

It Is Written

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Things We Must Do

By Heath Rogers

“Must” is an interesting word in the English language. It indicates a necessity, requirement, or unavoidable conclusion (“I must pay that bill.” “What goes up must come down.”).

Depending on the translation, the word “must” appears between 67-119 times in the New Testament. The Bible uses this word to indicate some necessary requirements to be met and some unavoidable circumstances to be faced.

1. We Must Believe in God. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). Our relationship with God begins with and is maintained with our faith. If we are going to please God, we must believe that He exists and believe He is worthy of our trust; that He has the intention and the power to keep His word. There is enough evidence to prove God exists (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20), and the Bible more than establishes a perfect track record of God’s ability to keep His promises.

2. We Must Be Born Again. A man named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. Like many Jews, Nicodemus believed the kingdom of God belonged to him by right of physical birth. Being a Jew, he mistakenly thought he was automatically entitled to the blessings of God’s kingdom. Jesus shocked him when he said he was not yet a part of the kingdom. “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Nicodemus was further perplexed with the idea of having to be born a second time. Jesus explained that one must undergo a spiritual rebirth to be a part of the kingdom, then said, “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’” (v. 7).

Paul spoke of this same need to be reborn in Titus 3:5. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” We are saved when we receive the “washing of regeneration.” The “regeneration” is being born again. “Washing” indicates this rebirth takes place at baptism. It is after baptism that we rise to walk in newness of life (we are born again – Rom. 6:4).

We must be born again. We must come to God on His terms. There is no other way we can be forgiven of our sins and enter the Kingdom of God.

3. We Must Worship God Correctly. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24). Jesus mentions “true worshipers,” who are set apart from all others who attempt to worship. God is seeking these kinds of worshipers. To be acceptable to God, our worship must be in spirit and truth.

To worship God in spirit means to worship with our hearts involved. We cannot disengage our minds, go through the motions, and expect to have pleased God. “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me” (Matt. 15:8). To worship God in truth means to worship the way God has specified in His word. God’s word is truth (John 17:17) and sets forth a pattern we must follow.

4. We Must Take Our Salvation Seriously. The writer of Hebrews warned, “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away” (Heb. 2:1). There is always a danger of drifting away from God. This is avoided by giving constant and earnest heed to the truth we have heard, believed, and begun to obey.

Drifting is something that is done slowly. While we would notice an abrupt departure from the truth, small steps often go unnoticed. Uncorrected, these small steps add up and lead to bigger steps. They also harden our hearts against the danger of being off course. The next thing we know, we have shipwrecked our faith (1 Tim. 1:19).

Instead, we must be diligent in adding virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to our faith (2 Pet. 1:5-7); constantly growing “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and

Savior Jesus Christ" (3:18).

5. We Must Answer to God. Why should we consider it a necessity or obligation to believe in God and worship Him correctly? Why should we take our salvation seriously? Because we will have to answer to God for the way we live our lives. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

There is a great day coming in which everyone who has ever lived will be brought before the Lord in judgment (Matt. 25:31-33, 46). This will not be the opportunity for us to plead our case before God. It will be a day of sentencing; a day of receiving according to the things we have done. Today is the day to argue our case (2 Cor. 6:2). Today is the day to get ready to meet the Lord in judgment. This is an appointment we must all keep.

Conclusion: Our world tries to deny absolutes and undesirable responsibilities. God's word seeks to equip us so that we are prepared for eternity. There are some things we must do. Are we doing them?

"The Lord Knows How . . ."

By Jarrod Jacobs

Peter tells the Christians (and us), "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Pet. 2:9). This statement reminds me of the words of Paul, who wrote, "God is faithful" and will not allow us to be tempted above what we can bear (I Cor. 10:13).

In context, Peter was saying that the false teachers, who were teaching "damnable heresies" (II Pet. 2:1), were facing their judgment by God (v. 3). He then reminds us that God was able to punish angels, the "old world" when Noah lived, and Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 4-6), and He knows how to punish the modern-day false teachers!

We feel overwhelmed at times. Perhaps we feel like Asaph, who had almost given up when he observed that it seems like the wicked get away with their sins while the righteous are plagued (Ps. 73:1-16). Maybe we think that God doesn't know what is happening in this world. Perhaps He doesn't see the sacrifices I am making! Friend, if a sparrow can't fall to the ground without our Father, don't you know He sees you (Matt. 10:29-31)? He knows who we are and what we are doing (Jer. 23:24; Heb. 4:13). God knows how to deliver us! Just as a father knows how to bless his children, so also our Heavenly Father knows how to bless us (Matt. 7:7-11). Asaph also learned this lesson when he "went to the house of the Lord" (Ps. 73:17-28).

In like manner, God also knows how to punish those who are doing wickedly in word and deed (Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30; Nahum 1:2-3). This was Peter's point in II Peter 2:1-8. False teachers may think they are getting away with something, but they are not. God is watching, and He will bring about justice at the right time.

Therefore, let us make sure we are speaking the truth and living it (Phil. 4:8-9)! Ungodly men might not like what we are doing, but God sees us and will bless (Jas. 4:4; Jn. 15:18-20). Let us make sure we do not fall for the lies of the false teachers. This is the reason we must demand sound doctrine, and to have it repeated again and again in our hearts so that we might not forget it (II Pet. 1:12-15; Ps. 119:11)!

Live Peaceably

By Frank Berthold

When God led the children of Israel out of Egyptian slavery. He gave them moral laws to live by. If they were to be a community of people, they had to learn how to live in harmony together. God has also given us laws to live by that we may live in harmony together in the church, and with those around us, as a community of people. "Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrew 12:14, NRSV). Paul tells us, "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (Romans 12:18, NRSV). God tells us how to treat one another, things to do and not do. Of course, we will make mistakes (James 3:2) and not follow His advice as meticulously as we should. That's where our forgiving one another comes in. And, when we ask for forgiveness, we acknowledge that we know we have done wrong and should strive not to repeat the offense. We must realize that our brothers and sisters are human as much as we are. Proverbs 17:9 says, "He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends" (NASB).