

THE EXAMINER



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What Does God Expect of Us? - By Thomas L. Andrews, Rome, Georgia

People often say, "I would do something if I knew what to do." This should be the attitude of every Christian. Can we say that the only things we leave undone in the service of God are those things we do not know to do? It saddens me to think of the number of people that readily admit, "I know I ought to" The watchword now, as always, is "putting you in remembrance" (**2 Pet. 1:13**). A continual reminding to keep the commandments of God before us is essential. Upon knowing what God expects of us, it behooves each person to do it.

As we think about what is expected of us, we must realize who we are. I mean in a very basic sort of way. "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (**1 Cor. 11:3**). Not many people would proclaim that they are God or the Son of God. However, we must understand that God expects us to submit to His authority and be humble as

humanity. Arrogant and self-willed people are an abomination unto the Lord.

Paul also teaches that if we are a man or if we are a woman, God expects us to be that which we are by our biological makeup. Certainly the sinfulness of abusing and leaving the natural sexual desires of man and women needs to be understood (**Rom. 1:26.27; 1 Cor. 6:9.20**). God wants people to experience their natural desires, yet these are to be satisfied in accord with His will. The child of God today perhaps has little difficulty with this aspect of God's will but what about social behavior?

The social behavior of man and women is also a realm in which God has expectations. God expects men to be the head of women (**1 Cor. 11:3**). This has a two-roll requirement. Men must be so inclined as to be a head and women must be submissive to them. Although the husband is to be head of the wife and the wife is to submit to her own husband (**Eph.**

5:22.23), this is not the only headship of man. Women are expected by God to be submissive. There are too many passages in the Bible that teach in relation to this point for it to be casually overlooked (**1 Tim. 2:9-15; 1 Cor. 11:2-16; 14:34; 1 Pet. 3:1-6; Tit. 2:3-5**). It may be "in" today for women to "take the lead" and even to be "manish," but it has never been nor never will be what God expects of women.

Do not misunderstand me. I believe in that old saying, "Behind every great man is a great woman." It can also be said of such a woman that she knew her place and what God expected of her. Many women are important factors in the Lord's work in various locations and as such do a great work. However, women do not have to challenge the authority of men to work in the kingdom. Women need to carefully examine their public behavior, modes of dress, attitudes, and actions so "that the word of God be not blasphemed."

Often the case is not that women are speaking so loudly, but that men are not speaking at all. This is to say that many godly women are looking for men to take the lead and the oversight. God expects men to accept the responsibility of being a head not only in the home but in other areas also. The Lord's people are suffering because men

will not develop as God expects.

The home is designed by God to develop children that will find the place in the work of the Lord (**Eph. 6:4**), yet many parents are failing in what God expects of them. Has God required of us an impossible task? Absolutely not! Our inquiry should be into our own desires, methods, and procedures of rearing our children. Lustful generations have found it easy to bring forth children, but let us realize that it is not so easy to bring up a child in the Lord. Yet this is what God expects.

As I write these words a startling thought comes to me. This is concerning the attitude that people have toward failure. "Everyone is doing it! So what." The point is-what are the consequences of failing to do what God expects of us? This is a serious matter. To fail in what God expects of us is sin and "the wages of sin is death" (**Rom. 6:23**). It is sad to see otherwise successful people fail in doing what God expects them to do. ---- Via - Truth Magazine XXII: 4, p. 69; January 26, 1978

Have You Left Your First Love? - by Larry Ray Hafley, Bartlett, Tennessee

Think of all the advantages the Ephesian saints possessed. An apostle had founded the church and worked with them for three years (**Acts 20:31**). After that, Timothy

worked with them (**1 Tim. 1:3**). Some of them "spake with tongues, and prophesied" after the apostle laid his hands upon them (**Acts 19:6; cf. 8:18**). They had "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (**Eph. 13; 2:6**). They had been "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (**Eph. 1:13**). Paul wrote a letter to them. Just imagine that all these things had occurred where you worship! What would your reaction be? How great would be your expectations? Then, suppose the church was active, alive aggressive and that the Lord himself knew of their tireless, tedious toil. What kind of church would it be? Great! Wonderful! Fantastic! Right?

Wrong. The Lord wrote a letter to the Ephesian church described above. With all of their positive aspects and glorious past history, with all of their diligent devotion, listen to what the Lord said to them:

I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence

thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent (**Rev. 2:2-5**).

Kind of scary, is it not? Look at the compliments and the words of praise. They were real, sincere, genuine. What would we say of a church today that was equally enthusiastic and "on fire for the Lord"? Here was a church that was debating false teachers, especially false apostles, and "posed them as "liars." Note the terms that show hard work; observe their steadfastness, their endurance. How would we describe such a church today? There are no words in our vocabulary sufficient to praise such a congregation! Back to the frightening part - see the words of rebuke. The Lord says, in effect, "I am ready to cease recognizing you as one of my churches" (**Rev. 2:5; 1:20b**).

It had only been a few years since Paul and Timothy walked and worked among them. They possessed zeal, but they were about to be extinguished. What happened? What was the problem? The Lord said, "Thou hast left thy first love."

Have you left your first love? It is not enough to charge the church with having done so. Have you left your first love? Pointing fingers is easy. "If we only had a good

preacher." "If we only had elders." "If we only had other elders." "If our singing was better." "If brother and sister Snobby would just leave." "If only brother and sister Friendly worshiped here instead of across town." "If only" will not build a strong church. Pointing fingers does not solve problems. Blaming others and hurling excuses only compounds the difficulty. Evidently, the church at Ephesus had all the "if onlys." They had it all. But the Lord said, "Thou hast left thy first love."

What Does That Mean?

What does it mean when it says they had left their first love? Consider a marriage. The couple is together. They have a comfortable life. "Things" are essentially good. He has a job. The house runs smoothly most of the time. Meals are on the table. The children are doing fairly well. So, what is the trouble? "I don't know. I just feel listless, unhappy, unfulfilled. All is well. The same things are going on day after day. Nothing has really changed, but our marriage is dull, dead and boring." This imaginary couple is going through the motions. They have left their first love.

It can happen to Christians and to churches. What is the answer? What is the solution? It is not a small thing. It is a serious matter. The marriage partners must renew

and rekindle their courtship. They must get back to the basics of love, duty and responsibility. Kindness, courtesy and consideration have ceased. As a result, the marriage is stale, dry and undesirable. So it is with faith. Disciples go through the motions of spirituality. They attend services; they give money; they perform token efforts of "good works." They draw near the Lord with their mouth; they honor him with their lips, but their heart is far from him. Their worship is vain, empty, lifeless (**Matt. 15:8,9**). "Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (**Eph. 5:14**). The child of God is commanded to be "renewed in the spirit of (his) mind," and to be "transformed by the renewing of (his) mind" (**Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2**).

You will search in vain for a "spiritual high." There is no cure to be found in a "Pentecostal Pep Pill." There is no shot that some religious "Doctor" can inject that will give you a "boost" from your lethargy and apathy. You must seize the initiative, "and Christ shall give you light." Quit blaming others. Repent. Pray fervently and frequently. Feed on God's word. Seek to serve and save others. You will be better in no time. — Via - **Guardian of Truth XXXIII**: 22, pp. 675-676, November 16, 1989