

The Vincennes Voice

"...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight..." (Matt. 3:3)

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ARE YOU AN OPTIMIST?

Larry R. Ping II

There is a great need for optimists in the Lord's Church today. Optimism is defined as "hopefulness and confidence about the future or success of something." The opposing attitude is that of pessimism, defined as "a tendency to see the worst aspect of things or believe that the worst will happen." Over the years, I have witnessed my fair share of pessimism on the part of my brethren who have stripped away the confidence and excitement of those who are giving and doing their best. Which of the twain are you? Be an optimist like the following good people.

1. Joshua and Caleb. As the spies were giving report of the Promised Land, ten said that indeed the land was wonderful and plenteous, but "nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there" (Num. 13:28). It took

the courage and optimism of Joshua and Caleb to say "let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). We meet problems, trials and tribulations today too, both individually and collectively, but we also can overcome. Will you be like the ten, or Joshua and Caleb?

2. David. The Israelites were falling into an attitude of cowardice and pessimism when David came and asked "who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God" (I Sam. 17:26)? Oh, that all Christians today would adopt the attitude of David and hold evildoers accountable! Later, David uttered these words to the giant: "This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that

all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (I Sam. 17:46). When we have issues that seem large, do we say that we will be fine, that we will defeat temptation (I Cor. 10:13), for God is with us? Saying so, even though others around us are of the "fearful, and unbelieving" sort (Rev. 21:8)? This is the true mark of optimism.

3. Paul. The apostle had been through so much (II Cor. 11:23-28). Yet, he was able to say, write and believe that "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Php. 4:13). He also wrote "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Cor. 12:9). Are you like Paul when life gets difficult and trying, and say "I can?" Most assuredly, the world (and the Lord's Church) possesses enough who say "I can't." Be the one who says "I Can," and then do it!

THE BIBLE ON OBEDIENCE

Larry R. Ping II

A diligent study of the fifth book of Moses, Deuteronomy, will reveal God's call and demand for obedience to His will. One would have to work hard to misunderstand this mark of this volume. The true definition of obedience is doing what God says the way God says to do it. Let's look at what the Bible says about obedience.

1. Obedience Is Connected To Salvation.

The Hebrew writer said Jesus "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). A clear and Divine connection is established between salvation and obedience, one which should not be broken by those who "wrest" scripture (II Pet. 3:16) or handle "the word of God deceitfully" (II Cor. 4:2).

2. Obedience Is An Indication Of Our Love For God.

John wrote "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). If one truly loves

God, then he will render obedience to Him. If not, "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:6).

3. Obedience Is Better Than Anything.

Remember the story of Saul and Amalek in I Sam. 15? Saul was told to "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not" (I Sam. 15:3). However, Saul "took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive" and brought back "best of the sheep, and of the oxen" (I Sam. 15:8-9). Later, Samuel set him straight and said "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Sam. 15:22). May we learn God's way is always better.

4. Obedience Will, For Some, Be An Eternal Downfall.

Paul made it crystal clear in II Thess. 1:8 when he wrote this: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God,

and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ..." Peter penned a great pair of questions when asking "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear" (I Pet. 4:17-18)?

5. Obedience Is About Doing.

Some in the Lord's body today have endeavored to divorce obedience from the act of doing. But this is a Biblical impossibility. The Jews on Pentecost, after Peter's sermon asked "Men and brethren, what shall we do" (Acts 2:37)? The Philippian prison-keeper, after surviving an earthquake and possible self-murder asked "Sirs, what must I do to be saved" (Acts 16:30)? May we learn to appreciate the association between obedience and individual action.

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MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Worship - 11:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study - 7:00 p.m.