

GOD SAYS WHAT HE MEANS AND MEANS WHAT HE SAYS

Not long ago I was told something that I have heard often over the years. A young lady said to me, "I don't think that we have to interpret the Bible that strictly". What she meant was that she didn't believe that God would allow a soul to go to hell for eternity just because they were not in harmony with some "little" command or teaching of the Bible. The fact is, IF the Bible is the inspired word of God, then one cannot take it TOO strictly! Why? Because God says just exactly what He means and He means just exactly what He says. No command of God is "little enough" not to matter. When one knows God's will on any "little" issue, and determines to violate it anyway, it is disobedience. In such a case, the "little" command is "plenty big" to result in the damnation of one's soul.

When Adam and Eve were placed in the garden of Eden by God, they were given just one restriction concerning what they could eat, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). It may seem a "little thing" that they violated that law, but violate it they did and the result was to be cast out of the garden. They disobeyed God! That is no "little thing"!

When Nadab and Abihu, both priest under the Levitical system, used fire from the wrong source to offer incense to God, it may well seem a "little thing". After all, fire is fire. Once the incense is lit, one would be unable to know the source of the fire used to light it. However, fire rained down from heaven and consumed them both because they had disobeyed God (Lev. 10:1-2).

Multitudes of examples could be cited that shows that whatever God says in His word, He desires and expects obedience. Jesus, as He was instructed by the Father in heaven, built His church (Matt. 16:18). No other church has Christ as it's head (Eph. 1:22-23), and has Christ as it's savior (Eph. 5:23). The plan of salvation, the acts of worship, the purity of life, the work of a child of God and the blessings promised are all specified in the word of God. He said what He meant and He meant what He said!!!

Christians also seem to forget this on many occasions. Those "little things" like the prohibition to gossip, to keep ourselves as far from sin as is possible, lying, forsaking the assemblies and such seem often to be forgotten or considered too minute to matter. They DO MATTER. They are God's commands too!

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WHAT EVANGELISM REALLY IS

For some, evangelism is something that only the preacher or elders do or maybe a few of the most dedicated and educated of the members.

Others consider evangelism to be the two worship services each week and possibly the two Bible studies at the church building as well.

And, to still others evangelism is the teaching of God's word to someone every once in a while when the opportunity presents itself.

Actually, evangelism is the heralding of God's word by all Christians all the time to all the world. No one can "hire" someone else to do their evangelism for them, just as it is not possible to "hire" someone to partake of the Lord's supper for you, sing for you, pray for you, care for your neighbor for you or any other responsibility of a Christian.

It has well been said that evangelism is faithful people moving faithless people through the power of a living sacrifice that is predicated upon God's inspired Word. Just imagine what success we could have in doing this if only all the members worked toward that end.

Though the gospel is for all and we have a responsibility to proclaim it to all, without partiality, often it is helpful to target a specific group in order to focus our limited amount of energies in one area, thus providing greater chances of success. For this reason, let us consider some possible areas to focus our attention.

First, we need to focus our attention on the **unfaithful and apostates**. We have a number of members who are not faithful, but only haphazard in service to God. We also have a number of members still in the area that have turned their backs from God and His church. These whom we already know and love hold a special place in our hearts and should also hold a special place in our attempts to evangelize.

Secondly, an often successful method of evangelism is to target **the youth**. Usually they have not yet closed their minds to truth, but are honest enough to see the truth when it is presented.

What is often referred to as **the un-churched** is another group that we can target. Not having blind loyalties to some religious organization, they simply need to be taught the sacrifice of the Son of God and the kingdom He has bought with His blood. Other groups could be cited, but this is enough to start with. Let's get started! *RCO*