

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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THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Larry R. Ping II

The Bible records, "And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all" (Mk. 12:28)?

Although this question was posed in a cynical and sarcastic way, the question itself was a good one. Since it was, Jesus answered it in the following way, "...thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mk. 12:29-30).

This command of God was not new, nor is it anything new today. It has always been and always will be. God has always demanded and deserved to be put first. Consider.

"And in every work that he (Hezekiah) began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the

commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered" (II Chron. 31:21).

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (Prov. 3:9).

"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Dte. 10:12).

Now the question comes to you and me. What must we do to obey the "first commandment?" What things must we be doing which indicates we, indeed, are putting God and His will first? Be sure to seriously consider the following activities, and see to it you are involved!

1) Attend Services

Regularly. Regular, consistent, and constant assembling with the saints not only indicates one is putting God first, it also brings with it great and countless benefits to the attendee. Remember, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). Regular attendance allows one to "draw near with a true heart" (Heb. 10:22), to "hold fast the profession" of their faith (Heb. 10:23), to exhibit consideration of their brethren (Heb. 10:24), to "provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. 10:24), to receive necessary exhortation and encouragement (Heb. 10:25) and to keep one from willful "sin" (Heb. 10:26). Regular attendance is a good thing, and for one to willfully absent themselves from the services is to violate Jam. 4:17, "Therefore him that knoweth to do good, and

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doeth it not, to him it is sin.” When one absents themselves willfully from the services, they become delinquent in their observance of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-29) and neglectful of their need to “lay by...in store” (I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:7). Remember, the lack of consistent attendance on the part of an individual is much like a fever, an indicator of a deeper-rooted problem. How is your attendance? Is it regular? Is it hit-and-miss? Show your adherence to the first commandment through your steady attendance!

2) Giving Purposefully

And Liberally. When we give on Sundays, it makes us “investors” in the local work. We are part of the successes of the local work. We should give as much as we can to the work. Recall, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (II Cor. 9:7). May we be as the poor widow who “cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mk. 12:44). Remember in this

instance, the Holy Writ says Jesus “beheld how the people cast money into the treasury” (Mk. 12:41). The manner and attitude with which we give is equal in importance to the amount which we give. In this vein, may we give in such a way to be as the Hebrews who “were restrained from bringing” because “the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much” (Exo. 36:6-7). How is your giving? Is it lacking purpose, or liberality? Is it well-thought out and passionate? Show your devotion to the first commandment through your generous giving!

3) Studying Often.

Gaining knowledge of God’s Word, and the wisdom which comes as a result, is of immense and lasting value, both to you as an individual and to the local body of God’s people. Consider, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15). God’s people should be a “people of the book.” We should work hard

in re-affirming our status as “Walking Bibles.” This means we will be as the championed Bereans who “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11). This means we will be eager to read God’s Word in order to understand it better (Eph. 3:4). Be warned, spiritual destruction and disaster awaits those who have a lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6). How are your Bible study habits? Do you only study when at studies and services? Are you committed to and enthusiastic about daily Bible study? Show your dedication to the first commandment through your diligent searching of God’s Precious and Divine Word!

4) Be Zealous In

Church Work. In other words, get and stay involved. Whether it is an extra study, taking part in personal work, preparing the Lord’s Supper, or some sort of get-together, take part! You will not regret it. Recollect, be “zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). Are you involved in the work? Show your commitment to the first commandment by being involved!

FIRST CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

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MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm