
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **What is the entire duty of man?**

Occasionally I meet people who attempt to summarize the whole duty of man in a short little sentence. They say something like, *"I believe that the most important thing is to just love one another."* Or, *"I think the most important thing is to help others around you."*

Unfortunately, when people make these sort of statements, what they are saying, either consciously or subconsciously is this:

- It doesn't matter if you go to church.
- It doesn't matter if you belong to any church or not.
- It doesn't matter if you read the Bible or go by the Bible.
- The only thing that's important is to just be a good person, be kind to those around you and try to get along with others.

These are very popular opinions.

But let me share with you what the Bible says. Occasionally there are passages in the Bible that sort of summarize the entire duty of man in a short verse or passage. Let me share with you two such passages. First:

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for **this is the whole duty of man.** ¹⁴ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Solomon was the writer of this passage. He wrote this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21). According to the Holy Spirit, then, there are two things which summarize the entire duty of man:

- *Fear God – this means reverence God; have respect for God.*
- *Keep His commandments – this means to submit to every thing God said in scripture.*

If people do this they would, of course, be kind to those around them, because this is one of the commandments of God (Mt 5:44). If people kept the commandments of God, they would help the poor, because this too is a commandment of God (Ja 1:27).

Keeping the commandments of God means being honest with others (Eph 4:25). It means working hard for your employer and giving him an honest day's work for the pay you receive (Eph 6:5-7).

Keeping the commandments of God also means assembling for worship on the first day of each week (Acts 20:7). In the 1960s it was the common practice for businesses to close on Sundays and for families to assemble for worship. Today, however, worship is considered unnecessary and some even think it's legalistic to insist on weekly worship.

Keeping the commandments of God means worshiping as God directed in the scriptures (Mt 15:9).

It also means being obedient to the command requiring baptism. Many think baptism is not necessary and others think being baptized for any reason is good enough. The scriptures teach that baptism is a necessary requirement for salvation (Acts 2:38). It must be for the purpose of washing away sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). While baptism alone is not enough to save a sinner, all the faith in the world cannot save a sinner without baptism (Ja 2:24).

Again, listen to this passage:

Matthew 22:35-40

³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,
³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"
³⁷ Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.
³⁹ And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

This passage also summarizes man's whole duty.

To love one's neighbor is important, but loving God comes first.

How does one love God? Does a person merely have a warm feeling in his heart about God – is that loving God? Listen to Jesus:

John 14:15

¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

2 John 6

⁶ This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. ...

According to Jesus and the apostle John, one shows love to God by keeping His commandments.

The apostle Paul wrote this:

2 Corinthians 2:9

⁹ For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

1 Corinthians 7:19

¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.

Let us not be guilty of “*selective obedience*” – wherein we pick and choose only those things we want to obey. This is not truly obedience to the Lord. Obedience means doing everything the Lord taught (Mt 28:20) and not just things we enjoy or approve of.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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