

“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus”
Colossians chapter 3 verse 23

Faith is most fully expressed in obedience to God. We hear and understand what he is saying to us, we believe him and we act accordingly. For every Christian, our first real act of faith is when we come to God through faith in Christ when we believe the Gospel and act on it. The result is salvation and reconciliation to God.

This is a basic principle for our lives. “Without faith,” the New Testament says, “It is impossible to please God,” and “Whatever is not from faith is sin.” That could just as easily be interpreted as “Whatever is not done in obedience to God is sin.” How often do we reflect on the things we do and ask whether they are motivated by God's intentions for us or by our own ideas, impulses and desires? How much of our life of faith and, indeed, the life of the Church itself, is shaped and directed by our own human decisions?

We are not, of course, intended to go round in a state of paranoia, terrified that we may inadvertently do something that is not entirely in keeping with what God wants for us, but neither can we simply live as if we are the sole arbiters of what happens in our lives. We have submitted ourselves to the authority of God, and he has something to say about it.

There are things we can do to maintain a check on whether or not we are living and acting according to the guidance of God's word and the prompting of his Spirit. We have his word itself, of course, in which we are clearly told how we are to live in Christ. But we also have this verse which tells us that we must always speak and act “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

That is a very straightforward test for us, when we are wondering whether something we are intending to say or do is right for us. We can simply ask “Can I say or do this in the name of Jesus?” “Could Jesus sign his name under what I am intending to do?” If you don't think he could, then don't.

Prayer

Father, thank you for the guidance you give me in your word and by your Spirit. Please help me in all things to speak and act in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to you through him. Please give me insight into how much of my life is defined by my own desires and decisions, and help me to live in obedience to you. In Jesus' name, amen.

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