everything is all right because I see “Him walking on the sea” (Mark 6:49). It is the process, not the outcome, that is glorifying to God. God’s training is for now, not later. His purpose is for this very minute, not for sometime in the future. We have nothing to do with what will follow our obedience, and we are wrong to concern ourselves with it. What people call preparation, God sees as the goal itself. God’s purpose is to enable me to see that He can walk on the storms of my life right now. If we have a further goal in mind, we are not paying enough attention to the present time. However, if we realize that moment-by-moment obedience is the goal, then each moment as it comes is precious. Oswald Chambers

Forgetting One’s Self

From the Pastor: Dr. M. J. Seymour, Sr.

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Lk. 9:23)

Some folks have this grand mystical whim of being a “Christian”, yet, they have not even the remotest clue of what being a real Christian entails. They are totally oblivious to the demands of a genuine Christian existence. Most seem to perceive it as some kind of slap-happy emotionally charged roller-coaster thrill ride with moon pies in the sky for dessert. Christianity is not for the faint of heart. It is not pretty little praise clichés with Howdy Doody rhetoric. Heaven wrought Christianity is of eternal holy design.

Our text clearly gives three elements utterly essential to rightfully “come after” Jesus. It does not mean to walk in His steps or to be carried in His arms; it is to consecrate one’s self to the identical sacrificial life of righteousness traveled by the Lord Jesus. It is a life of completing the Father’s will in one’s assigned duties. Jesus came to do the Father’s will and to finish His work; it must also be so for everyone seeking to “come after” Jesus.

The word “deny” carries the idea of losing one’s self in the pursuit of fulfilling the purpose of God in Christ Jesus. It is an unvarnished forgetting of one’s own desires and goals for the good of the cause of Christ, which is the eternal work of the Father.

Taking up the cross describes one’s willingness to be a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. It is the ultimate surrender of one’s life to do as Jesus in the unreserved giving of “self” for another. In this text, it is following in the likeness of the life of Christ. It is setting one’s eyes on the eternal purpose of the Father.

“Follow me” at the end of the passage conveys to the believers to accompany and to unite with Jesus in the pathway of righteousness for the work of the Father. In the holy work of Christianity one must forget self-purpose and release himself into the depths of grace in Christ Jesus. Forgetting “self” is remembering who you are in Jesus. As cited by Dale Wallace

Prayer is our Christian duty. It is an expression of submission to God and dependence upon Him. For that matter, prayer is arguably the most objective measurement of our dependence upon God. Think of it this way. The things you pray about are the things you trust God to handle. The things you neglect to pray about are the things you trust you can handle on your own. H. B. Charles *It Happens After Prayer*

Sinful pride murders believing prayer. You will never take prayer seriously as long as you are looking for face-saving alternatives to get your needs met. H. B. Charles