

# The Old Paths

Volume 10, Issue 1

March 2, 2003

## “Obligations We Have Toward God”

Jarrod Jacobs

**T**he word “obligation” is defined as: *“something by which a person is bound to do certain things, and which arises out of a sense of duty or results from custom, law, etc. .... a binding promise, contract, sense of duty, etc.”* (Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language). I believe there are very few people today who realize that they actually have certain obligations toward God. Many in this country have been brought up to think that they are “owed” something merely because they were born. If anything, the opposite is true. Because we are born into this world, we have certain obligations we must meet.

We have obligations to love, obey, and respect our parents (Eph. 6:1-3). Once married, we have obligations to our spouse (Eph. 5:22-33), and our children (Eph. 6:4; Titus 2:4). By being born in this country, we have obligations to pay taxes, and to follow the laws of this country (Rom. 13:1-7; Matt. 22:21). We have obligations toward our employer (Col. 3:22-23; Eph. 6:5-8), or toward our employees, as the case may be (Col. 4:1; Eph. 6:9). These are but a few of the obligations we have on earth.

Yet, in our ever-hurried lives, we often forget the One to whom we owe the greatest debt, and to whom we are the most obligated. Yes, friends, we have obligations to God! When we forget this fact,

we are sure to have problems. This is because it is God who must come first in our lives. We must love Him above all others (Matt. 22:37). We must serve Him and worship Him *“in spirit and in truth”* (Jn. 4:24). It is to Him that we owe everything. We belong to Him as slaves (Rom. 6:16-18, 12:1-2), being transplanted into *“the kingdom of His dear Son”* (Col. 1:13). Therefore, let us look to the Bible and consider some of our obligations toward God.

### **We Are Obligated To Worship God As He Directs.**

Many have the attitude that one can worship God as he/she pleases, and it is acceptable with Him. This is simply not true. God has always expected men to worship Him as He directs. Early on, a failure to worship God as He directed resulted in Cain’s sacrifice being rejected by God (Gen. 4:1-7). It was this same failure to worship God as He directed which condemned the nation of Israel. They thought they could worship God and be free to worship their idols, too. God said that such was not possible (Jer. 7:8-10). When we read what Christ said about worship, He told the Samaritan woman, *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”* (Jn. 4:24). God has not changed His mind!

Though the world says to “worship as you please” and tells us the way religion “ought to be,” we must realize we are obligated to worship God only in the way He directs, if we expect to please Him!

How has God directed us to

worship Him? By looking into the New Testament, we learn that God expects worship to Him to be done as we: sing praises to His name, preach His word, pray to Him, partake of the Lord’s Supper, and give as we have been prospered (Acts 2:42, 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19). All aspects of our worship must give glory, honor, and praise to our Creator, Ruler and Sustainer! We are not gathering to worship ourselves, nor to have a “fashion” show, nor for free baby-sitting! Let us examine ourselves as to the true reasons why we are here today. If God is the focus and center of our worship, we’ll not feel the pressure to “be different,” or to “win numbers” by: adding instruments of music, games, prizes, plays, dramas, and other such nonsense. If God is the focus and center of our worship, we’ll realize that we are not the “audience,” in worship, but we are the participants in worship wherein God Almighty is the “audience”! We will be interested in what pleases Him in worship, and doing nothing more or less!

### **We Are Obligated To Repent Of Our Sins.**

In his sermon on Mars’ Hill, Paul told the Athenians, *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent”* (Acts 17:30). The phrase, *“All men every where”* includes you, and it includes me! We are guilty of sin before God (Rom. 3:23). Because this is so, we need to be willing to repent of our sins that we might live our lives for the Lord.

The word “repent” means, *“to have another mind, to change the opinion or purpose with regard to sin. It is equivalent to the Old Testament word ‘turn’ ...”* (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia). In literal terms, this word means, “about face, forward march.” It is a change of one’s mind which results in a change of one’s life. In the immediate

context of Acts 17, people were expected to repent of following their idols among other things (Acts 17:23).

Just like the Athenians, we can be guilty of idolatry if we're not careful! Before we dismiss this point, friend, let us understand that idolatry comes in many forms! First, the "classical definition" of idolatry is alive and well! I have read newspaper reports about people worshipping Isis, Aphrodite, using "voodoo" dolls, and similar things, all in the US! Another form of idolatry is seen in covetousness! Paul said, "*covetousness ... is idolatry*" (Col. 3:5). When we put any one (including self), or any thing before God, this has become our idol, and we are sinning!

Friend, have you repented of your sins, be it idolatry, lying, cursing, drinking, fornication, rebellious toward God, etc.? You must, for He commands "*all men every where to repent*"! Are you following God?

### **We Are Obligated Live Our Lives In Service To Him.**

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (II Cor. 5:14-15). Many people live their life wondering what their purpose is on earth. The Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that seeing as Christ died for us, we need to be living for Him. Solomon, by the inspiration of God, stated that man's purpose on earth is to "*fear God, and keep his commandments...*" (Ecc. 12:13).

Yet, we live in a society which stresses that man look out for self-ish and self-serving interests. May it not be so with us! The life of a Christian is a life of service, first

of all serving God, and also serving others!

Service toward God and others follows the example of Christ. It was our Lord who said, "*Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*" (Matt. 20:28). Christ taught us, "*But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant*" (Matt. 23:11).

Our society teaches just the opposite, stating that those who are the "greatest" serve themselves, and strive to make sure "#1" is cared for before anyone else. The Christian, realizing that Christ died physically so that he/she might live spiritually, lives his/her life in service to the Savior.

Are we doing this? Do we remember with gratitude and humility what Christ had done for us?

### **We Are Obligated To Spread His Word.**

Having learned and applied Christ's word to our lives, (and continuing to do so) we then have a duty to spread God's word to others. It was Christ Himself who told the apostles to, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mk. 16:15). It was Paul who then taught Timothy, "*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*" (II Tim. 2:2). It was the Thessalonians who were ex-

amples of one church spreading the gospel to "*every place*" (I Thess. 1:7-8). How can Christians then have the attitude that spreading the gospel is for "someone else," or not have some urgency for telling others the good news about Christ? May all of us feel that urgency to spread God's word and tell folks the "old, old story" about Christ and His provision for salvation from our sins. How else will people know the truth if no one is there to teach them? How can God give us "*the increase*" at Southside if we do not have people "*planting*" and "*watering*" (I Cor. 3:6)?

### **Conclusion**

As I have said before, being a Christian is not for the faint-of-heart. Nor is being a Christian for the lazy! We have obligations before God that we must be ready to fulfill. Why do we do this? We do it out of love (I Jn. 4:19, 5:3). We do it out of gratitude and devotion to our Creator. We do it because we can look ahead to a time when there will be true rest for the people of God, and we want that. Like Abraham, we see a "*city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" (Heb. 11:10). Like those great faith heroes, we "*desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city*" (Heb. 11:18). Are you a Christian? If not, why not become one today?

**Tell Your Friends About:**  
[www.southside-churchofchrist.com](http://www.southside-churchofchrist.com)



***I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!***

Come and meet with the church at Southside.

Our address is: 2920 New Hartford Rd. Owensboro, KY 42303.

#### **MEETING TIMES:**

**Sunday Morning Bible Study** \_\_\_\_\_ **9:30 am**

**Sunday Morning Worship** \_\_\_\_\_ **10:20 am**

**Sunday Evening Worship** \_\_\_\_\_ **6:00 pm**

**Wednesday Evening Bible Study** \_\_\_\_\_ **7:00 pm**

Don't forget the call-in radio program on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-5200** with your Bible question.

**Preacher/Editor:** Jarrod Jacobs

**Phone:** (270) 683-5386

**Website address:** [www.southside-churchofchrist.com](http://www.southside-churchofchrist.com) (Updated weekly!)