

**MEETING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

**I. INTRODUCTION: I**

1. **2** Several weeks ago we began a series of lessons with the general theme of “grow[ing] in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.” (2 Pet. 3:18)
  - A. These lessons are designed to help Christians grow and be strong in the Lord (1 Pet. 2:2).
  - B. We cannot remain “babes” in Christ (1 Cor. 14:20); and even if we’ve been Christians for many years, we need to be reminded of these first principles (2 Pet. 3:1)
    - ❶ Lesson #1: Christians must put first things first (Matt. 6:33).
    - ❷ Lesson #2: Christians must strive to attain spiritual maturity (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
    - ❸ Lesson #3: Christians must turn away from “worldliness” and “keep oneself unspotted from the world” (Jas. 1:27).
    - ❹ Lesson #4: Christians must remain faithful after baptism and some of the things involved in remaining faithful (worshiping, moral purity, and bearing fruit).
    - ❺ Lesson #5: Christians must be a knowledgeable people (2 Tim. 2:15); the depth of our faith is directly proportional to the amount of time we spend studying the Bible and our faith is perfected by applying what we read.
2. **3** Today in our society nobody wants to accept responsibility (e.g., alcoholism is not a sin, it’s a disease; homosexuality is not a perversion, it is genetically determined; business & political scandals, poor parenting is really due to ADHD).
  - A. **4** But the Bible teaches much differently! We are accountable, or answerable, for things within our power or control! Eccl. 12:13-14
  - B. We must consider seriously what the Bible teaches about our responsibilities and never be guilty of taking them lightly (Matt. 25:14-30; **Rom. 14:12**: “So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”).
3. **5** Our objective in this lesson is to become better acquainted with our responsibilities and once we learn them to make sure we meet them! Responsibilities to God, responsibilities to others and responsibilities to self.

**II. DISCUSSION:**

1. **6** Responsibilities to God:
  - A. We all stand accountable (answerable) to God (Gen. 1:26-27; Eccl. 12:13-14; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
  - B. In what ways is man responsible to God? We must:
    - (1) **\*\* Believe in God**: Rom. 1:20ff; Heb. 11:6; Psa. 14:1
    - (2) **\*\* Know God**: Phil. 3:10; 1 Jn. 4:6; 2:3-5
    - (3) **\*\* Fear God**: Eccl. 12:13-14; **Acts 10:34-35**: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”; Matt. 10:28; **Heb. 12:28-29**: “...serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.”; Matt. 7:21-23; **Heb. 10:31**: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

- (4) **\*\* Keep God's commandments:** Eccl. 12:13-14; **Jn. 14:15, 23:** "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."; Lk. 6:46; Matt. 7:21; **Rev. 22:14:** "Blessed are those who do His commandments."
- (5) **\*\* Love God:** Matt. 22:37-38: First and greatest commandment!
- (a) We love God because He first loved us (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8).
- (b) The magnitude of God's love was manifested in the sending of His Son. How do we show our love to God? **Jn. 14:21:** "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."; **Jn. 15:10:** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."; 1 Jn. 2:3-5

## 2. **7 Responsibilities to others:**

A. Most people live their lives as if they have zero responsibilities to the fellow man:

- (1) Recall "a certain lawyer...tested" Jesus when he asked "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Lk. 10:25)
- (2) Jesus answered his question with a question: "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" (Lk. 10:26)
- (3) The lawyer answered correctly: "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"" (Lk. 10:27)
- (4) Then the lawyer did what so many do, he tried to evade his responsibility: "But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'" (Lk. 10:29)

B. We must never be self-centered, but must always seriously consider how we are accountable to others (i.e., be like Christ! **Phil. 2:3-4:** "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.").

C. How are we responsible to others?

- (1) **\*\* Teach them the truth:** The greatest thing we can do for someone is to teach them the truth (**Jn. 1:43-48:** "Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'"; Matt. 13:45-46; 1 Tim. 2:4; **Acts 24:25:** "Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come,"; **2 Cor. 5:10-11a:** "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. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men,"; Matt. 16:26).
- (2) **\*\* Love others:** (1 **Jn. 4:7-11**; **Matt. 22:39:** 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment→"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"; **Jn. 15:12:** "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.").
- (a) Love is not just an impulse from our feelings (**Matt. 5:44-46:** "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.").

- (b) Love seeks the welfare of all and works no ill toward any (**1 Pet. 3:8-9**: "...love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous...").
  - (c) Love also seeks every opportunity to do good (Gal. 6:10).
- D. **8** Restore the fallen/strengthen the weak: **Gal. 6:1**: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."
- (1) There is a great need in the church today for the spiritually-minded to restore those overtaken in faults and we must prepare ourselves for this great work (Matt. 7:1-5).
  - (2) Those who have fallen away stand in great danger (2 Pet. 2:20-22).
  - (3) The work of restoring the erring is perhaps the greatest work we can do (Jas. 5:19-20).
  - (4) Those that have fallen away must be warned (1 Thess. 5:14), encouraged (Acts 20:35), and reminded of their responsibilities to God (2 Pet. 1:12-15).
  - (5) Includes those on the verge of falling away! **1 Thess. 5:14**: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."
- E. **\*\*** Visit and care for others: Matt. 25:31-46
- (1) Recall the definition of "pure and undefiled religion"? (Jas. 1:27; go see and care for).
  - (2) Christians should always be concerned about the needs of others (Jas. 2:15-17: the road to hell is paved with good intentions!; Gal. 6:10).
- F. **\*\*** Exhort and encourage others: Heb. 10:25; 3:13: "but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
- (1) The word "encourage" means to inspire with courage or confidence (examples in our children).
  - (2) Brethren often become weary in well doing because of a lack of encouragement! (2 Thess. 3:13; **Gal. 6:9**: "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."; Heb. 12:3-4, 12: "Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,")
- G. **9** Practice hospitality: **Rom. 12:13**: "distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."; "given" often translated "persecute"! In order to persecute something we must have a "passion", a "desire"!).
- (1) Hospitality is a very prominent theme in the Bible:
    - (a) Consider **Heb. 13:1-2**: "Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." (recall Abraham, Gen. 18:2-10; Lot, Gen. 19:1-3; Job, Job 31:32; Lev. 19:34).
    - (b) A qualification for an elder (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8).
    - (c) A qualification for a "widow indeed" (1 Tim. 5:10).
  - (2) Notice how we are to show hospitality (**1 Pet. 4:9**: "Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.>").
  - (3) We should exercise hospitality: regularly, toward one another, without murmuring, not for recompense!
- H. **\*\*** Withdraw from some: **2 Thess. 3:6**: "But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us."

- (1) The Lord expects us to keep the church pure (**1 Cor. 5:1-7**: "...a little leaven leavens the whole lump...").
- (2) The Lord expects the entire church to be united in taking such drastic, but sometimes needed, action (Matt. 18:15-17).
- (3) Whenever such action is needed we must remember its purpose is also for the good of the one unrepentant of sin (**2 Thess. 3:14-15**: "And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."); 1 Cor. 5:5).

### 3. **10** Responsibilities to self:

A. There are some very important responsibilities we have toward ourselves.

B. Let's look at some responsibilities we have toward ourselves as we grow in grace and knowledge of the truth:

- (1) **\*\* Take heed to self:** **1 Tim. 4:16**: "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." Keeping one's self right in the doctrine of Christ is important! 2 Jn. 9-11
- (2) **\*\* Examine self:** **2 Cor. 13:5**: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves."
  - (a) Besides God Himself, we are the only one who can know our own heart.
  - (b) We need to constantly be looking into the mirror of God's word to see what changes we need to make (Jas. 1:22-25).
- (3) **\*\* Keep self pure:** **1 Tim. 5:22**: "...keep yourself pure..."; **1 Thess. 4:3-5**: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;" No one can do this for us!
- (4) **\*\* Save self:** **1 Tim. 4:16**: "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."
  - (a) Certainly there is a sense in which only God can save us (Eph. 2:8-9).
  - (b) But, in a very real way we do "save ourselves" in the sense that "by grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). Grace is God's part, but "faith" is our response to God's grace (Rom. 10:17).
  - (c) Note what Peter and Paul said (**Acts 2:40**: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation."; Phil. 2:12).
  - (d) We save ourselves by doing what the Lord requires us to do (Matt. 7:24-27).

### III. CONCLUSION: **11**

1. How we meet our responsibilities to God, others, and ourselves determines our eternal destiny.
2. How about you? Are you meeting your responsibilities to God, to others and to yourself? If not, why not change by doing whatever you need to do?

Adapted from: *Growing in Grace and Knowledge of the Lord*, by Johnie Edwards, Titus Edwards, Johnie P. Edwards, Edwards Publishing, pp. 18-20)