

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“The Christian’s Obligations to the Truth”

By Brian Meade

Obligations are defined as “*things that you must do or pay because of a law, rule, agreement, etc.*” (Cambridge Dictionary) We come to understand what it means to be obligated to someone in everyday life. We are obligated to be on time for work every day and to be busy doing the duties that our job demands of us. Some obligations come every year, like our yearly obligation that we fulfill on April 15th to pay taxes to the government.



And then some obligations result because someone has done something for us and we are obligated to express appreciation or repay their kindness in some way or another.

To be a faithful Christian, one must be under obligation to the truth of God’s word. If Christ is our Lord (and He is), then it is our duty to listen and to obey His every command! (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 10:5; Hebrews 5:9)

One of the major conclusions that serious Bible students reach is just how important a role that truth has in our life as a Christian. It is the only way God speaks to man today! That fact alone shows us just how much we need it to be faithful to God as our Master. It is the access to the desires of God for our life — to shape and mold us in faith and conduct. God’s will must be done

(Matthew 7:21; 1 John 2:17), and it is contained in the book called the Bible. That is why those of the world will often despise the Bible, because it obligates them to live differently and give up sin. (John 3:19-20)

We can choose to ignore or neglect our obligations to the truth, but to do so is to neglect or ignore God; and that is not a good plan!

1. We Are Obligated to Love the Truth.

The Bible teaches us in 2 Thessalonians 2:10, “*and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*” In this reading of scripture, a lack of love is suggested for the reason many will love error. Because they loved what was not the truth, they would not be saved. It is the same problem people have today—they love false ways over the truth! Many love tradition, creeds, and unBiblical ways that have no basis in scripture! May it never be with us!

Love for the truth means that we become passionate about the truth like King David, when he said, “*O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.*” (Psalm 119:97) We need to have a love for truth that surpasses money, materialism, and all earthly treasures that this life has to offer us. Can we truly say like David, “*Therefore I love Your commandments above gold, yes, above fine gold.*” (Psalm 119:127)

When truth is what love, we will want to be where it is taught at every opportunity. When people love sports, it is certainly not difficult to get them to go see their favorite team play. When a young man is dating a young lady, he will want to be with her at every opportunity to see her! His love for her draws him to be near to the one that he

loves! Why then is it difficult to get some people to come where truth is taught on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings? Maybe it is because some do not love truth as they should.

And when someone loves truth, they accept and embrace it even when it is unpleasant to do so. In short, we love truth even when it steps on our toes! Truth can cut us to conviction about our need to live right, proper, and holy lives before God. (Acts 2:37; Acts 19:18-19; Acts 20:20) And like medicine that may be unpleasant to the taste, God's word will heal and benefit us as the final result. We should love truth for what it does to make us sound and healthy spiritually.

2. We Are Obligated to Study the Truth.

We are told in John 8:31-32, "*Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* Notice that the knowing of truth is followed by the *abiding* or *continuing* in the truth as a disciple of Jesus. In verse 31, Jesus was telling those who believe to be His disciples and follow His teachings— this requires study to know truth!

Truth is not something automatically known by every believer, but they have the obligation by God to study to gain knowledge in the scriptures. (1 Timothy 4:13-16; 2 Timothy 2:15)

The apostle Peter teaches the new converts to Christ to grow, "*as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.*" (1 Peter 2:2) Do we set aside time to study the word everyday? Do we study the word practically, to put into practice what we learn? And are we growing in our knowledge of the word? Can we see progress from when we first obeyed the gospel? We should be striving to say *yes* to all these questions.

3. We Are Obligated to Live by the Truth.

This is the practical application of truth to our lives. Truth can either be something we just merely know about, or it can be something we live by. We all are obligated by God to live by His words, just as Jesus stated in Matthew 4:4, "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*" Does truth have an impact on our life and our conduct in this life? Paul told the Christians at Philippi, "*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.*" (Philippians 1:27)

The gospel calls us to *higher ground* than that of the world (Ephesians 4:17-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:3-4). We are taught to behave in a way that is pure, holy, and righteous— all by the truth of the scriptures (Romans 12:1-2). Does the gospel have an impact on how we dress? (1 Timothy 2:8-10) And how we talk? (Ephesians 4:25; 29) How we treat other people? (Matthew 7:12; Ephesians 4:26-28) And does it help us to have a fulfilled and happy marriage? (Ephesians 5:22-33) If we are truly converted, it should.

4. We Are Obligated to Preach & Teach the Truth.

This shows us the priority of study (see point #2). We must study to know how to teach others the truth of the gospel message. Evangelism is a great part of being a Christian. Sharing our faith with others is an obligation we all have as Christians.

In Acts 8:4, Luke records the history of the early church as, "*Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.*" Notice that it wasn't just the preachers or apostles who was evangelizing— it was the *disciples*! Our obligation is done out of love for the lost friends, family, and neighbors that we all have while living in this world.

Paul would even say, "*I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*" (Romans 1:14-16)

And if we do not preach and teach the gospel, who will? The government doesn't know it— its concern is political in nature. The churches of men don't know it either— they have their creeds, traditions, and most importantly their error on the plan of salvation. It is the church that must be the "*pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Timothy 3:15). We must preach and teach it!

5. We Are Obligated to Defend the Truth.

Truth will not automatically defend itself, it is up to us to know the truth well enough to be able to defend it when called upon to do so (again see point #2). Along this line, Paul would say, "*I am set for the defence of the gospel.*" (Philippians 1:16 ASV; KJB) And Paul would on many occasions as he was preaching the gospel (Acts 19:23-41; Acts 22:1-23; 2 Timothy 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:14-17). We may very well be called to contend for the faith (Jude verse 3) against false teaching and teachers who pervert the faith. Will you be ready with all boldness, "*speaking the truth in love*" (Ephesians 4:15).

6. We Are Obligated to Obey the Truth.

And this point could very well be first in our study of our obligations to truth. It certainly is necessary for us to love the truth, study it, preach & teach it, and even defend the truth— but if we don't obey it, we have missed the very thing we need most! (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 2:1-3)

The Hebrew writer reminds us of our vital need to obey the truth in Hebrews 5:9, *“And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,”* We cannot be saved without obeying the truth that Jesus brought to us (John 1:17). Have you obeyed the truth?

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Steve Switcher, Nicky Curtis, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Clois Wright, Debbie Keplinger, Gaddy Hall, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer) & Delain Doles

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Tim Harris Sr.
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: *“Strengthening the Hands of the Wicked”*

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Paul Johnson
The Book of John (Mike Willis)
Page 66, Question #20

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Russell Briggs
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Paul Busby
Acts 26:9-11
Song Leader: Chris Callahan
Lord's Table: Russell Briggs
Assisting: Adam Harris & Nathan Meade
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: *“Feelings, Truth, & God's Approval”*
Closing Prayer: Lee Busby

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

December 5th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Russell Briggs
1 & 2 Kings (Mike Willis)
Page 14, Question # 1
Invitation: Dan Cottrell
Song Leader: Adam Harris
Closing Prayer: Tim Harris Jr.