

HOW LONG ARE YE SLACK?

John Isaac Edwards

Joshua said unto the children of Israel, *“How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?”* (Josh. 18:3). Joshua stirred the people of God to possess the land promised by God. In essence he is saying: How long will you wait? How long will you put off? How long are you going to waste time? Why are you so slow to go? How long will you neglect? Till when are ye remiss? This is a good question for us today. How long are you slack...

1) TO TEACH OTHERS. We are taught to teach. The Lord commissioned, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...”* (Mt. 28:19-20). Paul wrote, *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”* (2 Tim. 2:2). The Hebrew writer exhorted, *“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers...”* (Heb. 5:12). The only way others will come to the Lord is as they are taught. Jesus said, *“It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of*

God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (Jn. 6:45).

2) TO CONVERT THE ERRING. James instructed, *“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins”* (Jas. 5:19-20). There are those who have wandered away. These need to be brought back into the way! Why not get to it today?

3) TO VISIT YOUR BRETHREN. The religion God accepts as pure and faultless is one that visits. *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction...”* (Jas. 1:27). To visit is to look after and take care of. Such will determine the destiny of all (Mt. 25:31-46). I like what Paul said to Barnabas, *“Let us go again and visit our brethren...and see how they do”* (Acts 15:36). How are our brethren doing? We may never really know, until we go and visit and see. What are we waiting for?

4) TO PRACTICE HOSPITALITY. Christians are to be a hospitable people. *“... given to hospitality”* is the admonition of Paul in Romans 12:13. Peter penned, *“Use hospitality one to another without grudging”* (1 Pet. 4:9). You can’t spell h-o-s-p-i-t-a-l-i-t-y without the word “hospital.” That’s a place of care! The word “hospitality” literally means “love of strangers.” In order for folks to know how much we care, our love must be expressed! Each of us is challenged to be a Gaius today. Paul said of him, *“...whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy”* (Rom. 16:23, NIV).

5) TO OBEY THE GOSPEL. The gospel has lots of value. It is God’s saving power! Paul declared, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation...”* (Rom. 1:16). The gospel must be obeyed, to be effective! Peter asked, *“...what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”* (1 Pet. 4:17). The Bible answers: *“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power”* (2 Th. 1:7-9). To

be slack to obey the gospel is to neglect salvation! *"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...?"* (Heb. 2:3-4). Don't put off salvation! Be like those in the book of Acts who obeyed *"immediately"* (Acts 9:18), *"straightway"* (Acts 16:33), *"the same hour"* (Acts 16:33), *"the same day"* (Acts 2:41). Why? You may not have another day. You may not even have another hour! *"...now is the accepted time..."* (2 Cor. 6:2). *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16).

6) TO REPENT AND PRAY. Remember Simon of Acts 8? His is a remarkable story. Before Philip, a gospel preacher, came to town, he was a deceptive man. Simon "...

used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one" (Acts 8:9). Yet, he was afforded the privilege of hearing, believing and obeying the gospel of Christ (Acts 8:13). Soon after his initial obedience, he found himself in a very bad state. Peter said unto him, *"Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity"* (Acts 8:20-23). What a blessing, that Simon was given space to repent! Through repentance and prayer, this child of God could

receive forgiveness and be rescued from perishing! Simon's response: *"Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me"* (Acts 8:24). If this time finds you like Simon, your heart is not right with God, whether it be sin in thought, in word or in deed (one is as bad as another), don't wait. Repent and pray. Forgiveness can be yours today!

Whatever the word of the Lord says we need to do, let's get to it. James said, *"...to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin"* (Jas. 4:17). In the words of the prophet Azariah, *"Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded"* (2 Chr. 15:7, ASV).

SOMETHING FOR EACH ONE

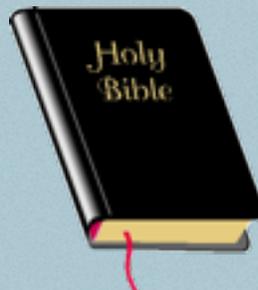
- Each one find one (Jn. 1:41).
- Each one bring one (Jn. 1:42).
- Each one teach one (2 Tim. 2:2).
- Each one win one (Prov. 11:30).

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