



# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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## STRIVING FOR GREATNESS

Jim Stauffer

We all have favorite personalities in history. Those we believe were great at what they did.

Abraham Lincoln, of all our Presidents seems to be the most universally accepted for greatness in that office.

It seems his greatest attribute was searching for the best solution to difficult problems in his governing sphere and patiently considering all the facts before arriving at a decision. Once he determined the right thing to do he was undeterred by his many detractors.

When we study the history of any of our heroes we generally find they followed a similar process. They studied to learn all about the responsibilities of their position. This applies to political, sports or any other great performers we may investigate.

Everyone who achieves greatness does so within his or her position in the overall scheme of things. William Allen White said, "greatness, generally speaking, is an unusual quantity of a usual quality grafted upon a common man." We are all common men capable of greatness. Most of us will never occupy high political office or be inducted into any of the many Halls of Fame. Yet we have the usual quality of every man and simply need to work to build it to an unusual quantity.

Jesus taught His disciples servitude. He was their Master/Teacher and yet He washed their feet. And when they perceived it was out of order for the Master to wash the feet of His disciples, He explained the role of a servant. **John 13:14** *If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, a servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him.* He taught them the need to serve one another.

We find such humble servants throughout the Bible to be examples to us. We can be great at serving the Lord as soon as we learn we are disciples of the One who served all of mankind with the greatest humility ever displayed.

He came to the earth to live in humble surroundings, suffering the rejection of His own countrymen and allowing them in concert with the Roman authorities

to crucify Him on the cross of Calvary (**Phil. 2:5-8**). He did this in order to be a suitable sacrifice for the sins of all men. **1 Pet. 1:18** *knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ: 20 who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, (cf. 2 Cor. 5:14,15; 1 Tim. 2:5,6).*

Many have emulated His walk of love (**Eph. 5:1,2**). Some were the most visible such as the Apostle Paul who was so committed to preaching the truth he overcame what he describes as the relatively light affliction of persecution. **2 Cor. 4:16** *Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (cf. 2 Cor. 11:21-28)*

Others were less visible but just as persistent in the conduct Jesus taught of serving one another. **Acts 9:36** *Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.*

We must determine our role in His service. Whether we are the five, two or one talent man of **Matthew 25**, we learn the greatness of a servant is in serving in the best way one can.

The term great servant sounds initially like an oxymoron but on closer inspection, we see from the example of the Lord, it is exactly what He desires in His disciples. **Matt. 11:11** *Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

Let us go about serving the Master in whatever role fits our abilities and achieve the greatness He desires for us. In doing so we will do our part in expanding the borders of His kingdom.

# Take it to Heart

**Deuteronomy 4:39:** *Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the Lord Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.*

The phrase “*consider it in your heart*” is translated in the NASB as “*take it to your heart.*” This is the phrase we might use today to describe the message God was delivering through Moses in verse 39. The Israelites were to take to heart God’s authority and their role as His chosen people. If they took this to heart, they would also take to heart the commands given in the following chapters.

Taking something to heart involves more than just knowing something. It involves valuing something highly. The commands given to the Israelites before crossing into Canaan were of grave importance. After they were given, Moses said “See, *I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.*” (**Deuteronomy 30:15**) Obeying God’s commandments was not just the most important thing for the Israelites. It was the only important thing. Their choice to obey or disobey God was a matter of life and death.

We should place the same significance on obedience to God today. When doctors tell patients they must take medication to survive physically, it is taken to heart because it is a matter of physical life or death.

Pleasing God is a matter of eternal life or death (**Matthew 25:46**). It is far more significant than physical life and death. Taking God’s Word to heart involves a recognition that pleasing God is what matters in all that we do.

If we understand the significance of pleasing God, we will take to heart the application of His Word in our lives, regardless of the temporal consequences that may result.

The apostle Paul was deeply grounded in unsound Jewish traditions before he was converted to following Jesus (**Galatians 1:14**). It would not have been easy for him to tell the Jews he once was a leader of that he was now opposed to (cf. **Acts 9:23-24**).

We may not suffer as much as Paul, but we must all go through difficult situations in order to please God (**2 Timothy 3:12**). Taking God’s Word to heart means accepting correction from Him, even when it is hard to do so.

This acceptance of His correction should start with a change in oneself. If a doctor tells a patient that he or she needs to take a medication in order to live, the patient most likely won’t turn to everyone else who has the disease and tell them they need the medication while ignoring his or her own need.

Yet, this is sometimes done with God’s Word. Jesus warned against this in **Matthew 7:1-5**. These verses are often misused to teach that we are not to help others recognize sin in their lives. The Bible does not teach this (**Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:14**). What Matthew 7 teaches in context is the danger

of hypocrisy. Note **Verse 5:** *Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.*

Taking God’s Word to heart involves looking first at what we ourselves need to change so we can see clearly to help others cure the problem of sin, unlike the Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day who bound “heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves [would] not move them with one of their fingers” (**Matthew 23:4**).

We are in a life or death struggle for our soul. In all we think, say, and do, let us take God’s Word to heart and allow it to guide our lives.

by Michael Hickox

## DISOBEDIENCE

### Ways of Disobeying

#### Old Testament Examples:

Are you conversant with Old Testament history? *Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.* (**1 Cor. 10:6**) *Now these things happened unto them by way of examples; and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come.* (**1 Cor. 10:11**) In this chapter Paul mentions a number of sins committed by the Israelites and how, for their disobedience, they were destroyed warning us not to be like them, and concludes, *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* These examples can be of no value to us unless we acquaint ourselves with them.

#### Moses and Aaron (**Num. 20:2-12**)

There was no water for the congregation. They complained bitterly of their lot. *And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, that it give forth its water; and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their cattle drink. And Moses took the rod from before Jehovah, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and smote the rock with his rod twice; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their cattle.* (**Num. 20:7-11**) But Jehovah was not pleased with Moses and Aaron. They took too much glory to themselves. Moses said, *Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?* He also smote the rock twice. They took credit to themselves and did not do as Jehovah commanded; and Jehovah said, *Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.* Moses certainly believed in the existence of God, for God had just spoken to him, but for the time being his confidence, his trust, was in self more than in God, and God said, *Ye believed not in me.* The only reason for any one’s departing from God’s way, knowingly, is lack

of confidence in God.

*Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1,2)*

They were priests, and it was their duty to offer sacrifices and to burn incense. But on this occasion they went beyond what God said, *and offered strange fire before Jehovah which he had not commanded them. And there come forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah.* It is a dangerous thing to do in religion that which God has not commanded.

*Washing Hands May Be Sinful (Mark 7)*

Jesus shows us that so essential a thing as washing hands, if imposed as a religious ceremony, becomes an act of disobedience.

## **Like His Teacher** **By Russ Bowman**

*"A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40).*

It appears to me that many "religious" people in our day have lost sight of the important concept of discipleship. Our English word "disciple" is a translation of the Greek term "mathetes" and means properly, "a learner; a pupil." Of all the terms which God uses to describe His people, the term "disciple" is the most common. We think of followers of Jesus Christ as "Christians" and that is an accurate designation (**Acts 11:26**), yet more often than not God refers to His people as disciples. In the first five books of the New Testament it is used some 225 times and that fact should impress upon our minds the relationship that we sustain to our Lord. We are to be learners, followers, and imitators of Jesus Christ, for those expressions are at the very heart of the concept of discipleship. When Jesus instructed the apostles to *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28:19)*. He was instructing them to encourage people to learn from, follow, and imitate Him. That is the fundamental function of a Christian. After all, Jesus states in **Jn. 8:31**, *"If you abide in My word, then you are My disciples indeed."*

However, I fear that we sometimes lose sight of that all important goal. We seem to confuse "religiosity" for discipleship. "Religiosity" is simply "affected or excessive devotion to religion" and for many folks -- at least in outward appearance -- the concept of Christianity is really about devotion to some creed or tradition or religious organization. How else can you explain why some 85% of people in this country consider religion at "least somewhat" important to them (according to a 2002 Gallup poll), while we languish in dishonesty, alcoholism, sexual immorality, violence, and wickedness? I don't believe only 15% of people in this country are responsible for all the evils of our day. Yet, I know a lot of folks who "go to church" but who live pretty much the way that they want to. Being "religious" is not equal to discipleship.

So what's the solution? Read the above quotation from **Lk. 6:40**. A perfectly trained disciple will be like his teacher. My job is to be like Christ.

I spent an hour or two last week reading the gospel of Mark. No interruptions. No searching for sermon or class material. Just a simple consideration of the text. And when I finished, I was reminded of the simplicity of the gospel of Christ -- Who He was, what He did and what He wants. What He wants is salvation for all mankind through obedient faith -- discipleship. Who He was and what He did provided the example for those of us who want to be true disciples. And while volumes have been written about the qualities of Jesus Christ that are worthy of exaltation and emulation, I was impressed again with a couple of things that stand out about my Lord. And, as a disciple, these things I need to focus upon and develop more fully in myself.

Jesus consistently manifested compassion upon those who were in need. You cannot read the gospels -- particularly Mark -- without being impressed with Jesus' power. Yet, more often than not, that power was manifest in response to some pitiable man or woman in need. He saw those diseased, possessed, crippled, maimed, blind, hungry, or merely unguided, and *"was moved with compassion" (Mk. 6:34)*. And that compassion for those physically wanting was merely the temporal expression of a God that is ultimately compassionate toward all of us because of our spiritual failures. Thus, the One Who raised others from death, willingly died because of His compassion for sinful plight. True discipleship demands that I develop such compassion for those in need, whether that need be physical or spiritual.

Jesus consistently manifested patience with His critics. The Jewish leaders of His day did not like Jesus, apparently because of His great popularity with the multitudes. Thus, He and His disciples are constantly hounded and criticized by the scribes and Pharisees. Yet, I stand impressed with His patience. He could have blasted them with heaven's fire, yet He calmly and pointedly tried to direct their minds toward truth. And this in spite of their own dishonesty and malicious intentions. I become so irate with those who abuse and ignore God's Word. And, like most folks, I'm inclined to be irritated with those who unjustly criticize me. My preferred designs in such circumstances are no source of pride, I'm afraid. But if I am to be a disciple, I need to imitate the Master in such situations. I need to learn patience.

Jesus consistently manifested a complete commitment to God's will. God's will demanded some difficult things of Jesus. The incarnation -- God coming to earth to live as a man. Humiliation. Scorn and reproach. Faithless followers. Self-serving multitudes. Stubborn opposition. Hunger and thirst. Disappointment. Ingratitude. A painful and violent death. Yet, through it all -- no matter what the demand -- He was devoted to the will of the Father. May God help me to learn and imitate my Master in the total and complete devotion to God's will. Discipleship demands it.

Let's remember, folks, God doesn't just want people who go to church on occasion, or offer lip service to religion. He wants disciples of Jesus Christ.

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**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study  
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship  
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship  
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

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**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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## NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: GRANT CLOTHIER AND J.R. DANIEL.

JAN PATRICK IS IN ROOM 2111 OF O.P. REGIONAL.

STEVE WIMP IS IN REHAB AT TRINITY NURSING, 62ND AND MASTIN IN SHAWNEE.

BIBLE CLASSES: SUNDAY: GOSPEL OF JOHN - RON PECK - WEDNESDAY: THE THEME OF THE BIBLE - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF ISRAEL/CHURCH



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10