

(Hospitality... continued)

In 2003, Jason Moore gave a sermon on the value and necessity of serving one another. He used the example Jesus gave us in John 13:1-17. Take time to read this scripture and then notice the following truths:

1. We cannot choose to serve and be worried about our rights.
2. To be any good our service has to be practical and to be effective.
3. The decision to serve cannot rely on someone serving you in return.
4. The decision to serve does not wait on others to begin serving.
5. The servant will choose to serve alone if necessary.
6. The decision to serve cannot expect a certain favorable response from the one served.
7. The decision to serve must not be reserved for our friends.
8. The decision to serve means you will look and be treated like a servant.

Jesus taught us to serve. We as women have a responsibility to do so. The blessing he promised in John 13:17 only comes by being a servant. We have our work cut out for us. Time is passing. We cannot delay. (*The Robinson Reminder 1-17-10, Edna, Tx*)

-- *Editor's Note:* This week's *Arkansas Weekly* article is titled "Who Is A Born-Again Christian?" If you would like to read the article before the paper comes, it is available on our website (if you do not use the internet, ask Joey or Jason to print the article for you). If you know of someone who claims to be a "born-again Christian," then cut out that article and ask them to read it. And don't forget to make time for hospitality—after reading this week's article (inside this bulletin), do you have any reason not to have someone in your home soon? (1 Pet. 4:9)

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Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*
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January 15, 2012
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HEART AND COMMANDMENT

Harry Osborne

Obedience to God involves two elements which are both essential. First, we are to obey God from the heart and serve Him with a whole heart. Second, obedience to God demands that we follow His pattern of instruction as directed in His will. Notice how the Bible ties the two together:

But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that pattern of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:17-18).

God will not accept a cold, lifeless, half-hearted service from man. He has always demanded and continues to demand our reverential and loving service from the heart. Notice the clear instruction on this point from God's word:

Deuteronomy 6:5 - *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might."*

Hebrews 10:22 - *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."*

James 4:8 - *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded."*

1 Peter 3:15 - *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."*

It is plain, then, that God will not be pleased with anything less than our whole-hearted devotion unto Him. No ritualistic attempt to please God without our hearts

involved will be acceptable. If we are to live with Christ in eternity, we must give Him our hearts today!

However, service which is heart-felt without being guided by God's pattern of truth is not acceptable either. To please God, our hearts must be properly taught and act in obedience to His commands. The Scripture plainly declares that pleasing God demands both elements:

Psalm 119:2 - "*Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!*"

Psalm 119:10 - "*With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!*"

1 John 5:3 - "*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.*"

Some people today teach that God will accept whatever service one offers to the Lord with the heart, even if that service is not directed by His will found in the Bible. However, God has clearly insisted that we obey Him not only with a heart-felt service, but in keeping with His commands. Notice how plain that instruction is:

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him (1 John 2:3-5).

We cannot forfeit either our whole-hearted service or our adherence to God's commands found in the Bible if we are to please God. Just as wheels and an engine are both essential to a functional car, so are man's heart and God's pattern of instruction essential in obeying our Lord. Therefore, let us daily yield our hearts and our conduct to His will. (*Reason For Hope; August 22, 2010*)

HOSPITALITY—SERVING CHRIST

Joanne Beckley (wife of a gospel preacher in South Africa—David Beckley)

"Honey, three men from Zimbabwe and Mozambique are planning to come and study with me for about a month," This week!? Did you say this week they are going to arrive? Oh, my. Beds and rooms to prepare. Turn on the geyser. Stock the pantry. Whew, money will be tight indeed this month! Oh, wow, how will I cook African style and STILL feed my husband what he likes. And I've never even met these men before...

The phone rings. We are coming to your house on Saturday. Wonderful! I will have tea prepared. No, we want you to teach us all day. And Saturday is only two days away...

Overheard from my husband – "Moses, I want you to know if you or other brethren cannot find food for your family and the political situation threatens your lives, please know we are here for you. My home is yours. I will also make sure you meet the brethren near the border if you need their help."

Did you say a WHOLE FAMILY wants to come over from the States and stay with us for two and a half months?? Oh, my. How many and how old are the children? Right, I think they need to be near their parents. Let's arrange for them to live in our house and you and I can sleep in the one room guest house. (And it worked! They shared with Dave and I in the spread of the gospel, teaching their children to serve – while I and the other wife shared kitchen duties. It is now three years later, and we continue to rejoice in the obvious benefits this effort cost them).

Today? Today I am a rich lady. So many wonderful opportunities that have widened my own horizon and deepen my love for others.

Hospitality. Funny, when occasions arise to help a friend or stranger, I don't think about whether I'm being hospitable or not. They have need; I can fulfill the need. Simple, right? But of course it is not. Somewhere along the way of following the pathway that Jesus demands of me, I have had to learn to love, loving even more deeply. Of course the "loving journey" improves my own heart, and I am thankful this love will prompt me to heed God's command to be hospitable.

The early Christians considered it their duty to show hospitality to strangers (Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 5:10). We also remember that our Savior reminds us that whoever received those belonging to him, received himself (Matt. 10:40-42, 25:34-45).

In fact, Christians were known far and wide for their hospitality and the unbelievers admired them for it. They were hospitable to all strangers, but especially to those of the household of faith. Believers scarcely ever traveled without letters of commendation, which stated who they were and what they believed concerning Jesus Christ. This gave them a favorable reception wherever the name of Jesus Christ was known. Second and Third John may be such letters of commendation.

(article continued on back page)