

Remnant Life Church
June 10, 2018
Doing All the Right Things
Deuteronomy 6:4-19

Had a physical this week – important to do regularly at this stage of my life

- Not all of it is pleasant but it is not horrible
- Asks all kinds of questions of which I give honest answers (who is hurt if I don't? Me)
- Toward the end he said, "Well it looks like you're doing all the right things"
- Got me thinking – if we can do all the right things physically, should we not want to do all the right things spiritually as it relates to how we live?
 - We can, and should, apply this to our lives

When you consider this the question should be asked, "Why is it important to do the right things?"

- Physically – for good health; ability to live a full life free of restrictions and pain
- Mentally – to stay sharp; ability to focus; deal with the often-complicated elements of life
- Emotionally – to develop and maintain healthy relationships; to know the proper way to react emotionally to things that come up every day
- Spiritually – to be an example of living for Jesus Christ; to point people to Him; to guard your heart against the enemy

Regarding how we act Martin Luther King, Jr. is quoted as saying, "Cowardice asks: is it safe? Consensus asks: is it popular? Character asks: is it right?"

- I would add one more to that, "The Christian asks, 'Will it glorify God?'"

Turn to **Deuteronomy** – the 5th and last book of the Pentateuch

Before we read:

- The book of Deut is broken down into 3 discourses given by Moses toward the end of his life
 - Another word for discourse is a lecture or teaching (Most familiar is Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives - **Matt 5,6,7**)
- The first discourse (chapters 1 – 4 (except the last 5 versus) Moses gives a historical review of the nation of Israel from their first arrival at the Jordan, to their unbelief, to their wanderings for 40 years in the desert and why it all happened
- The second discourse (the last 5 versus of chapter 4 through the end of 26) are commands and laws of God (ceremonial, civil, and social) starting with the 10 commandments
- The third discourse (chapters 27-34) are the prophetic promises of God and what He will still do for His people
- The first looks back, the second at where they are in the present, the third looks ahead

READ – **Deut 6:4-19**

There is a rich fullness of these verses for us today:

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your strength (v 5)
 - a. Jesus sites this as the greatest command when tested by the Pharisees
 - b. *Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."* (Matt 22:34-40)
 - c. Note how Jesus chose to handle what was intended to be a snare – He did not debate them, He answered them with truth

Regarding the Word of God:

2. Don't forget them; make them a part of you (v 6)
3. Teach and model them for your children in what you say and do (v 7)
4. Have tangible reminders of them around yourself so you don't forget (vv 8-9)

Regarding how to live:

5. Give glory to God and remember He is your source especially when things are going well (vv 10-12)
6. Fear the Lord; serve Him alone, don't make any are of your life an idol (vv 13-15)
7. Don't test or mock God by actions that you know are against His law and Word (v 16)
8. DO WHAT IS RIGHT (v 18)
9. He will reward your obedience and diligence in doing the right things (vv 18-19)

Why does God provide that blessing in association with this verse alone?

- It is the hardest of all that are given
 - We can say we love God
 - We can read the Bible to our kids at night
 - We can have a Bible sitting around the house or Bible verses on our refrigerator
 - We can live a "good" life as kind, descent, and upright individual
 - But to always do the right things requires much more of us
- How then can we position ourselves to do the right things more often than not?
 - I qualify it not to give license to fail but to remind us of how dependent we are on the grace of God

Four very practical ways to set your sights on this important part of a Christian's walk

1. Desire to do the right things
 - a. That may solicit an eye-roll and a "well, duh!"
 - b. The fact is, it is not always easy to do the right thing
 - i. Becomes difficult when the wrong thing is more expedient, convenient and practical
 - ii. And ESPECIALLY when the wrong thing is anonymous
 - iii. The temptation of anonymity exposes a person's character

- c. There are hundreds of quotes regarding the character of a person:
 - i. They all say different things regarding what character is but they all agree on how vitally important it is
 - ii. John Wooden once said, *“Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.”*
 - iii. *“When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.”* – Billy Graham
- d. Is there a depth of character in you that desires to do the right things?
 - i. Reading about David
 - ii. God could trust him to do the right thing even when he did not have to
 - iii. David spared Saul’s life twice when, both times, the opportunity was literally placed right in front of him (**I Sam 24, 26**)
 - iv. But David was man after God’s own heart (**Acts 13:22**) because of his character, the desire to do the right thing

2. Do the work

- a. What does that even mean?
- b. After your desire there is action that prepares you to make the right decisions
 - i. You may ask, ‘Well, can’t I just do it when the time comes because I want to?’
 - 1. If a professor walks into a university classroom to lecture on bio-nuclear physics, but had never studied the subject, what will he say to the class?
 - 2. If a man always wanted to play professional football, but had never played in high school or college, how well will he do?
 - 3. If my doctor had walked into the examination room, but had never graduated medical school, how confident would I have been?
- c. What is our preparation to do the right things?
 - i. It is spending time in the Word of God
 - ii. It is reading about Jesus - what He taught and how He lived
 - iii. Reading the book of Proverbs and the wisdom it provides
 - iv. Learning about the lives of the Patriarchs – their strengths and victories as well as their weaknesses and defeats
 - 1. *I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws. (Psa 119:30)*
 - 2. *Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. (Prov 7:2-3)*
- d. Just because you want to do the right thing does not mean you will if you have not prepared your heart and your mind with the Word of God

3. Take responsibility for your actions

- a. **READ** – **Matthew 25:1-13**
- b. In Jesus’ day the wedding activities were different than what we know today

- i. Two families would decide they wanted to their children to marry
 - ii. As they approached the age of marriage a price (dowry) would be negotiated by the groom and the bride's family and paid
 - iii. At this point – they are married but they do not live together, and they are not intimate with each other (Mary and Joseph)
 - iv. They would each live in their respective homes with the groom preparing their marriage home (usually about 1 year)
 - v. The season (not the day or time) would come that the groom would go to get his bride
 - vi. He and his friends would leave, usually around dusk, and travel to her home arriving after it had gotten dark
 - vii. A shout would announce his arrival and the bride, along with her friends (bridesmaids or virgins) would come out to meet him
 - viii. They would then process back to the groom's home to have the wedding feast with the way being lit by the bridesmaids carrying their lit lamps of oil
 - c. In this parable taught by Jesus, the wise women had their lamps ready to receive the groom, while the foolish or unprepared, did not
 - i. The groom is Jesus and the bride is the church
 - ii. Be ready!
 - iii. But also recognize that there was no one to blame for their being unprepared then themselves
 - d. When we are willing to take responsibility for the missteps, shortcomings, and times of failure in our lives we are ready to learn, grow, and be prepared to do it right the next time
 - e. David was not perfect but he knew how to take ownership of his decisions and repent
 - i. David spent many of the early years of his life on the run from Saul
 - ii. Lived in caves
 - iii. Pretended to be insane to avoid being captured by the Philistines
 - iv. Lived over a year in the land of Gath, the sworn enemies of the Israelites (also the home-town of a really, really big soldier David killed as a young boy)
 - v. This all happened AFTER he had been anointed by Samuel to be king
 - vi. But that leads us to the final point...
4. Refuse to embrace the victim mentality
 - a. When you only ever see yourself as a victim, you develop the attitude of 'Everyone owes me'
 - b. Unfortunately, and to our own detriment, we are raising a generation of young people right now that believe this is the definition of their lives – you owe me!
 - c. In WW II - 17 and 18-year olds were landing on beaches in Normandy and jumping out of airplanes to defend our freedom – today they need safe rooms, hug blankets, time off from school and work, and intense counseling to help them cope with and recover from offensive and hurtful words
 - d. Paul writes that we are called to "stand"!

- i. Eph 6 – the armor of God is to be used, not so that we can hide and run, but stand in the face of what the enemy throws at us
- ii. As long as we see ourselves as a victim of the unfairness of life we will never be in a place to do the right thing because doing that is often not easy, convenient, or even fair

Doing what is right is the byproduct of a life sold-out to living for Jesus Christ

- It is knowing that you do it as an act of service and sacrifice to the King
- Paul writes in Gal 6:1 - *Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.*
 - What might tempt you?
 - Their same temptation? – possibly but more likely the temptation to sit in judgement or condemnation which is often much easier than forgiveness and restoration
- When Jesus was brought the woman caught in adultery (John 8) He did three things:
 - Called out the accusers to punish her if they were without sin (v 7)
 - He forgave her (v 11a)
 - He told her to stop sinning and change her way of living (v 11b)
 - To do the right thing requires us to change from responding in the flesh and living in the Spirit

One of the most beneficial habits you can get into is to learn not to react quickly to situations -

- Snap judgement
- Flash of anger
- Quick response
- Immediate retort

None of these are going to help you do the right thing unless you have:

- Made up your mind to do what is right, not the easiest, most convenient, or fairest thing for you
- Done the work of preparing your heart and mind through regular prayer and reading of the Word
- Determined to take responsibility for what you say and do every time
- Refuse to embrace the victim mentality and understand that the people in your life do not owe you anything

Caution: this is not easy

- It will never be easy!
- People will tell you are nuts for not taking the easy way (David's men in the cave when he could have killed Saul the first time – I Sam 24)
- But, when you live that way, you will become a beacon of light for Jesus Christ wherever you go

In Matthew 5 Jesus is teaching the Sermon on the Mount and right after he shares with them the blessing of living right (Beatitudes) He tells them that this makes them different

- They are salt
- They are light
- **5:14-16** - *“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**”*

So why do we do the right things?

- To glorify God!