

Dedication

by Freddie Coile

When I played baseball, I was totally dedicated to the sport. I loved playing. I thought about baseball all day long. I dreamed about it at night. I enjoyed every minute of practice. Game days were wonderful. Mud and blood were stains of honor. Sweat smelled good. To play baseball was to give every ounce of energy I had in order for my team to be successful.

I played with a few guys who weren't dedicated. They didn't work at baseball. Practice was passing time to them. Losing didn't hurt. And they never received any awards.

The Church is full of players. Some of them are dedicated. Committed. They practice hard. They work. They give. They talk it, eat it, and sleep it. Then there are the others. Lazy. Undisciplined. Passing time. They get, not give. I'll bet you know some of both kinds. We need some more dedicated people who are playing for the Saints, don't we?

Now we might just conclude that the undedicated ones are not saved. But the Bible is crystal clear about the fact that there are undedicated saved people. For example, Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church these stinging words:

"For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." - II Thessalonians 3:11-15

Well, if the undedicated are not living for God what saves them? Grace. Thank God! No one has ever been saved by any other means than grace, through faith.

Salvation and dedication are NOT the same thing. There are **some major differences** between the two.

◆ Salvation is a **free gift** that God gives to any person who believes in the Lord, Jesus Christ. No works. No strings.

✧ Discipleship is a **state of commitment** that involves learning, following, and imitating the truth. While there is no work involved in salvation, discipleship is work.

◆ Salvation **happens in one moment of time**. It occurs in the blink of time when one believes in Jesus Christ. In that moment of faith, everlasting life is given, fully and freely.

✧ On the other hand, dedication, or discipleship, is **a process**. Hopefully it will last a long time. It begins when the Believer commits himself to follow after Christ above all else. Some do this at the point of their salvation. Others don't reach this point until some time later. Some Believers never become true disciples of Christ.

Discipleship ends when other things become more important than following Christ. Our hope is that Believers will stay dedicated to Christ until they see Him face to face. We must be honest with the Bible and admit that this doesn't always happen. True, long term discipleship is not automatic. There are many things that can hinder and thwart the Believer from true dedication. This is why we need Pastors, Bible teaching, and a humble daily reliance upon God.

◆ Salvation is **free**. The gift of God is eternal life. It costs us nothing because Jesus paid it all.

✧ On the other hand, Discipleship will **cost us everything**. Jesus said it like this:

"...Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." - Luke 14:33

◆ Salvation **cannot be lost**. Everlasting life is ever lasting. By its very definition, and by the promises of God, everlasting life cannot be lost.

✧ On the other hand, discipleship **may be forfeited**. It is possible to be dedicated today and not dedicated tomorrow - depending on what becomes more enticing than following Jesus. There are some Believers today who used to be dedicated, but are not now. Why? Something became more important than Christ to them.

◆ Salvation's end is to be in the eternal state **with God**. It is guaranteed from the moment of faith in Christ, sealed by the promise of God, and kept by His power.

✧ On the other hand, discipleship dedication will surely **end in rewards**. Dedicated believers who get the job done for God will have the awesome opportunity to be rewarded by Jesus Christ! Not only are the dedicated with God, they have a fabulously rich circumstance with Him in the eternal state of Believers.

<http://www.freddiecoile.org/>