

CHOOSE THE GOOD PART

When Jesus was at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, Martha was busy serving the meal. She asked the Lord if He cared that she was doing all the work and Mary was sitting at His feet instead of helping with the work. Jesus responded to her saying, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:38-42).

Do take note of the fact that what Martha was doing, that which she was concerned about, was not wrong. She was dealing with a legitimate need. There are "many things" in this life that we do have to consider and be concerned with. For instance, the word of God clearly teaches that we are responsible for taking care of our own physical necessities. Paul told Timothy, "...that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thess. 3:10) and "...if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8). However, He also taught that there are other things that have to be done while still doing those other needed things. He told the Pharisees who had omitted the weightier matters of the law while diligently following some minor points, "...these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23).

The "good part" that Jesus commended Mary for choosing was the preparation of her soul for eternal life. The soul is of far greater value than all the material possessions of the world piled together (Mark 8:36-37). The first step of preparation is to learn the word of the Lord, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). God the Father commanded that we hear and obey the word of His Son (Matt. 17:5; Acts 3:22-24; Heb. 1:1-2). The Hebrew writer stated, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).

Another thing about concerning oneself with the preparation of the soul for heaven is that as Jesus told Martha, it "shall not be taken away from her". All the material possessions and all the secular activities will be left behind when we leave this earthly life (I Tim. 6:7; II Pet. 3:10). But that which is laid up in heaven, will stand the test of time, it will be for eternity (Matt. 6:19-21).

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MOTIVE DOES NOT TRUMP OBEDIENCE

Many times in life one encounters someone who is doing something that is not really right, but their motive for doing it could be said to be a noble one. An elementary example of such would be someone who tells someone a lie, but the reason they lie to them is to spare their feelings, maybe telling someone the doctor said they are going to be just fine when in fact the doctor said they were dying.

This same thing happens in the realm of serving God. Often people are disobedient to God and yet the motive that they state could certainly be considered a good or even noble one.

Saul, the first king of Israel was told by the prophet Samuel to go to Gilgal and that he would meet him there. Saul waited, but with the Philistine army approaching he decided to offer a burnt offering himself, though Saul not of the priestly tribe. When Samuel questioned him about why he was disobedient to God, his answer was, "I saw that the people were scattered from me" (I Sam. 13:8-12). Though Saul's motive may have been well, his actions, according to Samuel was "foolish" (I Sam. 13:13). Later, when commanded by God to utterly destroy the nation of Amalek, including all the sheep and oxen, Saul carried out the command of God, but falling short of doing all God had commanded by sparing King Agag and the best of the flocks. When again faced by Samuel, he used the excuse that he had spared the best of the flock to offer them as a sacrifice to the Lord (I Sam. 15:1-15). Samuel's response to Saul was, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken that the fat of rams" (I Sam. 15:22). His motive may have been a good one, but his disobedience to God was still disobedience to God and rejection by God.

There is probably no place in Christianity where this same error is any more clearly evident than in the realm of Christian worship. God has instructed by His inspired word how we are to worship Him. One **must** worship both in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). An argument often made by proponents of it's use, is that the use of mechanical instruments of music make the worship sound better and more enjoyable. Though one can argue that it may well do that, he cannot argue that his motive for disobeying God makes disobeying God any less grievous. Good motives do not trump obedience!

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