

June 12, 2022

# Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

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## Painless Discipleship

By Joe R. Price

Church attendance is down in America (that's not news). One reason recently noted in a blog is the emphasis on children's sports activities on Sundays (*The Main Reason for Declining Church Attendance: Children's Sports?*, Christianity Today). Parents take their children to play soccer, baseball, football and more instead of Sunday Bible class and worship services. When we moved to Washington over 15 years ago I vividly remember being astonished at the amount of children's sports being played on Sunday mornings. The huge soccer complex near the church's meeting place was filled with the evidence that many people worship recreation instead of God on the Lord's Day.

One way churches are addressing this decline is by rescheduling worship services to accommodate families. By offering Saturday afternoon services they remove Sunday conflicts. Folks are free to do as they please.

Painless discipleship is in vogue. Jesus said, "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me*" (Lk. 9:23). By taking children to sporting events instead of worshiping God we are teaching them they are more important than the Lord. We are teaching them they can make plans that hinder them from putting the Lord first (Matt. 6:33). We are teaching them discipleship is adaptable to "me".

We must not have an inconsequential view toward attending worship services (Heb. 10:24-25). Does the illness that keeps you from worshiping on Sunday also keep you home from work on Monday? Being a disciple of Christ requires sacrifice; it is not always easy. Children who learn other things are more important than worshiping God will do those other things. So will adults.

Sacrifice is necessary in order to follow the Savior who sacrificed Himself for us (1 Pet. 2:21; Rom. 12:1-2). Christians gladly offer themselves to the Lord regardless of personal inconvenience. Being faithful means always putting the Lord first (Col. 3:1-4).

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# Must A Person “Do” Anything To Be Saved?

By Ron Daly

To be consistent, those who advocate the erroneous doctrine of salvation by grace alone, must deny that there is anything for a person to “do” in order to be saved. Those who teach the doctrine of salvation by “grace alone,” contend that a person is passive, not active, and that anything that is “done” constitutes a “work” and they say, “We are not saved by works.”

One thing they fail to understand is this: there are different kinds of works, and one must understand the difference in order to have a biblical concept of grace, faith, law, and works. There are works of the law of Moses such as offering sacrifices, Sabbath day observance, and circumcision. No person can be saved by keeping the law of Moses. The law of Moses has been removed. It is not binding on anyone. (Acts 15; Romans 3:21, 27; 7:4; Galatians 3:23-25; 5:1-4). There are works of “merit” by which one seeks to “earn” or “deserve” the right to salvation. No one can, by his own planning, earn or deserve salvation. It is a gift from God and no one can boast. (Romans 4:2-8; Ephesians 2:5, 8-9) There are also works of obedience. These are the works that God Himself has mandated or made necessary in order for people to be saved. (Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 5:8-9) When a person complies with God’s conditions of pardon he is not attempting to save himself apart from God’s grace, nor is he trying to earn his salvation. He is by the grace of God, yielding to the commands of the heavenly Master! A good question for the Calvinist is this: Can a person be saved without submitting to the conditions that God has made necessary for salvation?

On the day of Pentecost, the Jews who were cut in the heart by the apostles’ words asked, “Men, brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:36-37) The Holy Spirit who was revealing God’s will through Peter and the rest of the apostles, did not respond to their question by asking, “Do, what do you mean ‘do?’ There is nothing to ‘do.’ God has already done it all.” Luke tells us, “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be immersed every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ in order to receive the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 2:38) The Holy Spirit, through Peter, told them what to do. Therefore, a person must “DO” something in order to be saved!

In Acts 16:30 Luke says the jailer asked Paul and Silas, “Sirs what must I do to be saved?” Paul did not say, “Do, what do you mean do? There is nothing to ‘do.’ God has already done it all.” Paul told him, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” (v. 31) Paul did not tell him to “**only** believe,” or “believe **only**.” Salvation by faith alone is not taught in the

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New Testament. It is found in the mental corridors of denominational theologians who have discarded God's plan of salvation. Paul told him to "believe in the Lord Jesus." To "believe in the Lord Jesus" involves accepting all conditions God has made necessary for salvation from past sins, and this includes immersion into Christ Jesus. After Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to him and those in his house (v. 32), **he was immersed at once**, he and all his family! (v. 33) It is after he and his household heard the word and were immersed that Luke tells us, "And he rejoiced that **he had believed in the God.**" (v. 34) Yes, a person must "do" something in order to be saved, and when he does it, he has not earned his salvation, neither has he vitiated or nullified the grace of God. The Bible says "he had believed in the God."

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## Summer Priorities

By Joe R. Price

**E**very season presents particular challenges to Christians to live morally, to be devoted to God and to offer Him true worship. For example, winter brings temptations to join in the false worship of celebrating the birth of Jesus. Spring offers us Easter and its false service to God. Summer brings its own set of temptations to forsake God and righteousness.

As summer begins we have a good opportunity to review and renew our priorities as children of God:

**I will not take a vacation from worshipping God.** Worshipping God on the first day of the week ought to be a given (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25; Jn. 4:24). Planning a vacation also means planning our worship. Summer fun cannot mean we neglect God.

**I will give as I have been prospered.** If we get a paid vacation, God has prospered us. With such increase comes the privilege and responsibility to give (1 Cor. 16:2). We will give cheerfully and without neglect at all times (2 Cor. 9:7).

**I will only engage in moral activities.** The grace of God teaches us to live "soberly, righteously and godly" (Tit. 2:12). Therefore, we will respect God through holy conduct and not view vacation as a time to carelessly and foolishly disregard God's will through immoral actions (1 Pet. 1:13-17; 2:11-12).

**I will be modest at all times.** Modest clothing is not defined by one's location or activity. Since our clothing is to be marked by "shamefastness and sobriety", our hearts must contain these attributes (1 Tim. 2:9). Christians know the world does not set the standard for decent dress. Summer is the time when the world "takes it off" — but after all, that is what the world is about (the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye) — that is what the world does (1 Jn. 2:15-16). But, Christians will not let the world define their modesty.

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**I will be thankful to God for His blessings.** A vacation can easily turn into something that is all about us. But, Christians remember that God is the giver of all good things, and so is always prayerfully grateful to Him. Remember to “rejoice always, pray without ceasing” while on vacation (1 Thess. 5:16-17).

**I will obey our parents.** Children generally have more free time during the summer. Parents, monitor your children’s activities this summer. Let them play, but also give them chores for which they are responsible. It will do them good. Children, be respectful and obey your parents (Eph. 6:1-3).

I’m sure you can add to this list. Whatever the season, Christians will “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). This must be our priority every day.



Where *there is* no wood, the fire goes out; And where *there is* no talebearer, strife ceases. *As* charcoal *is* to burning coals, and wood to fire, So *is* a contentious man to kindle strife.

— Proverbs 26:20-21

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***Visitors — We pray  
that you benefit spiritually  
from our worship together  
and hope to see you again.***

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**June Birthdays:** The 13th Ethan Collins; The 18th Mary Randolph.

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**Sunday**  
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 10:30 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 5:00 P.M.

**Wednesday**  
Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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