



June 15, 2008

Do, Or Do Not

A famous scene from one of the Star Wars movies was the failure of Luke Skywalker to raise his submerged spacecraft from a bog. He walked away frustrated stating that he could not only to be surprised when the diminutive Yoda did so. Yoda tells Luke, “Do, or do not, there is no try.” There is magic involved here but the principle is one that we face when making decisions every day. We have to decide to do what we can and then put it into action. Unfortunately, there are many, like Luke, who will shun doing things that they are capable of accomplishing and turn back at the first obstacle or frustration. The life of a Christian is going to be filled with two types of hardships. Those that come upon us because we are human and therefore subject to the normal pains of life, and the added trials that arise as we strive to be faithful and do the things that God would have us do. Those who are not Christians face the same decisions when faced with the need to obey God. Some turn away because they think that they cannot live the life that God wants one to and turn away from active obedience with a fatal resignation. It is no wonder that many false doctrines are appealing as they present a range of passive ways in which one can believe and be “saved” without the need to be involved. Many state that they are Christians but find it difficult, or even unnecessary, to commit themselves to the Lord. Surprisingly these same individuals will take on any number of challenges in their personal lives as long as there is a need or some degree of personal satisfaction involved. Religion is sometimes pursued more for the social and recreational value that it offers rather than placing a priority on knowing what God’s will is. The disciples were faced with the same dilemma as they listened to the teachings of Christ. When Jesus explained the difficulty that one who was rich had in following him, they asked, “**Who then can be saved?**” (Matt 19.25). Christ answered, “**With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.**” (Matt 19.26). There is work involved in learning the scriptures. There is work involved in obeying the Gospel, and there is work to

be done in remaining faithful. For some, this is too daunting a task and they turn away hoping for the best perhaps thinking that God will understand and somehow they will be alright. Paul stated that God now commands all men to repent (**Acts 17.30**). If we truly have faith in God, and we desire to serve him, we must realize that he has made it possible for us to do that. God does not expect us to do what we are unable to perform but we have to ask ourselves if we are doing all that we can or should. Paul states, “**For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.**” (2 Cor 8.12). Each person who comes in contact with the Gospel is at a different stage of their lives and faced with various problems. As Paul pointed out in the passage above, we must first have a willing mind. We must be willing to learn and search for the truth which God has revealed. Paul, speaking of the revelation of God to man, revealed the purpose for this. “**That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us...**” (Acts 17.27). God has not presented us with an impossible task. We make things harder than they have to be through a variety of means. Our past may hinder us. We may think that we are too sinful to be saved. We might fear breaking traditions of our families and loved ones. Whatever these reasons are, they are not created by God. We have to make a decision to seek the Lord and do what he wants us to. We have to find ways of using what abilities we have to serve him and lead others to do the same. This is not insurmountable. Only our slavery to our own inhibitions will stop us. God will not. Paul gives the reason for obedience clearly. Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. If we really want to serve God, I am a firm believer that he will make a way for us to do that but we have to be willing and believe and that we can. Do, or do not. There is no try!

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