

GOODNESS



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Once we believe that God is and that His Word is sure and certain, we now have an obligation, “but it is **not to the sinful nature**, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, **you will die**; but if by the Spirit you **put to death** the misdeeds of the body, you will live.” Romans 8:12,13. We learned that faith produces obedience. Romans 1:5. All true Christians will live in obedience to Jesus Christ, our LORD, God and Savior.

Many Christians believe in Jesus Christ only as their Savior. They think that all they must do is name the Name of Christ and they will be saved **in their sins**. To back their claim they will cite Acts 4:12; “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” They will also cite Acts 2:21, “And everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.”



Peter tells us that ignorant and unstable people distort the writings of Paul and the other scriptures to their own destruction - 2 Peter 3:16. How is this so? By taking selected texts and separating them from the balancing texts. The Bible is like a jigsaw puzzle; two or three pieces do not make the whole picture. If you want the complete picture, **you must put all the pieces**

together.

The same is true of the Bible. If a teacher, preacher, minister, church or denomination only give you selected verses to support their positions, but leave off the balancing texts which give the whole picture, have nothing to do with them. They are leading you to destruction.

The balancing texts to Acts 4:12 and Acts 2:21 are, “when God raised up His servant, He sent Him first to you to bless you **by turning each of you from your wicked ways.**” Acts 3:26. “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord **must turn away from wickedness.**” 2 Timothy 2:19. This second step is just as vital for eternal life as the first. We must believe Jesus when He tells us that the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous will live. We must believe Jesus so much that we would rather pluck out our eyes or cut off our hands than to be cast into hell as a sinner.

Jesus asks us to “Follow Me”. Matthew 9:9. We are to follow His example of righteousness through His power. “I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13. Do you believe you **can do all things through Jesus?** Or has your church taught you that you can only do **some** things?

Jesus tells us that we are to produce fruits, works, deeds, and actions that are in keeping with our belief in Him. Matthew 7:16-20. We, in this second step, are to do (work) all the goodness we know to do. We spent enough time living for the world and the things of the world. It is time to enter through the **narrow** gate that leads to life. “Men will praise God **for the obedience** that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 9:13. “And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way; bearing fruit **in every good work**, growing in the knowledge of God.” Colossians 1:10.

“Our people must devote themselves to **doing what is good.**” Titus 3:14. Doing what is good? What a novel idea. Yet how hard it is for us to do the good we know we should. Those little smiles to brighten the lives of those around us. Simple courtesies that help make life pleasant. The words of encouragement which strengthen the weary of heart. What a different world this would be if we “set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” 1 Timothy 4:12. If each of us made a decision each day to practice our belief and live the example of Jesus, what happiness we could bring to ourselves and to those around us.

Unfortunately, the sad fact is, **we are** practicing our beliefs. Everything you do is done because you believe it to be right. If not, you wouldn't do it. Therefore, what you are doing is what you really believe. Check yourself. Look at your actions and ask yourself - Is this who I really want to be?

In our work, in our play, at home and in society, our one desire should be to be like Jesus. The life of Jesus should be our every thought. His divine nature our study. The love of Jesus must be revealed through our bodies so that this dark world of sin may see the Light of Life shining through us.

“Therefore as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Colossians 3:12-14.

When Jesus comes to take the righteous home with Him, He will tell them why they have **earned** the right to eternal life. In Matthew 25, we read where He says to the righteous, “Come, you who are blessed by My Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited Me in, I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, **I was in prison and you came to visit.**” Verses 34-36.

He says nothing about the big churches you built or how much money you spent on the carpet or organ. The question is, what have you done for Jesus in the person of the poor, needy and those in prison?

The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment because **they earned their reward**. How? By not doing for Jesus in the person of the poor and needy. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may **receive** what is due him **for the things done while in the body**, whether good or bad.”

2 Corinthians 5:10.

Do all the good you can. “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” Galatians 6:10.

From this moment on, if you are an inmate, never think of yourself as “a prisoner of the state”. No, now think of yourself as a “volunteer missionary” for Jesus in that dark world. I guarantee, for the rest of your time you will be the happiest person in prison. God will bless you as you obey Him as His “volunteer missionary”.

Related Texts

Genesis 4:7

Leviticus 19:11-18

Psalms 5:4, 5

Psalms 15:1, 2

Matthew 9:35-38

Romans 15:14

Galatians 5:22

Hebrews 6:5