

Obeying The Commands

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Sometimes I read bits that indicate that people like me have lost all respect for the authority of the Scriptures and do not think people must obey the commands in the New Testament Scriptures.

Those who refuse to obey the Lord can have no hope of salvation. We can all make that assertion with confidence, can't we? But what does that really mean? Too often it means that, if a person does not obey according to my interpretation of the Scriptures, he is doomed. I may have all sorts of technical refinements by which I measure acceptable worship, baptism, or other of my specialties, and if others do not measure up to them, they are hopeless (in my wise judgment!).

Since you obey all that is commanded, you do not fall into that class with me. Right? Fine! But do you obey these commands:

- Do you lift up hands in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8)?
- Do you call elders to anoint the sick (Jas. 5:13)?
- Do you wash disciples' feet (John 13:12)?
- Do you greet with a holy kiss (Rom. 16:16)?
- Do you sell all and give to the poor (Mk 10:21)?
- Do you invite friends to your feast (Matt. 19:21)?
- Do you share all good things (Gal. 6:6)?
- Do you sell your coat and buy a sword (Lk. 22:36)?
- Do you give to everyone who begs (Lk. 6:30)?
- Do you judge not, condemn not (Lk. 6:37)?
- Do you pray the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9)?
- Do you desire to prophesy (1 Cor. 14:1)?
- Do you pray in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20)?

With most of you, I think I can safely say, few of those things are on your list. You have learned to read over these instructions or evade them by logical twisting and turning. You consider me a trouble-maker for mentioning them, for I confuse people! However, if you think that way, you were confused before I got to you!

About three thousand people were obedient to the gospel and were saved on Pentecost. How many, do you suppose, had mastered the above list before they were saved? And you can add all other commands written later by inspired writers. One is not justified by his ability to know and keep all the commandments. Those on Pentecost were justified by what Jesus did on the cross when they accepted that offered salvation by faith which produced penitence and baptism.

Then, out of joy, love, and desire to please God because he saved them, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Commands, instructions, teachings, examples, and exhortations which came later guided them in the

expressing of their love in fruitful lives rather than for justification. They were not ignoring God's directives but were fulfilling them through keeping the Greatest Commandments. So should it be with us. []