

## Spiritual Necessities

Throughout the history of mankind there have been things that we must do and things that we must not do. Many of these things are absolutely necessary if we wish to accomplish some purpose or task. Some of these things are those that we must do or things that we must not do in order to be a productive citizen of our family, our community, or our country. Sometimes the lesson that certain things are absolute necessary is a hard lesson to learn and at certain times in our lives we need it to be constantly reinforced. My mother trained a stubborn, headstrong little boy in these matters with patience, persistence and liberal doses of what the hill folks called “hickory tea”.

These kinds of necessities not only apply to the physical realm and the world around us but to the spiritual realm as well. When God created Adam and Eve and placed them in his beautiful garden he gave them a prohibition, something that was necessary for their spiritual well-being.

**Genesis 2:16-17** “AND THE LORD GOD COMMANDED THE MAN, SAYING, OF EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN THOU MAYEST FREELY EAT: <sup>17</sup>BUT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL, THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF IT: FOR IN THE DAY THAT THOU EATEST THEREOF THOU SHALT SURELY DIE.”

God continued attending to the spiritual wellbeing of his people all the way down through the patriarchal age. Then when he chose to bring his people out of Egyptian captivity into the land he had promised he gave them what was necessary for them to maintain their relationship with Him as His people. These necessities of the Mosaic Age were first recorded in the book of Leviticus and the expanded and reinforced by Moses in his farewell sermon.

**Deuteronomy 8:1** “ALL THE COMMANDMENTS WHICH I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY SHALL YE OBSERVE TO DO, THAT YE MAY LIVE, AND MULTIPLY, AND GO IN AND POSSESS THE LAND WHICH THE LORD SWARE UNTO YOUR FATHERS.”

Many people would have us believe that with the end of the Mosaic Covenant that our spiritual wellbeing is being maintained for us only by the grace of God. All we have to do is believe in Christ (**John 3:16**) and be “good people”, then God will provide us with his richest blessings and claim us as His children. Of course, the definition of what the term “good people” means frequently varies with the teller. But that wasn’t what Christ told Saul. When this Pharisee of Pharisees strode down that Damascus road and met his Lord:

“AND HE TREMBLING AND ASTONISHED SAID, LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO? AND THE LORD *said* UNTO HIM, ARISE, AND GO INTO THE CITY, AND IT SHALL BE TOLD THEE WHAT THOU MUST DO.” **Acts 9:6**

## Spiritual Necessities

Saul had just met his maker and there will be many like him at the day of judgment. He has just been dealt a blow that has humbled him and awakened him to reality. Saul believed with all his being and was ready to bow his head and knees before God. But there was something else that Saul **MUST** do! He was told to go into the city and there "IT SHALL BE TOLD THEE WHAT THOU MUST DO."

I'm sure that there are more spiritual necessities, more things that are necessary for our spiritual well-being and relationship with God than we can cover in the time allotted today. But with your patience we will briefly consider a few of them.

## Inward Righteousness

**Matthew 5:20** "FOR I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT EXCEPT YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL EXCEED *the righteousness* OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, YE SHALL IN NO CASE ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

Someone says you can't really be righteous until you are right with God. It is God that defines who is righteous in His sight, not man. That is true and he reveals his measurements to us in His Word. But how can we ever expect to succeed spiritually without having the mindset to be righteous. How can we endure the slings and arrows of Satan that will come our way when we dedicate our lives to God without the determination to do and live as God requires? Saul had this mind set. Even when he was persecuting Christians he thought he was right with God. He told the council:

**Acts 23:1** "AND PAUL, EARNESTLY BEHOLDING THE COUNCIL, SAID, MEN *and* BRETHREN, I HAVE LIVED IN ALL GOOD CONSCIENCE BEFORE GOD UNTIL THIS DAY."

So when he was confronted by Jesus in the Damascus road and learned that he was wrong there was no hesitation; there was no discussion; there was no stopping him from making the radical changes in his life that were necessary for him to do right in the sight of God. If we turn to God without a deep, determined commitment to right living and obedience we will be become as those in Jesus' parable of the soils. When the word of God is sown in the hearts of men it is like broadcasting seed:

**Matthew 13:5** "SOME FELL UPON STONY PLACES, WHERE THEY HAD NOT MUCH EARTH: AND FORTHWITH THEY SPRUNG UP, BECAUSE THEY HAD NO DEEPNESS OF EARTH:"

## Spiritual Necessities

That seed came up, it even grew for a while but there was not enough commitment to righteous living to sustain it and like some of our brethren they drifted away.

**Matthew 13:7** “AND SOME FELL AMONG THORNS; AND THE THORNS SPRUNG UP, AND CHOKED THEM:”

Again the seed came up and grew but the trials, troubles and temptations of this world soon choked it out and it died. An inward desire for righteousness is a necessity for spiritual life, both before and after we become children of God.

## A Childlike Spirit

**Matthew 18:3** “AND SAID, VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, EXCEPT YE BE CONVERTED, AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN, YE SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

In another setting Jesus tells us:

**Matthew 19:14** “BUT JESUS SAID, SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN, AND FORBID THEM NOT, TO COME UNTO ME: FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

“FOR SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN” In order to be considered fit for God’s kingdom we must be as dependent on him as little children are on those who care for them. We must be as humble and willing as those who are completely innocent and have not yet learned to be rebellious. And rebellion is something that is learned if we allow it, not something they inherit. The wisdom of God tells us:

**Proverbs 22:4** “THE REWARD OF HUMILITY *and* THE FEAR OF JEHOVAH *is* RICHES, AND HONOR, AND LIFE.” (ASV)

One of the rewards of humility and fear of Jehovah is life. What does the writer mean by life being a reward? We all live don’t we? He’s not talking about physical life, he’s talking about spiritual life. Observe the words of the prophet Isaiah:

**Isaiah 57:15** “FOR THUS SAITH THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE THAT INHABITETH ETERNITY, WHOSE NAME *is* HOLY; I DWELL IN THE HIGH AND HOLY *place*, WITH HIM ALSO *that is* OF A CONTRITE AND HUMBLE SPIRIT, TO REVIVE THE SPIRIT OF THE HUMBLE, AND TO REVIVE THE HEART OF THE CONTRITE ONES.”

## Spiritual Necessities

The One who inhabits eternity, the One whose name is Holy; Almighty God says that those who will live with him are those with a humble and contrite spirit. Those who have bowed their will to his, those who are like Paul proclaimed:

**Philippians 1:20-21** "ACCORDING TO MY EARNEST EXPECTATION AND *my* HOPE, THAT IN NOTHING I SHALL BE ASHAMED, BUT *that* WITH ALL BOLDNESS, AS ALWAYS, *so* NOW ALSO CHRIST SHALL BE MAGNIFIED IN MY BODY, WHETHER *it be* BY LIFE, OR BY DEATH. <sup>21</sup>FOR TO ME TO LIVE *is* CHRIST, AND TO DIE *is* GAIN."

## A Repentant Heart

In one of his sermons in Ephraim before he made his final return to Jerusalem Jesus is asked a question. In response to that question; Jesus uses an incident that was fresh in their minds to illustrate a spiritual truth, a spiritual necessity. There was a tower near the pool of Siloam that had fallen and killed eighteen people, we don't know how, or why, just that it happened. Jesus asked:

**Luke 13:4** "OR THOSE EIGHTEEN, UPON WHOM THE TOWER IN SILOAM FELL, AND SLEW THEM, THINK YE THAT THEY WERE SINNERS ABOVE ALL MEN THAT DWELT IN JERUSALEM?"

Do you think that these eighteen men were greater sinners than all the rest of the people in Jerusalem? Who can know, except for God? After all we all sin and come short of the glory of God (**Romans 3:23**). So the question that Jesus asks is rhetorical, all men sin. And then he gives this warning:

**Luke 13:5** "I TELL YOU, NAY: BUT, EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH."

Unless they repented they would perish spiritually just like these men on whom the tower fell perished physically. Repentance is a spiritual necessity; Peter knew that for he told his hearers:

"THEN PETER SAID UNTO THEM, REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST." **Acts 2:38**

And Saul knew that as well, when he was led into the city:

"AND HE WAS THREE DAYS WITHOUT SIGHT, AND NEITHER DID EAT NOR DRINK." **Acts 9:9**

## Spiritual Necessities

And then in verse 11 the Lord tells Ananias that Saul was also praying. Saul had a repentant heart! Saul had repented and was petitioning God for relief from his sin. What he was told to do is the next Spiritual Necessity that we will consider.

### The New Birth

The fourth spiritual necessity that we will consider is the New Birth. When one of the rulers of the Jews came to Jesus he was told:

**John 3:5** "JESUS ANSWERED, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN OF WATER AND *of* THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

Well what did Jesus mean? The proverb writer tells us that:

**Proverbs 21:16** "THE MAN THAT WANDERETH OUT OF THE WAY OF UNDERSTANDING SHALL REMAIN IN THE CONGREGATION OF THE DEAD."

Whoever wanders out of "THE WAY OF UNDERSTANDING", the way of God, the way of knowledge, the beginning of which is to fear God (**Proverbs 1:7**) will "REMAIN IN THE CONGREGATION OF THE DEAD". **He will remain dead in sin!** But under the New Covenant God has provided a way of regeneration, a way of restoring life to the spirit, a way of being born again. Paul writes that even though the works of righteousness that we spoke about a few moments ago are spiritual necessities they are not what saves us.

**Titus 3:5** "NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US, BY THE WASHING OF REGENERATION, AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST;"

We are regenerated by washing! So how are we washed? Ananias explained it to us through the Apostle Paul when he told Saul:

"AND NOW WHY TARRIEST THOU? ARISE, AND BE BAPTIZED, AND WASH AWAY THY SINS, CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD." **Acts 22:16**

Saul believed, Saul had repented and had been praying and fasting before God for three days. But Saul was still in sin until those sins were washed away. For the life of me I will never understand how most of our religious neighbors can teach that baptism is not a spiritual necessity. That God will accept us without our sins being removed from our souls, without us being washed and regenerated, i.e. born again, becoming a new creature (**II Corinthians 5:17**).

## Spiritual Necessities

The New Birth, baptism for the remission of sins is a Spiritual Necessity.

## Spiritual Worship

**John 4:23-24** "BUT THE HOUR COMETH, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE TRUE WORSHIPPERS SHALL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH: FOR THE FATHER SEEKETH SUCH TO WORSHIP HIM. GOD *is* A SPIRIT: AND THEY THAT WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP *him* IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH."

Jesus says that the hour has come that true worshippers of God will worship in spirit and in truth. Spiritual worship is a spiritual necessity. So what is spiritual worship? Is it standing, swaying, waving our arms in the air and working ourselves into an emotional high? Some of our brethren seem to think so. But they've borrowed that from the denominations. They didn't find it in the word of God. To worship God in spirit is to worship God with the right spirit within us, the right mindset, the right heart, the right attitude toward God and toward our worship. A humble and contrite spirit like that of a child; not like Judah in the days of Isaiah the prophet; Isaiah writes:

"AH SINFUL NATION, A PEOPLE LADEN WITH INIQUITY, A SEED OF EVILDOERS, CHILDREN THAT ARE CORRUPTERS: THEY HAVE FORSAKEN THE LORD, THEY HAVE PROVOKED THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL UNTO ANGER, THEY ARE GONE AWAY BACKWARD." **Isaiah 1:4**

It was impossible for them to worship God in spirit because of their attitude toward God. They had "FORSAKEN THE LORD", they had "PROVOKED" him unto "ANGER", because of their sin; they were "LADEN WITH INIQUITY" they were "CORRUPTERS" and "EVILDOERS". So God told them:

"BRING NO MORE VAIN OBLATIONS; INCENSE IS AN ABOMINATION UNTO ME; THE NEW MOONS AND SABBATHS, THE CALLING OF ASSEMBLIES, I CANNOT AWAY WITH; *it is* INIQUITY, EVEN THE SOLEMN MEETING.

<sup>14</sup>"YOUR NEW MOONS AND YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS MY SOUL HATETH: THEY ARE A TROUBLE UNTO ME; I AM WEARY TO BEAR *them*." **Isaiah 1:13-14**

## Spiritual Necessities

It is absolutely necessary that we worship God in spirit, with the right attitude toward him and his word. And it is also absolutely necessary that we worship God in truth. What we think, what we want, what we see as being wonderful in our eyes doesn't matter. Now that would come as quite a shock to many people in this world. But I ask, who are we worshipping, God or ourselves? Who are we here to please God or ourselves? We are to worship God "IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH" and what is our source of truth?

**John 17:17** "SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH."

The Psalmist writes:

**Psalms 119:142** "THY RIGHTEOUSNESS IS AN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THY LAW IS THE TRUTH."

God's word, God's law authorizes what He will accept as worship; the Lord's Supper, singing, giving, prayer and preaching and teaching his Word, nothing more, nothing less and nothing else. Right worship is presented with a humble and contrite heart in awe of being in the presence of God.

## Spiritual Food

**John 6:53** "THEN JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, EXCEPT YE EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN, AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, YE HAVE NO LIFE IN YOU."

It never ceases to amaze me that a man, or woman, can become upset if they had to miss a physical meal. Who will demand to be fed physical food if they thought that someone was trying to deprive them of this food unjustly. But at the same time will use whatever excuse is at hand to absent themselves from the spiritual feasts that are presented by the church every week. In **John 6:53** Jesus tells us plainly that if we absent ourselves from the opportunity to participate in the Lord's Supper we are spiritually DEAD. In **Hebrews 10:25-26** we find that if we absent ourselves habitually from the assemblies of the saints conducted for Bible study and worship it is willful sin.

The prophet Isaiah writes these words to the Judeans to whom he's calling to assemble to hear and worship God:

## Spiritual Necessities

“HO, EVERY ONE THAT THIRSTETH, COME YE TO THE WATERS, AND HE THAT HATH NO MONEY; COME YE, BUY, AND EAT; YEA, COME, BUY WINE AND MILK WITHOUT MONEY AND WITHOUT PRICE. <sup>2</sup>WHEREFORE DO YE SPEND MONEY FOR THAT **which is not** BREAD? AND YOUR LABOUR FOR **that which** SATISFIETH NOT? HEarken DILIGENTLY UNTO ME, AND EAT YE **that which is** GOOD, AND LET YOUR SOUL DELIGHT ITSELF IN FATNESS. <sup>3</sup>INCLINE YOUR EAR, AND COME UNTO ME: HEAR, AND YOUR SOUL SHALL LIVE; AND I WILL MAKE AN EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH YOU, **even** THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID. **Isaiah 55:1-3**

While men never fail to feed their physical bodies, sometimes to excess, yet they will neglect their spiritual wellbeing. That doesn't make sense does it? Hearing God is how we come to know God. Hearing God is how we come to know the revealed will of God for us. The wisdom of God tells us in:

**Proverbs 2:3-5** “YEA, IF THOU CRIEST AFTER KNOWLEDGE, **and** LIFTEST UP THY VOICE FOR UNDERSTANDING; <sup>4</sup>IF THOU SEEKEST HER AS SILVER, AND SEARCHEST FOR HER AS **for** HID TREASURES; <sup>5</sup>THEN SHALT THOU UNDERSTAND THE FEAR OF THE LORD, AND FIND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.”

In another place the Holy Spirit through this same writer tells us the beginning of knowledge, the beginning of becoming wise is to KNOW GOD. Something we can never do unless we:

“STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.” **II Timothy 3:16**

It is a spiritual necessity that we gather with other saints at the appointed times, partake of the Lord's Supper, uplift our hearts and minds in singing praises to God, gather spiritual strength as we pray together and for each other, study as we are directed in our Sunday and Wednesday classes and give of our means as we have been commanded. Or, as you have heard from another sermon several years ago:

“Willful forsaking of the opportunity to assemble to worship and study is a symptom of the absence of a spiritual appetite, or desire for the word of God; Which by the scriptural diagnosis of the Greatest Physician indicates a terrible, potentially terminal sickness of the soul.”

Just as physical food is necessary for our wellbeing; partaking of spiritual food on a regular basis is a Spiritual Necessity, required to maintain our spiritual life.

## Spiritual Necessities

### Personal Faith

**John 8:24** "I SAID THEREFORE UNTO YOU, THAT YE SHALL DIE IN YOUR SINS: FOR IF YE BELIEVE NOT THAT I AM *he*, YE SHALL DIE IN YOUR SINS."

We are to believe what? When we take the "he" out of this verse that was added by the translators we see that we are to believe that Jesus Christ is the "I AM". Well, what is the significance of that? Several times in scripture God or Christ refers to himself as the "I AM". We will consider two. First God tells Moses to tell the children of Israel:

**Exodus 3:14** "AND GOD SAID UNTO MOSES, **I AM THAT I AM**: AND HE SAID, THUS SHALT THOU SAY UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, **I AM** HATH SENT ME UNTO YOU."

And then Jesus to the Jews:

**John 8:58** "JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM.

This phrase "I AM" signifies that Jesus was The Word (**John 1:1**) that was with God in the beginning, was coexistent with God and was the Creator of all things in the beginning (**John 1:3**). He is the same yesterday, today and forever. (**Malachi 3:6**). And in **John 8:58** Jesus doesn't just say that he was before Abraham but before Abraham was "**I AM**". He identifies himself as the "**I AM**" of the Old Testament. (**Exodus 3:14**)

**Hebrews 11:6** "BUT WITHOUT FAITH *it is* IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE him: FOR HE THAT COMETH TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, AND *that* HE IS A REWARDER OF THEM THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM."

A personal faith is a spiritual necessity. Without it how can we have a personal relationship with the Son of God?

What about you this morning, my friend? Are you a child of God? If you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son God, as we have just studied. If you are willing to repent of your past sins (**Luke 13:3**), confess that belief before men as did the Ethiopian treasurer (**Acts 8:36**) and be baptized to wash away your sin as did Saul (**Acts 22:16**). You can be added to the saved as those were in the first century (**Acts 2:47**). If you have neglected your spiritual well being, have public sin of which you need to remove from your soul, you have opportunity to repent

and pray for forgiveness the same as that of Simon in **Acts 8:22**. Won't you come?