

Follow Jesus: It's God's Will

Joe Slater

As John the Immerser prepared the way for Jesus, he enjoyed tremendous success. Great numbers heard him preach repentance, and many submitted to baptism. Some of John's disciples thought his success was being threatened as multitudes came to Jesus. They protested, *"Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified – behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"* (John 3:26).

John, however, was undisturbed. He knew his job, he knew who Jesus was, and he felt no rivalry. *"A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease"* (John 3:27-30).

Jesus' success had been given to Him from heaven. It was and is God's will that people follow Jesus. This made John happy, not resentful! John had done his work well, and now people were traveling on that road God had sent him to prepare.

The "best man" at a wedding does not envy the groom, but rejoices in his friend's good fortune. Even so, John rejoiced as people followed Jesus. He more than willingly removed himself from the spotlight, giving all glory to the Lord. What a marvelous example of selfless humility!

God still wants people to follow Jesus. Christianity isn't about our popularity or fame. Even great men like the apostles rejected veneration. *"Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"* (1 Corinthians 1:13).

Let us follow Jesus because it is God's will, and let us persuade others to do likewise!

IS THE BIBLE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?

Is the Bible easy or difficult to understand? That's really not a very fair question because the Bible is, in a sense, both.

There must be a sense in which it is easily understood because it is God's desire for all men to understand and be obedient to His will (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). How could God expect something of all men that is beyond their capacity to do?

There are some parts of Scripture that are difficult. Even Peter acknowledged this fact, specifically regarding some of Paul's writings (2 Peter 3:16). Any honest student of Scripture will agree with Peter.

But just because there are difficult parts, it doesn't follow that it is all difficult and beyond our comprehension. This is precisely the point at which some people make a tempting, but false, leap in their thinking. After all, if everything in Scripture is difficult, would this not excuse a lack of obedience? How can you do what you don't know or understand?

Mark Twain is credited with a statement that is probably closer to the truth and more honest than most people want to admit. He said it wasn't the parts of the Bible that he didn't understand that troubled him – it was the parts that he did understand!

It's an age-old problem. Man's failure to do what is right is usually not because he doesn't know any better. Rather, it is a failure to do what he already knows.

Many times people aren't in need of knowing more; they're in need of doing what they already know. The plea of God is for mankind to repent, to change the mind, heart, and will from self-service to submission to His will.

Are we willing to do what we know? It might seem easier just to plead ignorance or an inability to really know – that is, at least for now.

"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin" (James 4:17).

--David Deffenbaugh (Oklahoma City, OK) via *Old Paths*

BOOST ATTENDANCE

I recently attended my first college football game. It was absolutely awesome. Going to a football game was very special. You know, you can learn several things at a football game, and I think I know how we can boost our church attendance. Here are my conclusions:

1. We're going to replace our cushioned pews with steel benches and remove the backs (Our elders will have backs for rent.)

2. We're going to make people sit very close to each other. Especially close to those we don't even know.

3. We're going to take the top off the building. There must be something about having a roof on the building that keeps people from coming in.

4. We're going to have someone holler really loud in the over the P.A. system. I guess that will be me since I'm the preacher.

5. Oh yeah, one last thing. We're going to make everyone pay \$50.00 to get in, even before they know the outcome.

The average in attendance at college football games is 81,000. You know, I think we would settle for 81,000 at church.

Oh, one more thing. We're going to change our services to 3 hours instead of one. Boy, with these changes, you'd better come early next Sunday in order to get a good parking place.

—adapted from Glen Willcut, Eagle Lake, FL
via Facebook