

Elements of Motivation (Part 4)

Obligation

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I have been showing at the beginning of each sermon that acceptance of Christ's blood and entering into the New Covenant is merely the beginning of a process begun with God's calling. His calling is not an end of and by itself, but rather places us under the obligation of living up to the terms of the New Covenant. If we're going to live up to the terms of the New Covenant it will produce works that must be done, if God's will for us is to be done. This does not make us earn salvation. It rather enables God's creative efforts to be completed.

We're going to begin this sermon in Romans 2: 1-13. As I just alluded to at the beginning of this sermon I have been beginning each one of the sermons in this series with some reference to the requirement that *we do works*. I'm going to very briefly just go through one scripture after another. If you are at all familiar with this section, you'll know what I'm leading to in Romans 2: 13 which it says that it's not just the hearers of the law that are justified before God, but the doers will be justified. This subject is within a context that concerns judgment.

Romans 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

In that verse Paul basically says that anybody participating in what must be the most easily mastered skill is just pulling himself into quicksand. That most easily mastered skill is *judging other people*. Today [in the wake of the breakup of the Worldwide Church of God] the most common judgment is to call Mr. Herbert Armstrong into account, and then say at the end of this, "But I love him." They seem to forget how vulnerable and subject to God's condemnation they put themselves in. Verse 2 reinforces something to us.

Romans 2:2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth.

The implication is that those [in verse 1] who are judging, don't have all the truth in order to make a really factual, fair, unbiased, unprejudiced judgment of whoever it is they are judging.

Romans 2:2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

God alone judges all truth. He is the one who knows all the facts. He alone can arrange them all in the light of perfect righteousness, and that in itself gives God the *right* to judge.

Romans 2: And think thou this, O man, that judges them which do such things, and do the same, that thou shall escape the judgment of God?

In this verse Paul shows the weak position of those judging, in that they are guilty of committing sins that are just as bad as the ones that they are judging. In fact their judgment may be one of those sins. In verse 4 he counsels those judging that they should lay aside their pride and concentrate on God's patience towards themselves, and that He is leading them to repentance.

Romans 2:4-5 Or despise thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads thee to repentance? V5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasure up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

In that verse there is a very interesting contrast between the word *riches* and the word *treasure*. What he is saying is that those who persist in their condemnative judging are in reality treasuring [heaping] up riches of judgment for themselves. From here the subject takes somewhat of a turn.

Romans 2:6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

Keep that in mind -- "Who will render to *every* man according to his deeds." The One who is going to judge according to truth is going to be judging what? He's going to be judging our *works*!

roman 2:7-10 To them . . . [Here's one group that can be judged] . . . who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: 8 But unto them [in the other group] that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that *works* good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: 11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

Turn now II Corinthians 5:10. The same apostle who wrote the book of Romans 2 says this in II Corinthians 5:10:

II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Go back now Romans 2. Verses 6 through 11 are a classic argument for the doing of good works after justification, from the mind and pen from the very man who is accused of saying that there are no works required. But what Paul was saying within the greater context of the entire book is, that while a person is justified by grace through faith, [and this establishes the relationship with God that never existed before because of sin], *good works* are the *effect* of the establishment of that relationship. Good works are the concrete open and public expression of the *reality* of that relationship. The works are the witness that this relationship with God exists.

Let me put it in another way. Just as surely as day follows night, and if our faith truly is in God and we have been justified by grace through faith, the works that will follow will be according to God's will. Paul was saying that living according to God's will should be the natural consequence -- the effect of faith in God. Though we are justified by grace through faith, we're going to be judged according to the works that this relationship or that justification established.

Doesn't it seem logical to you that *anyone* [knowing that he is going to be judged according to his works] would want to at least have some clearly stated absolutes showing him what is expected of him, rather than some merely fuzzy vague statement about loving one another? Don't you think that such a person would want to know authoritatively and absolutely what constitutes love? Let's read verse 7 again.

Romans 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing.

Doesn't that indicate some sort of action, some sort of movement? Those people who have these characteristics are going to seek for glory and honor and immortality -- *eternal life*. By implication it is indicated the person does not yet have these, and he has got to do something in order to have them. He's got to seek them in order to have them. Again that indicates to me activity. It takes work to seek, and we're told here that it happens to be a work that is *patiently* continuous. It is something that is constantly going on. At this point Paul does not specifically define what the good works are, but whatever that good is, it is going to be accomplished by work.

Romans 2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

His judgment is going to be according to truth.

Romans 2:12 For as many as have sinned without law . . .

Now we have a mention of law and sin together in a context of judgment, in a context of works. He brings law into it. We begin to understand that the good works [the things we're going to be judged on how well we do] involves *law*. He's introduced a word that so many find to be repulsive. Why is the term *law* repulsive? Because law implies authority, and human nature doesn't like any authority over it, even if that law is expressing the authority of God. What is

interesting here is that Paul says we're going to be judged according to what we actually know.

Romans 2:12 For as many as have sinned without [or apart from] law shall also perish without [or apart from] law: and as many as have sinned in the law [that is, with the knowledge of the law] shall be judged by the law; 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.)

I don't want to spend the whole sermon on this, but Paul makes it very clear that we are going to be judged according to what we actually know. The implication is the Jew is going to be judged more stringently because he has done his bad works [his sin] with the knowledge of the law. He is within the law. On the other hand the Gentile is still going to be judged, but he's going to be judged on the basis of the fact that he does not *know*, does not understand, does not comprehend the law in the same way, to the same depth, to the same degree as the Jew. There's a very interesting principle of how God is going to judge. "*To whom much is given, much is required.*" The Gentile in this case hasn't been given the law in the way the Jew has, and so the Gentile is not going to be judged as stringently as the Jew. That ought to start shaking you a little bit. The good works he mentioned earlier, right within the context, involve law keeping.

It's obvious to all of us that God wills that we live moral lives, and morality must have standards, and therefore morality is defined by laws. The law sets a standard. We're going to be judged against what we know of God's law, and that's why it says the doers of the law are going to be justified. Let me show you an interesting little twist that the theologians of the world give to their comments on this section in order to excuse themselves, to give them an *out* on verse 13.

They know clearly what it says there. They attempt to justify their "no law" theology against what these verses are saying, that Paul was speaking here of the *natural* man, not the converted man. While that may be partially true, it is avoiding the fact that one of the reasons God gives us His Holy Spirit is to *lead* us into *all* truth. That includes the truth about His law. That includes the truth about the *intent* of the spirit of the law.

The very first thing practically that is recorded in the Sermon on the Mount [beginning in Matthew 5] is Jesus' expansion of the law to include its spirit, showing that to whom this is being revealed is going to be held responsible for a higher level of judgment. We're going to be measured against a higher level of morality. As we are led into the greater depths of God's truth, its effect then is to give us greater, and therefore more responsible knowledge of God's will. This raises the stakes in judgment, because to whom much is given, much is required. We're going to be judged against greater knowledge of the law of God than these people to whom he was directly speaking at this time.

In the broader context of the entire book it becomes clear that each person -- Jew, Gentile, converted, or unconverted -- is judged against what he knows, and is held responsible by God for working to produce obedience at that level. We're not saying at this time that the person is going to lose his salvation. We only have to know that we're going to be judged against a very high standard. This system of judgment is used by men. In school, isn't more expected of a

twelfth grader than of a first grader? Why? Well, for the very principles that I just talked about here. Children in higher grades are held more responsible for knowing and producing than those in lower grades. The courts use this same general system. Adults are held more responsible for their crimes than children, even though both, or each, may be judged for the same crime. The adult will receive a greater degree of punishment.

When I was pastoring the church in North Hollywood, I ran into an interesting situation where a father and a stepson got into a fist fight. The father was a church member, but he was pretty tough. The big 17-year old stepson [who thought he was pretty strong] decided to take on the stepfather. Wham! The first thing you know the step-son was on his backside. He forgot that his stepfather grew up in a pretty tough area, and the stepfather laid him out. Some of the people in Imperial School heard about this because the kid was a student there.

The police came to the father's house and arrested him. The policeman's justification was very simple. "*Did you deck him?*" "*Yes, I did it.*" "*You're guilty.*" "*Why?*" "*Because you're an adult. You should have exercised control.*" That was simple. Even though the kid was in the wrong [he started everything], the stepfather responded in a way that led to his arrest. There was no court trial or anything. The charges were never made. He paid his fine and that was the end of it.

It's the principle that we're talking about here. What *the called* [you and I] must realize is that because of our calling the requirements, and thus the judgment, are stiffer, because we know more than what we did before. That's why Paul makes this statement in Romans 3: 31

Romans 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith?

Does justification by grace with faith do away with the law? "*God forbid!*" Paul says. "*We establish the law!*" If that standard is there against which we're going to be judged, it means we are required to keep the law. Faith [Paul says] actually upholds. That's what the word *establish* means. It upholds, or makes firm, because the law points out what sin is, and the law is the basic guide as to how faith is to be used. It's that simple. Now this leads into what is going to occupy the remainder of this sermon, which is the Fourth Motivational Factor.

I've already talked about the Fear of God, Vision, and Hope. Today we are adding to those three a fourth one: a deep sense of obligation or duty to Christ. This is important because of what it leads to. If that sense of obligation is there -- the sense of duty that we owe Christ something - it produces a deeply held personal loyalty that is given to Him. Obligation's closest synonym is "*duty*." Obligation is produced by a strong and compelling sense of indebtedness for a benefit or service received, or because one feels bound by contract, promise, or law. Obligation is what one owes in return for a favor, or because a law or a promise says that we must give it. It is adherence to duty or obligation which produces loyalty, or we might use the biblical term "*faithfulness*".

We're going to begin in II Timothy 3 which talks about the kind of days that we're living in.

II Timothy 3:1-5 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful,

unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

I want to begin here because I want to give a quick overview of a very powerful and evil attitude that is driving this world. Every single one of us has been victimized by it and we cannot escape being affected by it. This over-riding way of life described II Timothy 3:1-5 is one of the factors that is producing what I call "the welfare mentality". It forces us to concentrate our attention on *self*-satisfaction. It leads us to believe that life, that government, that the employer or society owes us a living. A strong sense of obligation and thus service [especially freely given service and loyalty] are major victims of its onslaught, because it produces in us this attitude that we are owed, rather than *we owe*. Self-satisfaction is the very foundation, the launching pad, the driving force that motivates sin. It is sin's very essence.

Before we go too far here, let's not be deceived into thinking that God does not want us to have satisfaction in life, but rather that human nature, aided by Satan, very easily gets out of control and it goes beyond the bounds of righteous standards. God wants satisfaction to be produced in a different way from what human nature employs. There's the problem. I think that sex is an area where this principle should be able to be very easily seen. God created it, and within the principle of Genesis 1:31, He said "It's very good." It's to be used both for reproduction *and* the binding of a marriage into an evermore closely, intimate, loving, pleasurable and satisfying way, as each partner *gives* and serves the other.

Sex is intended by God for marriage only. However, as we can see from the world around us, if a person [man or woman, or both] does not have a strong sense of obligation to either the mate or to God, or to the promises given when taking vows, or of God's laws, or of his personal relationship with Christ, sex and its use can very easily get out of control. When people seek only their own pleasure in the use of it, then the self-satisfaction becomes a destroyer of marriage and family life, the stability of community, and above all our relationship with God.

A deep sense of duty or obligation motivates to the very important virtue of faithfulness. The Bible uses several metaphors to teach of the perverse satisfaction, what is self-satisfaction, and what it produces. Sin puts us into debt. Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is death. That's what we earn from it. Sin puts us into debt to death, to an amount that is so great that we're unable to pay! It's beyond us!

Turn now to Proverbs 22:7 where we will make use of a principle here and apply this principle to things spiritual.

Proverbs 22:7 The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

Sin puts us into debt to the one that we obeyed while sinning. Once we sin, we are living on borrowed time. This verse says the borrower loses his independence because his life is owed to somebody else. The borrower is no longer his own man. Maybe this verse would mean a little bit

more if you understand the word *servant* is in reality the word that can be translated *slave*. That makes it a little bit more stronger. Sin puts us into slavery. Now here we begin to think about another metaphor that is used by God. It puts us into bondage to the most cruel taskmaster in the universe -- Satan the Devil. It is a bondage that we are *completely* unable to break free of without outside help. Hebrews 2: 15 gives an interesting statement as to one of the reasons why Christ came.

Hebrews 2:15 And deliver them [you and me] who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

It is right here that one of the major reasons which demands our loyalty -- our deep sense of obligation to Christ -- comes to the fore. This is expressed through the doctrine in the Bible called *redemption*.

I Peter 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conduct received by tradition from your fathers: 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

To redeem means "to buy back". The essential purpose of redemption as shown in the Bible is to deliver a person or a thing from captivity or loss. As such it becomes almost a perfect image for God's saving actions on behalf of mankind. Answer the following question yourself. How much would you be willing to give to pay for the life of someone that you love dearly? Kidnappers take advantage of this. They steal a person who means very much to another. Usually the one they steal is a child. Sometimes they steal a mate. They hold this person for ransom to extort a grand sum of money they think is going to put them on easy street.

Now transfer this thought to God the Father, who is willing to pay a ransom price for us by giving the life of the One He loved the most for our redemption. He gave His own Son in exchange for our liberty, and the releasing of our debt at one and the same time. The Son also willingly volunteered to be the payment in full. Let's turn this and look at it from another angle. Let's look at it from the point of view from the one who is redeemed -- the one who is released by the payment that is made. How great a sense of obligation, of loyalty born out of gratitude would you feel if you were the one who was released from your captivity? How much of a sense of loyalty and obligation would you feel to the one who *paid* for your release? That's the issue here, plain and simple. It's one of the major themes of the book of Ruth.

Ruth, remember, is a symbol of the Church. Ruth is a symbol more *specifically* of the Gentiles God is calling into the Church. She prostrated herself at the feet of her redeemer's sleeping place [which was Boaz in this case], and that symbolized her total submission in service to him. In this case she was obligating herself to him as wife.

Turn now to the book of Philemon. There was an interesting event in the life of the apostle Paul when he called upon a person's sense of obligation to him. The story goes somewhat like this: Philemon was converted by the preaching of the Apostle Paul. Philemon was a man apparently

of some substance. Maybe he was even wealthy. He had slaves, and one of those slaves was a man by the name of Onesimus. Onesimus [like any slave with any kind of spunk within him] wanted to be free of his slavery. His self-satisfaction drove him to steal something from Philemon and then run away. God didn't let him get away with it. He had plans for both, or maybe all three -- Philemon, Onesimus, and the Apostle Paul.

Somehow or another Onesimus and the Apostle Paul met, and Onesimus was converted by the preaching of Paul. Now we have the former slave a converted man, and the owner is also a converted man. Onesimus turned out to be very useful to the Apostle Paul, and so when the time was ripe Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon with this letter. It is one of the most psychologically powerful letters that has ever been written.

Philemon 8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient.

Translating this into modern language, Paul said, "*I could use my authority and command you to give him his freedom. Yet for love's sake (verse 9) I rather beseech you.*" It's a letter of wonderful tact and discretion and courtesy. "Being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ," [He was in jail.] "I Paul have written it [this letter] with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owe unto me even thine own self besides." [Verse 19] Here Paul hits Philemon with a double-barrel shot. It was so deftly done. The first is that Paul said, *Hey, I wrote this letter myself.*" This wasn't dictated. This was right from the boss, and he took the occasion to make the appeal personally. Now that put Philemon [who must have already been thinking as he was reading the letter] to say, "*All right! All right! I'll do it!*"

When Paul says that he had written the letter himself, the obligation intensity began to climb even higher, because then Paul reminded Philemon that he owed Paul *his very life* -- his spiritual life. Paul was saying that Philemon's spiritual indebtedness to him should more than cover any debt that Onesimus owed to Philemon. Therefore, Paul is saying, "*Charge it to my account!*" What Paul did for Onesimus reflects what Christ did for us. As Paul laid himself out for Onesimus, Christ did for us in order to pay our indebtedness and to set us free. In like manner, as Paul laid claim to Philemon's indebtedness to *him*, so Christ lays claim to our indebtedness to *Him*. We own Him something! What He wants is our loyalty. In I Corinthians 6 and verse 9, again Paul writes:

I Corinthians 6:9-10 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

That ought to be very clear. Sinners are not going to inherit the Kingdom of God. People who are practicing and living sin are not going to be there. Now drop down to verse 19.

I Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, WHICH ARE GOD'S.

I don't know how the basis for our obligation to Christ could be stated any clearer than it is here. There are two reasons given. 1) Our body is the temple of His Holy Spirit and 2) We have no right to pervert and misuse our life, because it belongs to Christ. He bought us. He paid for us. He owns us. In regard to the mention of the temple, remember that in the Old Testament symbolism God abode in the Holy of Holies in the temple. Paul was now reminding these people that God now lives in us, and it is our obligation to live to the utmost respect that He is in no way defiled by our conduct. We owe Him that, because He is in us.

We are obligated to look upon our bodies as *sacred* holy vessels fit for the Lord's use. What an awesome honor that is! That is a towering obligation! Would you have the nerve to desecrate the temple of God [the building in Jerusalem] if it were standing, and you were there? We are obligated to treat our bodies and the conduct of our lives for the very same reason. It is holy for God's use, and He lives there. He has every right to demand our obedience. In I Corinthians 7 and in verse 22 through 24 it says:

I Corinthians 7:22-24 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant [or slave]. 23 You are bought with a price; be not you the servants of men. [Don't be worldly.] 24 Brethren, let every man, where he is called, therein abide [or remain] with God.

This is a reflection back to chapter 6 in redemption. Paul is saying that if you are being paid by an employer, work for him. Work for the one who is paying you, and not for yourself, and not for somebody else. Even the world recognizes that this is unethical. We owe Christ [our employer] because He bought and paid for us. Your time on the job belongs to the one who is paying your wage, and thus it is with Christ. We are obligated to consider His demands in every area of life all the time. This is expanded upon even more clearly and thoroughly in Romans 6:11.

Romans 6:11 Likewise reckon we also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now what's the cost of that to us? In verse 12 he tells us.

Romans 6:12-22 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body . . . [That's what we're obligated to as a result of being alive from the dead *spiritually*]...that you should obey it in the lusts [self-satisfaction] thereof. V13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of

righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that you were the servants [slaves] of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, you became the servants [slaves] of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: . . . [In other words, they were so weak spiritually.] . . . for as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

So all that Paul was doing in those verses is explaining that even as Christ has paid our indebtedness in order to set us free, we are now under obligation to live our lives in obedience to righteousness. Now let's explore this just a little bit further. Let's go back to the book of Exodus, in chapter 6, and in verse 6.

Exodus 6:6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments.

Here is the first mention of redemption in the Bible in relation to Israel. God does not specify at this point about what the redemption price will be, only that He mentions there are going to be great judgments. Let's turn to after the exodus. They are just over the Passover.

Exodus 13:1-2 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Sanctify unto me all the firstborn [sanctify, meaning set apart - indicating set apart for a holy use; consecrate them.] whatsoever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

Exodus 13:11-15 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring you into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto you and to your fathers, and shall give it thee, 12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that opens the matrix, and every firstling that comes of a beast which you have; the males shall be the LORD'S. 13 And every firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you

shall break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shall you redeem. 14 And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, What is this? that you shall say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: 15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that opens the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. 16 And it shall be for a token [a sign] upon your hand, and for frontlets between your eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

I think we can safely say that the price of buying the Israelites' freedom was the devastation of Egypt's land, and above all the killing of Egypt's firstborn. The redemption of the firstborn of Israel was to remind them of the high cost of their liberty. Those Egyptians, brethren, belonged to God just as surely as the Israelites, but God used them to pay for Israel's liberty! They died so Israel could be free, and that law was established to remind them that people had to die so they could be free. Freedom is not free. It is the most costly thing in the universe, and once that freedom is gained it is not to be given up on the cost of anything. It's too precious to relax and allow it to just go floating by the board, especially when we begin to realize that for our freedom the greatest price in all the universe had to be paid.

Now maybe it's a stunning thing for us to realize that God would use an entire nation and devastate it and kill the very cream of the crop of that nation to gain the liberty of another people -- a slave people. But He has the right to do anything to anybody at any time. We are His creation. He pushes the button. Our responsibility is to respond. God is going to pay Egypt back. God evens things out.

Isaiah 19:18-24 In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of Destruction. 19 In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. 20 And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. 21 And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yes, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it. 22 And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them. 23 In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come unto Egypt, and the Egyptian unto Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land.

Now let's go back to Deuteronomy 8, and in verse 10.

Deuteronomy 8:10-20 When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which he has given you. 11 Beware that you forget not the LORD your God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command you this day: 12 Lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13 And when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied: 14 Then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15 Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint; 16 Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers knew not, that he might humble you, and that he might prove you, to do you good at your latter end; 17 And you say in your heart, My power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth. 18 But you shall remember the LORD your God: for it is he that gives you power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto your fathers, as it is this day. 19 And it shall be, if you do at all forget the LORD your God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. 20 As the nations which the LORD destroyed before your face, so shall you perish; because you would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

Forgetfulness, brethren, produces ingratitude, which in turn produces disobedience, because people are no longer motivated by their sense of obligation to the One who set them free.

I've given you the legal basis upon which our sense of obligation rests, but there is more, and that is it is a continuing personal loving friendship of an elder Brother and loving Father. In Matthew 28, and verse 20 Jesus said to them, "Lo, I will be with you always. Even unto the end." It means *until the end of days*. That's forever.

Hebrews 13:5 I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

That's such an important concept to have in our minds in regard to increasing faith. It's very difficult for us to believe that the great God would actually be aware of somebody as puny as we are, out of the midst of billions of people on this earth. Brethren, we have been called into a

relationship that God describes in a number of ways. One of them is that He is our friend. Abraham was the friend of God. That's how close their relationship was. Apply these things in Proverbs 17:17 in relation to God, or to Jesus Christ, who is God.

Proverbs 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

This verse is not saying that a brother cannot be a true friend, or that somehow a friend from outside the family is going to prove to be a better help in time of need than somebody within the family. The verse here is not pitting the brother against the friend. Actually they are being equated. The brother and friend are being equated as one and the same. A true friend is somebody who is constant. The verse is using *brother* in the same sense that is used for the friendship of David and Jonathan. Also it's used in the same way for the friendship that existed between Solomon and Hiram, who was the king of what was then Phoenicia, or Syria. In other words it is talking about the kind of friendship in which the friends are truly as brothers *should* be, can be. In adversity a true friend functions as if he is in reality a brother. Jesus covers both of these. He is both friend *and* brother.

Proverbs 18:24 A man that has friends must show himself friendly:
and there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

This is actually a mild caution. The first clause there is actually a mild caution about having too many friends, spreading yourself too thin, as it were. The highest priority implied is to have truly good friends. In order to have truly good friends you can't have too many, because there is only so much time and yourself to spread around. So he is telling us, implying here, that the wisdom in regard to having friends is to concentrate on a few rather than try to accomplish being friends of everybody. Now how does this apply in relation to Christ? If there are too many interests, how many true friendships is a person going to actually be able to develop with someone who is going to stick with him through thick and thin? Isn't it better to have one friend who is going to stick with you through everything? If you have a lot of interests, guess which friend it is who is most likely to be forgotten or neglected? The one who's out of sight -- the friend who sticks closer than a brother. Let's go to John 15 and verse 13.

John 15:13-16 - Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made know unto you. 16 You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

When we are redeemed, at first look it elevates us from being a slave of unrighteousness to being a slave of Jesus Christ and righteousness. But brethren, here Christ elevates our calling to almost unimaginable heights; that is, to an intimate friendship with Him and with the Father. The full impact of this is going to fall short with us because we have hardly known the depth of actual physical slavery, nor have we known the heights of what it is like to walk in the halls of power with the great and mighty of this world.

There is a small group of people in the United States called "FOB". Do you know what that means? It means "Friends of Bill." Bill Clinton, that is. The president of the United States. They have a respectability and influence that status has given them. Reflect back on Rome, because this kind of thing has been going on for centuries. In Rome they had their equivalent of that. They were called "FOCs"-- friends of Caesar's; or "FOE" -- the friends of the emperor. Do you know history records that these people had greater access to Caesar than government counselors and his military advisors? The people actually in politics did not have the access to Caesar that these people had. These people are recorded as actually having access to the Caesar's bed chamber at any time, day or night. Think about that principle and put it into this section here about being a friend of Christ, and about being a friend of the Father. What Christ is saying is *"Because of the status that I am giving to you, you have access to the Father anytime, day or night. You are the most privileged people on the face of the earth!"*

I said that He was opening up to us a status that is almost unimaginable to us. Now what kind of obligation does that put us in? It's pretty high to have conferred on us a status, that out of the billions of people on earth, just a very few have access to the Father and to the Son at anytime, at anywhere, at any circumstance.

You know a slave is never given reasons for the work that is assigned to him. He is simply given it and he must do it because he has no other choice. But a friend is a confidant of the one in power, and that one in power shares the knowledge of his purpose with a true friend, if we are one. Then voluntarily adopts it as his own. He is obligated to do that. It's the price of that friendship.

You are not following Christ simply because of some chance impulse. Verse 16 tells me, and it tells you, "*You have not chosen Me.*" It was no impulse on our part that moved us to choose Christ as our Master. "*I have chosen you.*" This awesome being who is our Creator said, "*I want this person, and this person, and this person to be My friend.*" He is the one who has developed the friendship as well as paid the price for our liberty. Then He sets our obligation boldly and clearly before us. He said, "*I have chosen you and ordained you.*" It means that He appointed you. It means He purposed you. What for? Our obligation is to bring forth much fruit. That's why we were chosen to be His friend. There's the obligation. Then in verse 17 He adds that we are to love one another as well.

Let's summarize. Our obligation rests first of all upon the fact of Jesus giving Himself as the price of our spiritual redemption from slavery and death. If we have any sense at all of what we have been rescued from, and have had opened up our sense of gratitude, then we're going to be stirred, we're going to be motivated to loyalty because we realize that we owe Him so much. Our sense of obligation is further built and strengthened upon the knowledge of the fact that we have been specifically summoned and chosen to share in an intimate loving family friendship

that He sustains through His office as High Priest.

Hebrews 7:24-25 But this man, because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them.

If we have any sense of gratitude for the interceding, leading, guiding, correcting and working to perfect our character so that we might bring forth much fruit and love one another, our sense of obligation is going to be further stirred to ensure that we do not let Him down in any area of our lives, that we will always glorify Him. This motivational factor is largely dependent upon feeling not the sickening sweet sentimentality of some of this world's Christianity, but rather feelings derived from a clear understanding of what has been done, and what continues to be done in our personal, individual behalf by our Savior and High Priest.

It is the quality of deep heart-felt and comprehending feeling that arises from the mind of people who have had first-hand experience with the suffering of sin and death that brings to them a knowledge in their heart-of-hearts that they too have been guilty of rebellion against this wonderful personality who created us, died for us, and continues to be our friend, and wants that friendship to continue for all eternity because we are changing to be like Him.

Hebrews 12:6-7 For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not?

Pay attention to "scourges every son."

Hebrews 12:8-10 But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

You are not a nameless, faceless, impersonal blob. He has done these things that we might be partakers of His holiness. That purpose is surely something worth being obligated to, and the person who keeps these thoughts not far from mind and refreshes them from time to time, lest they be taken for granted, is going to feel such a sense of obligation of being motivated to please Him, even to attempt to pay Him back for a while, even knowing that it can't be done. That's going to drive that person to self-control in obedience to His every wish.

As you should be able to see, the key to this motivational factor is not merely knowing that Christ is Savior, but knowing and abhorring sin and its devastating effect, and the contrast

between the two.