

Misconceptions

One is believing that since we are saved by grace and not by works, (Eph.2:8-9) we shouldn't discipline ourselves to even read the Bible or pray, for fear of getting into legalism or works to earn our salvation.

Another is that God is in control. If He wants me to get up and pray, then He will cause me to do it. Similarly, if God wants me to be healthy, prosperous or anointed, He will do it, because He is sovereign.

Finally, at the other end of the spectrum are Christians who believe that keeping busy for God is being a good Christian; like busyness is holiness. But they don't believe we are saved by this.

Faith versus Works

At the heart of the first one is this issue. There are Christians who believe that Paul and James (two New Testament writers) disagreed on this, for Paul said, "No man can be justified by works of the law" (Gal.2:16). And James said, "... a man is justified by works and not faith only" (Jas.2:24). But since God wrote it all (II Tim.3:16) it must agree. We may need to study and ask God's help.

Paul and James were writing to

two different audiences. Paul wrote to Jews who were steeped in the traditions that had been added to the original laws God gave Moses, and they had a hard time giving these up. James wrote to non-Jews. If you read James 2:14-26, he makes it very plain that if you've been converted, we should see changes! No changes; no conversion! (Later on, we'll see what those changes should be.)

To finish up the second misconception, we need to know that **it's up to US how we grow and what we become.** God has a wonderful plan for each one of us, but it is up to us if we get there. Josh.1:8, Psa.1:2-3, Jas.1:25, John 15:4-7, Matt.7:21, 24-27, II Tim.2:19-21, Deut. 30:19-20 and 28:1-15.

Keep Busy?

At least seven verses say that we will be rewarded for the work that we do. (Heaven is not a reward, but there are rewards in heaven.) Psa.62:12, Prov.24:12, Jer.17:10, Matt.16:27, Rom.2:6, II Cor.5:10, and Rev.22:12.

However, three verses suggest that this is a matter for Godly fear! Heb.12:28, "... offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and Godly fear." I Pet.1:17, "... your Father ... judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear..." And Phil.2:12, "... work out your own salvation with fear..." (This needs to be

understood: Work **results** from being saved; not **to be** saved, just like James was saying.)

Two verses, Heb.6:1 and 9:14 speak of "dead works" and give no explanation of what they are. Ideas abound, but here is a sensible one: In I Cor.3:10-15, we read about works that will receive no reward, even though the person will be saved. And in Matt.7:21-23, we read about people doing mighty works (signs and wonders) but Jesus was not pleased, and claimed they weren't doing God's will! So how do we know what works will be rewarded, and what ones won't!

Learn to be led

Many verses say we are supposed to be like Jesus here on earth. Here are a few: I John 4:17, 2:6, Luke 6:40, II Cor. 3:18, and Gal.4:19. That leads to this: **Jesus only followed God in what He did!** John 8:26,28, 12:49-50, and many more.

Rom.8:14, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

John 10:4, "...and the sheep follow Him for they know His voice."

To begin learning to be led, get the brochure called, *God wants to make your life beautiful.* (First qualifications for being led.)

My Own Laws?

If I discipline myself to spend time in prayer and in the Word every day, haven't I made a law for myself? The answer is to **look in your heart**. If you are doing it because you have to, and it is drudgery, then something should change. But if you realize that God loves you very much, and He said if you spend time with Him, and get to know Him, and soak in His love, then He can change you to be more and more like Jesus, and more and more blessed! When you're in love, do you constantly look at your watch to see how long you've been there? No! Because you love being there. Psa.40:8, "I delight to do Your will, Oh my God." That's love speaking.

Do You Love Me?

John 14:15, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

John 14:21 "He who has my commandments and keeps them (obeys them), it is he who loves me."

John 14:23-24 "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word... He who does not love me does not keep my words..."

II John 6 "This is love, that we walk according to His commandments."

I John 5:2-3 "By this we know

that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments..."

John 15:14 "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you."

God WANTS to be good to you!

But notice the conditions.

II Chron.16:9, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to Him."

Heb.11:6, "... and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Matt.6:33, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Psa.37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."

Psa..34:10, "...but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing."

Psa..1:2-3, "But his delight is in the law of God ... and whatever he does shall prosper."

*If we're not saved
By works,
Why obey?*



*A mini Bible study
By Cheryl Boone*