



Anchor of the Soul  
P.O. Box 401  
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# ***Anchor of the Soul***

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## **The Difficult Part**

Bill Hall

Many, before entering the Lord's service, no doubt feel that once they have been baptized, become accustomed to attending worship periods regularly, and overcome some of their old habits, they will pretty well "have it made" in serving the Lord. Doing these outward services, however, is the easy side of obeying Christ. The difficult side involves that which is within; it involves keeping the heart right. It is easy to attend the worship periods, but it is difficult to worship, to rid the mind completely of worldly things, and to concentrate fully on the Lord. It is easy to sing, but it is difficult to meditate on the words, making the sentiment of the song one's own sentiment. It is easy to bow the head, but it is difficult to pray. It is easy to eat bread and drink fruit of the vine, but it is difficult to concentrate fully as one should on the suffering of Christ. Sitting through a worship period is not in itself worship, for true worship must proceed from the heart (Ephesians 5:19; John 4:24). In moral realms, the difficult thing to do is to keep the heart pure. It is relatively easy to refrain from killing, stealing, or committing adultery. After all, one is hindered in such matters by the laws of the land, social pressures, forbidding circumstances, fear of being caught, etc. It is difficult, however, to completely rid the mind of jealousy, selfishness, discontent, lust, hatred, bitterness, a spirit of revenge, etc. Anyone who has ever been jealous of another knows the difficulty involved in cleansing the heart of this terrible sin. So it is with all the sins of the heart. It is easy to develop a friendly way and gracious manner with others, but it is difficult to develop genuine love and concern for others within the heart. It is easy to give something to some charity drive, but it is difficult to develop real compassion for the poor. It is easy to say, "Forgive me, Lord," but it is difficult to repent. The wise man said, "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*" (Proverbs 4:23). This is an essential part of serving the Lord...and the difficult part!

## Give God Your Best—Be Diligent!

By Byron Smith

Do you profess to be a Christian? As such, how would you characterize your service to God? Are you truly dedicated or have you become negligent in the degree of devotion you possess? Without making a concentrated effort one can easily tend towards complacency or self-satisfaction. One can become so lackadaisical in their relationship with God that they can be better described as being spiritually slothful instead of earnestly devoted. What would you say about yourself? Better yet, what would God say about you? Are you a spiritual stalwart or a spiritual slug, energetic and concerned or lazy and indifferent? The simple point I wish to emphasize is we need to give God our best effort! While one could approach giving God our best from different angles, what the Bible says about being **diligent** establishes the point particularly well.

God has always expected diligence from His people regardless of the age they lived in and regardless of the law they were under. While one could consider many passages from the OT let's presently consider only the book of Deuteronomy in this regard. Moses here gives a series of farewells speeches or "sermons" before his death. Israel had made their way through the wilderness and had come to the plains of Moab, near the Promised Land, and just across the Jordan River. Moses writes to encourage the people to be faithful in their new homeland. As he does this he emphasizes multiple times the importance of being **diligent**. They were to "*diligently keep*" themselves (4:9), to "*diligently teach*" their children God's Word" (6:7), to "*diligently keep the commandments of the LORD*" (6:17), to "*diligently observe and do...*" (24:8), and to "*diligently obey the voice of the LORD*" (28:1). With these words of exhortation, and with many others, Moses firmly established God's dissatisfaction with a casual, careless, and haphazard effort to serve Him. Without diligence He would not be pleased!

God expects nothing less of those who profess to be a Christian today. Peter spoke of the need to diligently add Christian virtues to one's life (II Pet. 1:5-10). One must not become complacent with their standing before God, but must progress through concentrated effort. Likewise, in our efforts to procure heaven we must "*be diligent*" (Heb.4:11). One will not be able to whine, weasel, or wiggle their way into heaven. Remember, God is "*a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*". (Heb. 11:6) So, in anticipation of the Lord's return we need to "be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless". (II Pet. 3:14; cf. Lk. 18:8) Paul exhorted, "*Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*" (Rom. 12:11; cf. Heb. 6:9-12) With regard to God's Word we must "*be diligent...*" as well. (II Tim. 2:15) And lastly observe, diligence is implied in Lk. 13:23-24. Jesus said, "*Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter*

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and will not be able." One must "strive" (from *agon*) or "agonize" to enter through the narrow gate. This suggests that tremendous effort is required. Yes, many desire to be saved but will not be saved because they are unwilling to "strive". They are not diligent and without it God is dissatisfied. I urge you, be **diligent**, give God your best. He certainly deserves it!

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### ***Trends . . .***

A poll of American teenagers by the Josephson Institute found that 30% reported stealing from a store within the last year, 83% said they lied to their parents, 64% admitted to cheating on tests . . . however, 93% indicated that they were satisfied with their own character and ethics, and 77% claimed that "when it comes to doing what is right, I am better than most people I know." - **via AFP News, 12/1/08**

**1 Timothy 4:12** "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (From bulletin of Collegevue church, Columbia, TN)

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### **More about the Spruce Pine church of Christ...**

We are undenominational (1 Pet. 5:2)  
We worship in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24)  
We preach ONLY the word of God (2 Tim. 4:2)  
We are a closely-knit spiritual family (Eph. 4:16)

### **Times of Services**

Sunday.....	Bible study	10:00 AM
	Worship	11:00 AM
	Evening Worship	6:30 PM
Wednesday....	Bible study	7:00 PM

### **Directions**

From Hwy 19 E in Spruce Pine, follow 226 South to McHone Road (located just before the Mitchell Veterinary Clinic). Once you turn onto McHone Road, turn right into the second driveway. You will see our sign at the top of the hill.

Call **(828) 467-1463** for more information

## Is the Conscience a Safe Guide?

By Mark J. Ward

Have you ever heard the expression, "*Let your conscience be your guide.*"? Many people today sincerely believe that their conscience is a proper and safe guide in religion. Let us look to a few passages of Scripture and see what God tells us about this important subject.

Passages that mention "conscience" in the New Testament

- **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.*"

- **Acts 24:16**, "*And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*"

- **Romans 14:7**, "*Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.:*"

- **Romans 14:12**, "*But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*"

Note the following truths:

1. Saul of Tarsus thought he was right/correct while following his conscience in persecuting Christians (Acts 23:1). He was religious, his conscience was wrong and he thought he was right. Many people today fit this category.

2. If we violate the conscience of another person or our

## Strange Doctrine

*Author Unknown*

It is, in Fact:

"strange doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3)

If its Foundations are:

- "myths" (1 Tim. 1:4)
- "endless genealogies" (1 Tim. 1:4)
- "controversial questions and disputes about words" (1 Tim. 6:4)
- "foolish and ignorant speculations" (2 Tim. 2:23)

And its Fruits are:

- "speculation" (1:4)
- "quarrels" (2 Tim. 2:23)
- "unprofitable and worthless" (Tit. 3:9)

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## Sound Doctrine

*Author Unknown*

It is, in Fact:

"sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:6)

If its Foundations are:

- "by faith" (1 Tim. 1:4)
- "trustworthy statements" (1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8)

And its Fruits are:

- "furthering the administration of God" (1 Tim. 1:4)
- "love from a pure heart, good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5)

## “Please, Daddy, Won’t You Go!”

*Author Unknown*

A little girl’s bright shining eyes with face aglow,  
Says: “Daddy, It’s time for church-Let’s Go!  
They teach us there of Jesus’ love, of how he died for all,  
Upon the cruel cross to save those who on Him will call.”  
“Oh, no,” said Daddy, “Not today. I’ve worked hard all week,  
And I must have one day of rest; and I’m going to the creek.  
For there I can relax and rest; and fishing is fine they say.  
So run along; don’t bother me, we’ll go to church some day.”  
Well months and years have passed away,  
but Daddy hears that plea no more;  
“Let’s go to Bible school.” Those childhood days are over.  
And Daddy’s grown old, life’s almost through,  
He finds time to go to church, but what does daughter do?  
She says: “Oh Daddy, not today-I stayed up half the night;  
I know you know that church can wait...you understand my plight!  
Then Daddy lifts a trembling hand to  
brush away the tears,  
As again he hears the pleading voice,  
distinctly through the years.  
He sees a small girl’s shining face  
upturned, with eyes aglow,  
As she says, “It’s time for Bible  
school; please,  
Daddy, won’t you go?”

**“Train up a child in the way he  
should go, and when he is old he  
will not depart from it.”** (Prov. 22:6)



own conscience, we sin (Romans 14; I Corinthians 8).

3. God's Word is truth (John 8:31,32; 17:17) and we need to learn to "train" our consciences to be in harmony with that truth, the true Will of God.

4. When we properly read, study and follow God's Word, our consciences should mirror God's Will for man to-day...Then, knowing what is right, our **properly educated consciences** will be bothering us when we do wrong! Isn't it great that God made man with a conscience to help us in this regard? But we must have properly trained consciences, lest we THINK we are right when we might be wrong.

5. Paul taught us to follow him AS HE FOLLOWED CHRIST (See I Cor. 11:1). In the same way, we should follow our consciences AS WE FOLLOW GOD'S WILL (Acts 23:1; Rom. 14; I Cor. 8; Col. 3:16,17). So, the conscience alone is NOT a safe guide, but the properly aligned conscience (in harmony with God's Will on various matters) is to be followed. Wouldn't that mean that the "guide" is really God's Word, rightly divided, and that both our consciences and our actions should be in harmony with that? Thus, the necessity of training our consciences properly.

We are not "born" with consciences that are properly aligned with God's Word. The "paradox" is that we are to not violate our consciences, but our consciences might NOT be in harmony with the Will of God at our current stage of spiritual development. This will take GROWTH in God's Word on possibly many topics in order to correct this. It takes Bible reading, Bible study and spiritual exercise to properly determine right from wrong. Then, (and only then) our consciences will be a safe guide. Let's all seek to live our lives by following consciences that are in line with God's

# Control Your Temper

by Andy Mitchell

Abraham Lincoln's secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, was angered by an army officer who accused him of favoritism. Stanton complained to Lincoln, who suggested that Stanton write the officer a sharp letter. Stanton did, and showed the strongly worded message to the President. "What are you going to do with it?" Lincoln inquired. Surprised, Stanton replied, "Send it." Lincoln shook his head. "You don't want to send that letter," he said. "Put it in the stove. That's what I do when I have written a letter while I am angry. It's a good letter and you had a good time writing it and feel better. Now, burn it, and write another." Sometimes it's best to let things cool before we speak, or we may end up saying things we will surely regret later. God said it best when he said, ***"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:"*** (Jam. 1:19)

***"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."*** (Prov. 16:32) It takes discipline and diligence, but it is possible to learn, because we are commanded to do so. ***"Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools."*** (Eccl. 7:9) ***"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."*** (Col. 3:8) Replace your anger with forgiveness, patience, and love.

Where are you learning your temper? ***"Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul."*** (Prov. 22:24-25) Be careful who you hang around. Who wants to be friends with an angry man? Do you get angry and irritable over petty things? Winston Churchill said, "A man is about as big as the things that make him angry." When you're angry you are the one who usually suffers the most. Think about this one. With tongue-in-cheek, someone said, "For every minute you are angry you lose 60 seconds of happiness."

# TEN REASONS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

By David Riggs

1. The Bible yields food for the soul. It has the milk necessary for the spiritual growth of the babe, and strong meat to sustain the older, mature Christian. (See 1 Pet. 2:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14).
2. A knowledge of the truth and obedience to it is necessary to be made free from sin. (See John 8:31-32; 1 Pet. 1:22).
3. The Bible reveals God's view of man. It enables the student to see himself as God sees him, for the Bible is God's mirror of the soul. (See James 1:21-25).
4. A working knowledge of the Bible arms one against the difficulties and hardships of life. It has a message to cover every condition and problem. It can be used in every emergency from the cradle to the grave. (See Rom. 15:4).
5. The knowledgeable Christian is able to comfort and edify the discouraged and brokenhearted. (See Col. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:14).
6. The Scriptures contain all good works that are pleasing to God, and give all things that pertain to life and godliness. (See 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).
7. One must study the Bible to have the approval of God, to be a ready workman, and to handle correctly the Word of truth. (See 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15).
8. A knowledge of the Bible is the only safeguard against fatal error. (See Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1).
9. The Scriptures are able to build us up and to give us a home in heaven. (See Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:15).

The Bible will be our standard of judgment in the last day. (See John 12:48; Rev. 20:12).