

THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

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RECEIVING GOD’S WORD (Part II)

In part 1 of this article, we studied that there are four basic characteristics of God’s Word:

1. It is truth.
2. It is the Seed which produces new birth.
3. It is the Word that has been authored by God.
4. It is the Word that abides.

Now we turn our attention to the blessings that we may receive from the Word.

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We may, through God's Word, receive purification of the soul. Man's soul is defiled by sin. Sin fills the conscience with guilt. Sin pollutes the heart. However, man's soul can be purified by God's Word because in God's truth men can learn what God has done that they might be saved from sin. A gracious, merciful, loving heavenly Father in His great wisdom has provided a way that men can be saved from sin. A price had to be paid for sin and Jesus paid that price.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. (Heb. 2:9)

Furthermore, in God's true Word we learn how to reach the blood of Christ.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:3-4)

When you sincerely believe that Jesus Christ is your only hope of salvation, when you honestly acknowledge the reality of sin in your life, when you face the sad fact that you are a sinner, when in penitence you turn your will away from selfish, sinful living toward God, then you are ready to be baptized in water as was the Ethiopian eunuch.

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. (Acts 8:36-38)

Saul was instructed by Ananias as to what he should do.

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.
(Acts 22:16)

The soul is purified when sins are washed away. Sins are washed away when believers are baptized. Therefore, the soul is purified when we are baptized. These facts and commands are revealed in the Word of truth. But please keep in mind, you must obey the truth.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:
(1 Pet. 1:22)

Until you are willing to obey the truth, the cleansing from sin will not be your precious possession. Our Savior concluded the sermon on the mount with an emphasis on obedience to His Word. The one who heard and did what the Lord commanded He likened unto a wise man who built his house on a rock. The one who heard but did not do what the Lord commanded Jesus likened unto a foolish man who built his house on the sand (Mat. 7:24-27). The main difference is in wisdom and folly as is demonstrated by this verse: *“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* (Luke 6:46)

James also mentioned this: *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves”* (Jas. 1:22).

The Word of God is so very important that man’s salvation from sin, his successful life on earth by a spiritual standard, and his deliverance into eternal life in heaven are dependent on obedience to God’s Word. Man’s eternal destiny will be decided in judgment. Judgment will be according to the Lord’s Word.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:48)

The words of the poet John Greenleaf Wittier are fitting:

We search the world for truth; we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scroll,
From all old flower-fields of the soul;

And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from the quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read.

Are you paying attention to God's Word and studying it as you should?

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)

Your salvation depends on it.

Adapted from a sermon by KENT DICKINSON
(Deceased)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What was the name of Abraham's first wife?
2. What was the apparent source of Samson's strength?
3. Who was Solomon's father?
4. What job did Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, do?
5. What miracle did Jesus do for Lazarus?

...ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

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THE GOLDEN RULE

I think it is safe to say that you like for people to do nice things to you. For example, if you need help, you like it if someone comes to your aid, or if you make a mistake, to be patient with you, or if you have a great loss, to comfort you in your loss. Consider the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 7:9-12:

Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Here Jesus reasons that a man will naturally give good gifts to his son and in the same way our Father in heaven wants to give good things to us, His children, when we ask Him. But then He goes on to teach that since your Father in heaven gives good things to you, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them.

This last principle is known as the Golden Rule. It is often stated as “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” I like to think of putting myself in the shoes of the other person. If I were in their shoes, facing the same situation as they face, what would I want someone to do unto me? That tells me what I should do unto them. Jesus taught us that following this principle would fulfill all of the Law and the Prophets. In other words, it would make us pleasing to God. Let us look at several areas where we can apply this principle.

Suppose your brother sins against you in some way and then he is sorry for what he has done to you. Do you forgive him? The Golden Rule teaches us to forgive others because we want to be forgiven when we sin. “*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for*

Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32).

Suppose you gave a task to someone and they completed most of the task but not all at the end of the day. Or suppose someone owed you some money but they didn't have enough to pay you back. Or perhaps they borrowed something from you and then lost it so they cannot return it to you. Do you insist on full restitution or do you give them mercy? You have many opportunities to give mercy to others. Do you want others and especially God to give you mercy? The Golden Rule teaches us to give mercy to others because we want to be given mercy.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
(Mat. 5:7)

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.
(Luke 6:36)

For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.
(Jas. 2:13)

Suppose you see that your brother has some need in his life. Perhaps he needs some money to buy something very important. Perhaps he is hungry. Or perhaps a storm destroyed his crops or his means of transportation. Perhaps he has a serious illness and cannot work. Do you ignore his need and tell yourself that it is his problem and not yours? Or do you help him? The Golden Rule teaches us to help another who has needs because we want to be helped when we have a need.

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:17-18)

Suppose you make an appointment to meet with someone at a specific time and they are late in arriving. Or perhaps they agree to give you something but they continue to delay giving

it to you. Or perhaps they have a habit or way of doing things that you think is irritating. Do you get angry with them or cast them away? The Golden Rule teaches us to be patient and longsuffering with them because we want others and God to be patient and longsuffering with us.

With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:2-3)

Suppose you have a brother who loses a loved one or someone else close to him. On the other hand, perhaps he gets the job he has wanted for a long time or he marries the love of his life or he has a new baby. Do you ignore him or go to him and weep with him when he weeps and rejoice with him when he rejoices. The Golden Rule teaches us to empathize with others because we want others to empathize with us. *“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep”* (Rom. 12:15).

Suppose you see that your brother is in poor health or is going on a long journey or needs guidance in his life. Do you pray for your brother? The Golden Rule teaches us to pray for our brother because we want him to pray for us.

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (Jas. 5:16)

There are many other ways that you can apply the Golden Rule in your life as you deal with others. Some that come to mind are having compassion for them, bearing their burdens, edifying them, listening to them, being kind to them, giving what they request, greeting them warmly, and loving them. You do these things unto others because you want them to do these things unto you. My encouragement is that you apply the Golden Rule in all areas of your life. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

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FROM THE SCRIPTURES: ABOUT KINDNESS TO OTHERS

And the king [David] said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet . . . And David said unto him [Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth], Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. (2 Sam. 9:3, 7)

She [the virtuous woman] openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. (Pro. 31:26)

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (Mat. 5:44-45)

But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. (Luke 6:35)

And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. (Acts 28:2)

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (Col. 3:12-13)

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Gal. 6:10)