

The power of a temptation is in its falsehood. Every temptation is leveraged on a lie. Every time. Always. Without exception. Temptation is a sales pitch begging you to buy into a misperception of reality.

—John Kitchen

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)

19. Q. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression (Gen. 2:16, 17; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22).

20. Q. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery (Rom. 5:12).

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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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PATIENT CONTINUANCE

Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: (Romans 2:6-7)

The first chapter of Romans concludes with a declaration of judgment against those who had “changed the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” The Jews were evidently prone to hold the Gentiles to a greater level of contempt than themselves and so, Paul soundly rebuked them. They were perhaps even more guilty than the Gentiles in that they had “the oracles of God.” They demonstrated that they did not know that the “goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.”

We would be reminded that the holiness of God demands no less than that we be compatible with God – “Be ye holy for I am holy!” It is to the degree that we understand the awfulness of the offence against God that we fully appreciate and understand the extent of His mercy toward us. But while we marvel and rejoice in what we have received because of mercy and grace, we have before us the demand for a life that reflects that work of grace in us. It is that which has been purchased for us by no less than the blood of Christ Jesus our Lord. While we bask in the assurance of that which Christ has accomplished for us, we are reminded that God is not mocked. God will render to every man according to his deeds and those deeds, which characterize us as acceptable with God, are as much a work of grace as anything, and so are necessary.

So, against the backdrop of manifest

hardness comes the declaration He will “...render to every man according to his deeds.” This thought is often the cause of consternation among many believers in the grace of God. They have difficulty with anything that seems to suggest salvation by works or any other form of human contribution. Nevertheless, we find similar thoughts expressed in the Word of God. An example is: *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)*. Looking further we see, *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Revelation 20:12)*. It is evident then that judgment is rendered according to one’s works. Certainly, salvation is not by works, but judgment is. Consider our Lord’s parting words: *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. (Revelation 22:12)*. John Gill aptly commented on this thought: “God will be the Judge, who is righteous, holy, just, and true; every man in particular will be judged; as the judgment will be general to all, it will be special to everyone, and will proceed according to their works; for God will render to wicked men according to the demerit of their sins, the just

recompense of reward, eternal damnation; and to good men eternal life, not according to the merit of their good works, which have none in them, but according to the nature of them; such who believe in Christ, and perform good works from a principle of grace, shall receive the reward of the inheritance, which is a reward of grace, and not of debt. In other words, God will render to evil men according to the true desert of their evil deeds; and of his own free grace will render to good men, whom he has made so by his grace, what is suitable and agreeable to those good works, which, by the assistance of his grace, they have been enabled to perform.”

The thought of “patient continuance” arrests our attention at this point. It is not the idea of “hanging in there.” We are here made rather to think of perseverance and the grace of God. There is a continuance to be noted, a persistent pursuit of the things of God, if you will. In comparison to those practicing evil works, James enjoins, *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: (James 2:8)*. Paul wrote to both the Galatians and the Thessalonians that they should not be “weary in well doing” knowing that in due time the harvest would come. John encouraged such a walk in writing, *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. (2 John 1:6)*. James likewise pointed to patiently waiting for the early and latter rains. Throughout the Word we find that good works are an essential element of the believing life. *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (Matthew 24:46)*.

The overarching truth here is witnessed in their character and desire for Christ. They seek for glory – not that of this world; it is rather that of Christ in which we are made partakers. They seek for honor – again, it is not that which men might bestow. It is rather to be identified before God and men as the redeemed of the Lord – the end of a work of grace. And they seek for immortality, a sense of eternal identity with Christ and in the power of His resurrection. The result is eternal life. It is the life they have sought after with Christ; not merely to live forever. The deeds do not earn it; they indicate it!

Many have tried to ascertain what constitutes good works and good deeds. This is difficult to do so without thinking legalistically. We are simply told to do all in the name of Christ and with Him as our objective all else comes into proper view. After having declared that tribulation and anguish awaits those that are contentious Paul restates what he has said: *But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: (Romans 2:10)*.

Peter summarized it well: *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. (Acts 10:34-35)*. As we have already shown, acceptance with God is not based on either fearing God or working righteousness but the absence of either indicates that they are not accepted with Him. *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)*. bhs

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IS THE ONE IMPREGNABLE ROCK TO WHICH THE SUFFERING HUMAN HEART MUST CLING.

—JERRY BRIDGES

What Is the Best Thing In Life?

Any time we consider the spiritual disciplines, or means of grace, it is crucial that we remember not only the great purpose of these habits but also the great blessing they represent. We were made to know God and to be known by God. We were made in the image of God to have a real and living relationship with God.

We were the ones who interrupted this relationship through our sin and rebellion, who declared God an enemy rather than a friend. What a blessing, then, that even though we rebelled against God through our sin, he made the way for the relationship to be restored. What an honor that he still invites us to join into that relationship, that friendship. The habits we practice are the keys to knowing God.

It is through the Bible that we learn about the nature of God and the acts of God; it is through prayer that we speak to God and share our hearts with him; it is through fellowship that we join into his body, serve his people, and demonstrate his love. It is because Christianity is intrinsically relational that Packer can say, “What is the best thing in life? To know God.” May we never lose the wonder of that great privilege. – Tim Challies (Blog March 3, 2024)

Prayer’s Practices in Perspective

So, prayer—having God’s ear—is ultimately about having more of God. And having God’s ear (like hearing his voice) is not first and foremost about our particular practices and postures—the specific habits we develop—but the principle of continually relating to him, privately and with others. He is holy, and so we worship (adoration). He is merciful, and so we repent (confession). He is gracious, and so we express appreciation (thanksgiving). He is loving and caring, and so we petition him for ourselves, our family, our friends, and our world (supplication).³ Because prayer is part and parcel of an ongoing relationship with God, the book of Acts doesn’t accent the particular times and places of early-church prayer, but tells us, “All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer” (Acts 1:14). And Paul charges the church not to specific prescribed habits, but to “be constant in prayer” (Rom. 12:12), to “continue steadfastly in prayer” (Col. 4:2), to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17), to be “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication” (Eph. 6:18). Prayer is first and foremost an orientation of life, rather than the particular practices and patterns which might be characteristic of a certain community or season of life, or season of church history.

David Mathis, *Habits of Grace*

God is never surprised; never caught off guard; never frustrated by unexpected developments. God does as He pleases, and that which pleases Him is always for His glory and our good. —Jerry Bridges