

The Reason it's Right or Wrong

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Is something right (or wrong) because God said so, or did He say so because it's right (or wrong)? It isn't just a philosophical question; it goes to the nature of God and of people made in His image.

Some actions are either right or wrong based on the moral nature of God. For example, when Cain murdered Abel, he sinned. To our knowledge God had neither spoken nor written a law against murder. Having been made in God's image with a moral nature, Cain knew murder was wrong. After the flood and later in the Ten Commandments and other places, God specifically legislated against murder; but murder was sinful even in the absence of oral or written law. The same can be said for stealing, fornication, and numerous other immoral acts. This may be termed "moral law."

By contrast, Cain's failure to offer the right sacrifice was an act of unfaithfulness and disobedience, but it was not immoral. Some have called this "positive law." Cain could not know by his moral nature that God required sacrifice at all, much less what that sacrifice should be. We know God told the brothers what to offer because Abel did so by faith (Hebrews 11:4), which comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17). Abel's sacrifice was right because God said so, not because it was inherently moral.

Building the ark was right because God said so; by faith, Noah trusted and obeyed. Marching around Jericho was right because God said so, not because it was inherently moral. Joshua obeyed by faith.

God's "positive law" is to be obeyed even when we may not understand why or we "don't see what good it will do." This applies to baptism, the Lord's Supper, and any number of other matters that are not of a moral nature.

(I am indebted to brother Jerry Brewer for the seed thoughts in this article, J.S.)

Working in the Vineyard

In His "Parable of the Workers" in Matthew 20, Jesus told of laborers who were hired to work in a vineyard. They were hired at various times of the day, yet at the end of the day they all received the same pay.

Traditionally, we make application to show that God accepts the penitent sinner no matter the age or stage of the person's life, all receiving an eternal reward. However, there is a lesson here that can be easily overlooked. Each worker, no matter their status, was required to complete their assigned task within the vineyard so as to collect the day's wage. God wants us to commit our time and be busy workers in His vineyard.

Even the person who comes to Christ late in life has an obligation to be a good steward of the days the Lord has given them. The Lord blesses us with 24 hours a day; it's up to us to use our time wisely and always make time for the Lord's work (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5).

Time is a blessing from God and a precious commodity; ask the grandparent who has limited time with grandchildren or the person who has reached old age. One doesn't have to read the bible for very long until they can see the Lord requires His servants to be busy vineyard workers, using their time to increase the kingdom.

"But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:16)

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX)

Things

God isn't opposed to you having things;

He is opposed to things having you.

--Voddie Bauchman (via Facebook)

THE RENAL SYMPHONY

"He made the earth by His power; He founded the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding" (Jeremiah 10:12).

We now focus on the "Renal" system. This system, including our kidneys, acts as a complex filtering mechanism, cleansing our bodies of waste and excess substances, maintaining our body's fluid balance, and even assisting in regulating our blood pressure.

Our kidneys filter about 120-150 quarts of blood daily to produce 1-2 quarts of urine, comprised of wastes and extra fluid. This ceaseless process, happening without our conscious effort or control, is a testimony to the remarkable complexity of God's design.

However, there is a cleansing far more profound than our renal system can achieve, a purification that reaches our souls' depths. It is the cleansing that comes through the blood of Jesus Christ. This divine filtration system washes away sin, guilt, and the stains that mar our spiritual selves. The price for this cleansing was heavy - it cost God His only Son. However, such is His love for us.

Today's society depends heavily on medical advancements like dialysis machines. However, as much as we value and appreciate these human-made aids, they merely attempt to replicate the intricate systems God has already created within us.

As important as it is to utilize these aids when necessary, let us not forget to appreciate and trust in our bodies' ultimate Healer and Designer. If God can maintain the complex systems within us, and if He is willing to pay such a price for our spiritual cleansing, surely He can handle the complexities of our lives.

Let us surrender our worries to Him, trusting in His ability to filter out the unnecessary and keep what is vital for our growth and His glory.

--Robert Kargbo (Middleton, WI)