



Today's Sermons

Morning: "In Christ, We Have..."
Evening: James: Practical Christianity

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FOR THE RECORD	
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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am
AM Worship...11:00am
PM Worship:...6:00pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am
"Back to the Bible"
AM 580 WSKS
93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm &
Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

Is Baptism A Work?

Tim Canup

When baptism is suggested as a command necessary to salvation, Ephesians 2:8-9 is often cited, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast" and the conclusion drawn that baptism is a work, therefore, it cannot be necessary. The Bible is infallible (there are no contradictions or errors). Therefore, our interpretations of any passage must be in harmony with all other passages. With Paul's statement in mind, consider what James wrote in 2:17, 24, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone...Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Is salvation by works or is it not?

In Ephesians, Paul spoke of the grace of God coupled with faith in connection with salvation. The word "faith" here is literally, "the faith" and is a reference to the Gospel system of faith. Paul said it is "a gift of God," meaning man did not come up with it. Now, Paul said it is not of works and James said without works there can be no salvation, which seem to be a direct contradiction. So, how can we harmonize these two references to works?

Continued Inside



Whoever keeps commandments keeps their life,
but whoever shows contempt for their ways will die.
- PROVERBS 19:16

The fact is there are two different types of works mentioned in the Bible: works of merit and works of obedience. Ephesians 2 refers to works of merit (as well as Titus 3:5; Romans 4:1f). There is no work we can do to earn our salvation; it comes only through obedience to the Gospel (Hebrews 5:9). James 2, on the other hand, refers to works of obedience (as did Peter in Acts 10:35 “worketh righteousness”). Therefore, there is no contradiction at all between Paul and James.

What is the difference between a work of merit and a work of obedience? A work of merit is something we do, which we offer to God in hopes of receiving His blessing (that is, salvation). A work of merit therefore would have to originate with man, the one offering it to God. However, something commanded by a higher authority cannot be a work of merit. When a parent or employer commands a child or employee to do a certain task, it is obligated upon them to do it!

What about baptism? Many have merely asserted that baptism is a work of merit; however, there is no passage that supports this. In fact, baptism is a command of God (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38); therefore, it cannot be a work of merit. Notice what Paul wrote in Colossians 2:12, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of **the operation of God**, who hath raised him from the dead.” Baptism is now a work of merit, but rather, as Paul said, is “an operation of God.” When we by our faith obey God’s command to be baptized, it is where God removes our sin. Baptism, as well as Jesus’ commands to have faith (John 8:24), repent of sins (Luke 13:3), and confess Him as the Christ (Matthew 10:32-33) are all works of obedience spoken of in James 2:17-26.

Some have suggested Abraham in Romans 4:1f as an example of one saved by faith without any works. However, consider James 2:21-22 “Was not Abraham our father **justified by works**, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how **faith wrought with his works**, and **by works was faith made perfect**?” Abraham was not saved by works of merit, rather by works of obedience!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Oct 25 – Song Practice
- Nov 1 – Men’s Business Meeting & Ladies’ Class
- Nov 8 – Preach & Eat – 1:30 Worship
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell
- Wireless Internet Password: 94615548

Preacher, What Do You Think About Dancing And The Prom

—Author Unknown

Let me emphasize that it does not matter what I think. It is what the Bible says that counts (John 12:48). Everything about dancing is against God and righteousness! It is the instigator of all kinds of evil. Statistics show that 70-80 % of unwed mothers say their permissiveness started on the dance floor.

The word which best describes dancing in the Bible is “*lasciviousness*.” This Greek word is translated “*lasciviousness*” six times (Mark 7:22; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 1 Peter 4:3; Jude 4); “*wantonness*” two times (Rom. 13:13; 2 Peter 2:18); and “*filthy*” one time (2 Peter 2:7). The word means: “*absence of restraint, indecency, shameless conduct, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females.*” This describes dancing in every detail!

Herod was so pleased by the dancing of Salome that he promised to give her whatever she asked. This foolish promise cost John the Baptizer his head (Mat. 14:1-12). Sensual desire and lust is the purpose of dancing. If this is not so, why not have one prom night for the boys and another for the girls. Let me make it plain, this is not preacher talk! It is condemned of God and all who participate in it have sinned, whether saint or sinner. Do not think you can come to offer worship unto God and it be acceptable (John 4:24)! Your choice is to “*repent or perish*” (Luke 13:3). Think of the “*judgment to come*” and how you will stand before God (Acts 24:25).

Answer these serious and sobering questions:

1. Is dancing of the world or is it of God (James 4:4)?
2. Does dancing help us set our mind on things above (Col. 3:1-3)?
3. Does it cause us to conform to the world (Rom 12:2)?
4. Does dancing inspire us to holier service in the Lord’s kingdom?
5. Does dancing help us keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27)?
6. Is dancing a love of the world or of God (1 John 2:15-17)?
7. Is dancing abstaining from the appearance of evil (1 Thess 5:22)?
8. Is dancing fleeing from youthful lusts (2 Tim. 2:22)?

Dancing is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). It has never produced more love for God, the church, Bible study, holiness, for teaching the lost, nor for heaven.