

# DUTY OF MAN

By: Bill Richardson      Edited by: Bill Kelly

Giving thought to the title of this study should get us into the thinking process right away quickly. When I was going over in my mind what principle or area of study I wanted to pursue this time, my mind engaged into the responsibility realm and for whatever reason duty jumped out.

Of late my heart has been telling me that this kind of study effort is my duty. Study, meditation, and learning is a duty, and I have never enjoyed it more since I have been putting my study effort into writing. It is good for me. I think the reason that is true is because I needed it. I am happy, content, and satisfied to the extent I have never been before. This has grown on me, and I believe it is a love growth for my Lord from my association in fellowship with good Elders and the other Saints which make up the Body of Christ at any named Church of Christ. I have been blessed by association to worship and service with several congregations of dedicated worshippers. God bless 'em all.

Addressing first the definition of the subject, note this. The duty of man: “The impelling or controlling force of obligation put into moral and legal action, by conduct and in force of one’s diligent doing of God’s will.” Does this define and or explain, somewhat, the duties of man? Oh, you can take away, add to and rearrange words, but don’t you think that pretty well sums up the definition of our subject?

Well, I’m not going to leave it there. I am going further with it by breaking it down as to individual and collective duties, which are specific responsibilities, and they are outlined and explained in the scriptures. That is my intention and my plan.

First, I want to look at the duty of man to God. I start by saying that man’s first duty is his duty to God. It can be seen by observation that this is not always what man is doing first. We know there are people that do not know God. They do not accept or believe in the living God, and they admit it. Tragic though it is, some do not believe.

The first duty of man is expressed in Deuteronomy 6:5, “*And thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all they might.*” Now I have a question for you. What does “with all” in the cited scripture mean to you? It should mean above all else, God first and always. What is the duty of man? Obedience... yes, that is the duty of man. Love is the root of all obedience, it’s the primary attitude we must have toward God.

Jesus echoed the verse cited above when He commanded us to “*love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as our self*” (Mark 12:30-31). Knowing that it is our duty to love God, to love Him strongly, as Jesus echoed the commandment to love, it is also man’s duty to know love to that depth. In an earlier study writing, which I gave the title “Love,” I am citing a verse of a song titled, “The Love of God.” This is a song which we sing in worship, and I use it again because the words of the verse so ably attempt to express the length and breadth of God’s love.

“Could we with ink the ocean fill and

Were the skies of parchment made?  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,

And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above would

Drain the ocean dry; nor could  
The scroll contain the whole, tho'

Stretched from sky to sky. Oh,  
Love of God, how rich and pure!

How measureless and strong! It  
Shall forevermore endure the Saints'  
And angels' song."

It is the duty of man to know and keep God's commandments. In Deuteronomy 8:6, "*Therefore, thou shall keep the commandments of the Lord they God, to walk in His ways.*" In Deuteronomy 10:12-13, which was commanded of Israel and is applicable to man today, it is said, "*And now what doth the Lord they God require of thee, but to fear the Lord they God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord they God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes.*"

How do we do that? In faith and love, diligently with endurance and fear.... that's how. You know what? We can't leave out anything! It is the duty of man, woman and believing children. Amen! Know here what is said in Micah 6:8. It says, "*He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God.*" God is asking man, us, to be just and merciful to our fellowman and to live in humble obedience to Him. Again this is the echo of Jesus in Matthew 22:39 as he spoke of the "Great Commandment" of love. Beautiful words of Jesus. Do you know the song we sing, "Wonderful Words of Life," one line of the song, in part, says, "Words of life and beauty, Teach me faith and duty." I tell you, I get emotional sometimes when I get to reading and studying God's Word. It makes me happy. It makes my heart thankful that I'm a Christian. Amen!

Look back over 8:6 and 10:12-13 just above, in Deuteronomy and note the words, which I have underlined. Particularly note the word required. It's a strong word! But is it any stronger than thou shall, or keep My commandments? I ask, "Are failures in fulfilling requirements fearful in your heart?" It should be! To fear God is a duty and a requirement of man.

Note if you will, and I'm sure that you are familiar with this scripture, Ecclesiastes 12:13, where it says, "*.... fear God and keep HIS commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*" Someone said that it could be read, "This is the whole of man." It has been said before, but I'm going to say it again here, "Obedience to duty is an expression of grateful love." Sure it is! "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Our obedience in keeping God commandments is a must and must be motivated by love. Can you give an "Amen" on that? Pray with me that we will let the above duty expressions be predominating in our life of service to him.

Remember, we are studying about the duty of man to God. It is man's duty to worship God. That's our next point. Psalms 96:9 reminds us of that when it says, "*Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before Him, in all the earth.*"

The manifestation of God's holy character is in the lives of the worshipers. Volumes could be written about worship. Many lessons have been presented concerning worship. We in the Church, in love and fear, worship our Lord collectively in assembly at the church building on the first day of the week and also worship mid-week in the evening each week. Individually, we worship Him in our daily life. Praise the Lord and Amen. Another statement of duty is, "*Ye ought to obey God rather men*", that is scriptural, and is set forth in Acts 5:29.

Second, I want to discuss the duty of man to man. The scriptures teach us the action required of man in fulfilling his duty to his fellowman. I don't know a more challenging duty than what is taught in Matthew 7:12 and 23:37. Let me cite them here: *"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS."* It is true that love fulfills the law. In Romans 13:8, we are told, *"Owe no man anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law."* We are told in Galatians 5:14, *"For all the law is fulfilled in one word even in this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

Precious one(s), the Word, the Law, inform us how to fulfill our duty. Let us be diligent in our love for our duty. The Christian has liberty by keeping the law, but is not free to follow the selfish desires of the flesh, the selfish human nature. Man has been called by Christ to demonstrate love by unselfishly serving his fellow man. All that God requires in our treatment of a fellow human being is to treat him, as we ourselves would want to be treated. (I Timothy 1:5) explains it by saying that the purpose of the commandment is faith. To make it more noticeable, I give you a definition of a good conscience. "It's the octane of a well-trained mind."

In Matthew 25, our Lord enumerates a list of things that man should do in doing for others, and if done, what the results are. The Lord said, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of them my brethren, you did it to Me." In essence, here is what the Lord said to do: 1) If a man is hungry, give him food; 2) If a man is thirsty, give him something to drink; 3) If a man is a stranger and in need, take him in and care for him; 4) If a man is naked, clothe him; 5) If a man is sick, visit him; 6) If a man is in prison, go to him. Need I say, if you visit and go to someone sick or in prison, you don't talk about the weather? The bottom line is that it is the duty of man to care for and satisfy the needs of his fellow man. And also, there is the parable of the Good Samaritan, in Luke 10:25-37. It tells of the mercy that man must have for man. Showing mercy through acts of love, well.... It just doesn't get better than that.

Next, let our thinking and discussion of man's duty be as disciples. It would be debatable, I am sure, should one be bold enough to try and place priority on the duty-list of man as servant, as a disciple, if you will, as to what to do first or foremost in his responsibility. I won't say, because I suppose it would depend upon circumstances, conditioned as to a particular time and place in which man found himself. However, I am beginning in my study-thoughts here about duty as disciples, by citing Matthew 28:18, 19 first, because as much as anything, it ends with Amen! To me that is, "be it so."

In the referenced scripture Jesus is addressing His disciples, and He charged them then, and it is His charge to us today. **HERE IS THAT CHARGE.** And Jesus came to speak to them saying, *"ALL AUTHORITY has been give ME in Heaven and on earth. GO therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with always, even unto the end of the world."* Amen! I ask, has our duty been accomplished?

"When our journey is completed, If to God we  
have been true, fair and bright our home  
in glory, our enraptured soul will view  
Hold to God's unchanging hand, hold to God's  
Unchanging hand: Build our hopes on things  
Eternal. Hold... to God's unchanging hand.

Please go back and read above what was cited in Matthew 28:18, 19, then read what is said below. Wait now! Please go back and read as requested before you continue reading the next paragraphs.

The central task of the Church, the duty of man, the works of the disciples, and the responsibility of the Saints, collectively, as challenged in the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations is an awesome task. IT IS THE CENTRAL TASK. I don't know how we could take that out of context. I don't know how we can hide from it. We can't! We must accept our task; it's our duty.

When we were baptized, we in essence made a promise to be loyal to our Savior, our God, and in being loyal we must obey His commandments. We must be about His charge of going and making disciples. Disciples begetting disciples.... that's the business the Church is in.

Notwithstanding what is said above, the duty of man as a disciple is to work out his own salvation. Philippians 2:12,13, Paul is speaking and said, *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and do for His good pleasure."*

Now tell me, is God our partner? He is! It's like the good preacher said. "Without God man is nothing." God will always be with us as long as we remain faithful in our duty, doing His will. Duty sure does cover lots and lots of territory, doesn't it?

As a disciple it is man's duty to forgive one another. Look at Galatians 6:1. There we are told, *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted."* Note in the scripture of Galatians 6:1, that man is told not only to forgive, but how he should forgive (in a spirit of gentleness), and also man is given a warning to which he should heed. Man should pay attention to all warnings and commandments.

There is another very beneficial and warning-type scripture on forgiving in Matthew 6:14, 15. The warning reads this way, *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

You know... I have heard both Christian men and women say, "I can't or won't forgive" for whatever wrong had been done to them. And they said that and having never gone to the person and talked it out. That is about as tragic as it gets. God forgive them. Here is something else that is thought provoking. God will never forgive anyone or us unless we ask Him for forgiveness. We must ask or beg with sincerity of heart to be forgiven. Other scriptures on forgiveness: Luke 6:37; Ephesians 4:32; and 2 Corinthians 2:6-11. And those are not all the scriptures, which speaks of forgiveness!

As a disciple, it is man's duty to bear each other's burdens. Look again at Galatians 6:2-5. Verse 2: *"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."* Help your neighbor with his weakness and burdens. The law of Christ is to love your neighbor as yourself. Galatians 5:15 says, *"But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of the other."* Galatians 6:3, *"For if a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."* Apart from Christ we are nothing. The person that is proud of spiritual attainments does not understand his dependence on God. Galatians 6:4, *"But let every man prove his own work and shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in others."* We should make sure that our own work, our conduct, is what God wants. Only then do we find true satisfaction.

Comparing ourselves with the weakness of others is never Christ-like. Galatians 6:5, "*For every man shall bear his own burden.*" Every man, with the help of God, shall perform his duty. Every man must be responsible for himself before God. We each have burdens that no one can fully share. Christ's way is to accept responsibility for ourselves, and we are to share or help with the burdens of others who are weak and in need of help.

Will God do for us what we can do, should do, or must do, for others and ourselves? I say no! God will do or help us to do those things, which we are unable to do. Oft-times there are things which we are responsible to do, and don't, because we mistakenly think that God will do it. How's that? Well, all can and must agree that we need God, and God assures us that we will receive according to what we have done. We reap what we sow. Doing our duty is as sowing to the Spirit and we will of the Spirit reap. Amen!

Relating to what has been said above caused me to say, "We need Thee every hour!" That in turn caused me to think of the song, "I Need Thee Every Hour." There's a chain reaction here, because I had another thought. What I'm thinking now is that sometime we may be guilty of thinking that the capabilities within us are such that we classify them in our mind as inadequate. If that were so, or thought to be so, I admit, it is frightening. I've done it, it has happened to me. It is cause for concern and should be looked at and evaluated.

In this situation one should be concerned. In this situation one should do some looking and evaluation. It takes determination to be honest with oneself. It's something to pray about. Remember, the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Pray for wisdom. Pray for knowledge and understanding. You will learn. It's guaranteed! You will find that God has helped you and your talents have increased, your duties have broadened, your desires have flooded your heart and your energy level has risen and is ready to be released in doing. And you find out in doing your duty that you can and that your talents have increased. It is identifiable! It is love and faith working in you, that's what it is!

You know what? You have been motivated! God was your partner and that's how it happened. Why, you ask? Because you took the right step toward God, and He ran toward you. That's your duty, and that is what God wants.

God's existence is eternal, spoken as everlasting to everlasting. Man's duty to God will always be. The listing of all the parts, which go together to make the whole, that which is called the duty of man is not, however, recognized to the same degree by everybody, and we've talked about it. It is still tragic and sad. We must not let that discourage us. We must grow in love for God and increase in our duty performance, working toward becoming five talent servants to our Master. I need an AMEN...NOW!

In this study we have only discussed but a few of the duty parts. It can be recognized that to list and analyze all would be beyond the scope of this study writing. I do want to list one more and reference some scriptures that will give a good starting place should it become a study project in the future.

I want to jog our memory one more time to say our subject in this writing is Duty of Man, and I want to say that it is also the duty of us all to study.

The last duty part in this writing which is made and scripture references are listed for benefit to anyone who would engage in private study is: Duty of men and women in the marriage relationship. Note these scriptures: Genesis 2:8-24, Leviticus 20: 14-21, 19:3-9, Matthew 22:23-30, Mark 10:2-12, Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7:1-40, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:22, 23, Colossians 3:18,19, 1 Timothy 5:14, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Peter 3:7.

These are not all the scriptures that address the point of man/woman relationships and duties to be exercised between them in the marriage, parental, or other relationships. Always use a good reference Bible in your study of any subject. You will be blessed. Observation of these relationships in society, the courts, in the Church, to God and Christ gives cause for concern to our responsibility in life, including relationships.

The scriptures and commentary that have been set forth in this study have been of great benefit to me. These wonderful scriptures and principles, which were cited and studied were motivating to my conscience (my mind), and it is my prayer that you who read and study this lesson will accept all truth herein and that it will be a conscience (mind) server for you to do what is right in obedience to Jesus Christ.

Speaking to conscience, do you know that the well-trained conscience is equal to the knowledge, abiding faith, and love that we expose or subject to our mind? It is true! With confidence, I say that you are studying this lesson with faith and love, and that it will be of great benefit to you. It will be the blessing which our Savior Jesus Christ promises.

With confidence I say, that you desire to be blessed. Blessed to gain, more knowledge, (true abiding Biblical knowledge), and it is a blessing, which is associated with personal responsibilities. Biblical knowledge creates a desire to seek, to search diligently, and accept when found the associated responsibilities. It is associated with, and was an active part of the precious obedient of the ones' on the Day of Pentecost. And please remember that you, as are all who is obedient by abiding faithfully in the Lord's Church until death will be victorious. Heaven will (by the Grace of God) be your home to live eternally with God and all the other faithful Saints of Christ's church. Amen!

The church that I am speaking of cost the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is His Body, His Kingdom, which is His Church. Again I implore you, be an obedient dedicated part of His church, the church we read about in the Bible. You cannot pass through Heaven's gate if you are not in His Body, (His Church), and it is the only church that you read about in the New Testament. That is the truth. That is what the Bible teaches.

I invite you to view my Website, [www.geocities.com/dubbyt](http://www.geocities.com/dubbyt) and please note other consecrated writings. There is a writing posted that I am sure you will want to view and copy. The writing title is, "The Church of The Bible, Christ's Church." It has a two-page enclosure, which has the title, "What Must I Do To Be Saved."

Please study both Biblical-Truth with an honest and receptive heart for the truth and motivation of obedience. You will be blessed! God bless you for studying with me on this great subject.

Great must be our concern and actions in effecting our duty as God would have us do and as He has commanded. If we are going to get to Heaven, it will be by the Grace of God and us being found faithful.

Let's pray that we will always do what duty demands and God commands of us. Pray also that we will be increased in knowledge, wisdom, and zeal in doing the will of God, giving thanks to His for creating us and loving us first.

I love you and thank you for us studying together on this most needed subject.

God bless... and Joy, Peace, Happiness and Love always.

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## “THE FOOL HATH SAID...”

By: *Bill Irby*

A recent study of Psalm 14 just ran headlong into current events. You may have heard that a purported comedienne made an interesting comment in her acceptance speech of an entertainment industry award show (one of their many exercises in rotator-cuff damaging self-celebration). She made fun of people who thank God for their awards and then issued a common and profane challenge to the Lord. Published reports say that she said something on the order of “This award is my god now.”

I am not surprised by these things. The utter disdain that many in the popular culture feel for traditional values is well known. I am sorry that they think that way and I am sorry for them. They will find out that they are wrong one day. I pray that it will not be too late for them. We are to love everybody, even those who think so incorrectly as to endanger their souls.

Psalm 14:1 says, *“The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.”* A little later the Psalmist says that *“The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.”* Notice the connection here between understanding and seeking God. The truth of the existence of God is verifiable by rational means. We have the ability to think. Adequate thought on the subject of God is in a sense a colossal and tragic example of misunderstanding. It is the result of incorrect thought. As the Psalmist ask, *“Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?”* (14:4).

In Psalm 15 the text asks, *“Lord, who shall be abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?”* The answer is *“He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart”* v. 2. Folks can and certainly will continue to say and do all manner of ridiculous things. Unless a person loves God and does His will there is no hope for a home in Heaven. It is a thing of surpassing sadness that people are so foolish as to shut God out of their lives.

I know it makes folks like us mad to hear someone say disparaging things about God. It seems to me that many of the people who say these things are wrapped up in themselves that they forfeited the ability to understand anything real. So, as mad as it makes me, I think it makes me even a bit more sad. Indeed, *“the fool hath said...”*