

WHATEVER YOU DO

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col 3:17)

Let us consider the possibility that the Bible actually says what it means, and means what it says. It really does! This verse requires the child of God to never do anything that cannot be done in the name of the Lord Jesus. Can this be true? The answer is yes!

There is nothing “secular” to the child of God. Whatever we do is worship for we do it in the name of our Lord Jesus. Pagan people do not think this way. Their lives are divided into the sacred and the profane. The word “profane” literally means “before” or “outside” of the temple. (*Pro* = before and *fanum* = temple). They considered anything brought into the temple as holy, and everything else as profane. Christian worship is not like that. It is not confined to any particular location, for it is in spirit and in truth. This is the point of our text. Whatever we do, whether in word or deed, we do it in the name of Jesus. Our relationship with Christ is like a marriage. The marriage union is not confined to a certain time or a certain place. It involves 100% of all that we are and all that we have. So to the Bride of Christ, nothing is secular. Everything we do is done in the name of Jesus and hence involves every aspect of our lives. Note:

- Wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord (Eph. 5:22).
- Husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25 - 33).
- Slaves are to obey their masters just like they were obeying Jesus (Col. 3:22 - 25).
- Masters are to provide for their slaves in a way that is right and fair because they also have a Master in heaven (Col. 4:1).
- True worship, as we have said, is not limited to a “place”, but is in “spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Whatever we do we need to do in the name of the Lord Jesus!

If you think such a life would be like slavery you are right. It is! Paul wrote by inspiration: **“Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.” (Rom 6:16-18)**

Slavery to Christ is not a peripheral matter. It represents the very essence of discipleship. Jesus said: **“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.” (Luke 9:23-24)** Paul said that he died every day (1 Cor. 15:31), and repeatedly referred to himself as a “servant” or “slave” of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Titus 1:1). Phebe was also a slave of Christ (Rom. 16:1). So also were Epaphras, Timothy, James, Peter, Jude and John (see Col. 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:24; Ja. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1, and Rev. 1:1). In fact, every follower of Christ is His slave for he that is called to the Lord being a slave is the Lord’s freeman, and he that is called being free is the Lord’s slave (1 Cor. 7:22).

The Law of Moses tells about two kinds of slaves, the law slave, and the love slave (Ex. 21:1 - 6) The law slave was to go free after six years, but the love slave was to serve his master forever. Every true believer is a slave to Christ because of love.

So we have a choice. We can be slaves to sin, or slaves to Christ. Before making your decision, please take a closer look at both options

THE BROAD WAY

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. “ (Matt 7:13-14)

Someone has said that the very essence of sin is “I want, what I want, when I want it”. This philosophy of life is very popular and is personified by Satan. He said in his heart: **“I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” (Isa 14:13-14)** Unfortunately, most people think like Satan and live self centered lives.

We now know, however, that the “broad way” does not lead to happiness, it leads to destruction. Moreover, the pleasures of sin are temporary and only last for a short time (Heb. 11:25). Sin offers no lasting pleasure. Miserly people, as the name implies, are ultimately miserable. The devil has no happy people. Even worse, slavery to sin ultimately leads to death as we learn from Rom. 6:16. Unfortunately, most people still take the broad way and follow Satan to their mutual destruction (Matt. 7:13).

THE NARROW WAY

By contrast, slavery to Christ is a narrow way. It is not popular and seems so difficult that only a few will find it. The “Good News”, however, is that the narrow way leads to life (Matt. 7:14). Paradoxically, this narrow way not only leads to eternal life in the world to come, but also to **“inexpressible and glorious joy”** in this present world (1 Peter 1:8).

On the surface, this may not seem true, but it is. Check it out! Those who take the narrow way are the happiest people on earth. As Jesus said, those who save their life will lose it, but those who lose their life for His sake will save it (Lk. 9:24). Paradoxically, happiness eludes those who seek it. Judas Iscariot thought that 30 pieces of silver would make him happy, but he turned out to be one of the most miserable people on earth. True happiness is a by-product. It comes like magic to those who forget themselves in service to others. Jesus said it like this: **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. “ (John 14:27)**

JUDGEMENT DAY

On the day of Judgement, the people of earth will be divided into only two groups. One group will be saved and the other will be lost (Matt. 25:31 - 46). Please note that the saved were the ones involved in serving others. They were ministering to the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the sick, etc. We are left to assume that the lost had a selfish and Satanic philosophy of life.

As we have already pointed out, saved people take up a cross and crucify themselves daily. They are not self centered, but their lives revolved around Christ. Whatever they do in “word or deed” they do to please Him. Again we repeat that these slaves to Christ not only experience abundant life on earth but eternal life in the world which is to come.

Obviously, before choosing a path to walk, it is wise to find out where that path is going!

THE THREE GREAT TEMPTATIONS

With this brief introduction, let us focus on the three great temptations the devil uses to destroy us. We should not be ignorant of the schemes of the devil (2 Cor. 2:11). The Apostle John placed sin in three categories:

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.” (1 John 2:15-17)

Note that these three categories represent “everything in the world”.

1. Cravings of sinful man (the lust of the flesh).
2. The lust of the eyes.
3. Boasting of what we have (the pride of life).

Note also that the devil used these same three temptations in Eden to destroy Adam and Eve. The forbidden fruit was:

1. Good for food.
2. Pleasing to the eyes.
3. Desirable for gaining wisdom (Gen. 3:6)

Note also that Jesus faced these same three great temptations in the wilderness. He was tempted to:

1. Turn stones into bread (Matt. 4:3).

2. Leap from the highest point of the temple and achieve instant fame (Matt. 4:6)
3. Worship the devil and be lord over all he could see (Matt. 4:8, 9).

Also please take notice that Adam and Eve had an advantage over Jesus. They were in a garden and Jesus was in the wilderness. They had plenty to eat and Jesus hadn't eaten for 40 days. The fact that Jesus did not sin proves that we don't have to sin either. We can avoid sin even when we are in a hostile environment and our earthly cravings are strong. God, in fact, has promised that believers will never be tempted beyond what they are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13).

THE CRAVINGS OF SINFUL MAN

Let us consider these three categories of sin one at a time.

The Scriptures teach that "Jesus was hungry" (Matt. 4:2). Nothing wrong with that. In fact, God actually caused His people to hunger (Deut. 8:3). Manna was difficult to obtain and if the Hebrews did not have hunger to drive them they would have died of starvation.

The temptation Jesus faced was not just to eat, but rather to satisfy His hunger for personal gratification and not for the glory of God. This is quite similar to the temptation that Adam and Eve faced in the garden. They could honor God by what they ate, or they could honor themselves. Remember! Everything we do in "word or deed" is to bring glory to God. Remember! **"whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."** (1 Cor 10:31)

Jesus taught us to pray for our daily bread (Matt. 6:11). Nothing wrong with that! God even designed our bodies with taste buds that make food delicious. There is nothing wrong with eating. In fact, we would die if we did not eat. The principle, however, is that we should not eat merely for self gratification, but to ultimately bring glory to God. There were some in Rome who lost sight of this principle and ate only to please themselves. Unfortunately, their intemperance became a stumbling block to some weaker brethren. Therefore Paul reminded them: **"He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord."** (Rom 14:6-8) If we follow the example of Christ, we will always concentrate on pleasing our neighbor and not ourselves (Rom. 15:1 - 3).

God also designed mankind with other fleshly cravings. Most adults have a craving for sex. Nothing wrong with that! God created Adam and Eve as sexual beings. In fact, one reason for marriage is satisfy our sexual craving in a lawful way and thus avoid immorality. Paul put it like this: **"Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other**

except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” (1 Cor 7:1-6)

Note that each marriage partner engages in the sexual union to please the other. How beautiful! The husband has a duty to his wife and the wife has a duty to her husband. The heathen, by contrast, entered into sexual union for selfish purposes. This is specifically forbidden for believers. **“It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.” (1 Thess 4:3-8)**

We should not be surprised that Christian people have the happiest and most fulfilling sexual lives.

God also designed man with many other physical needs, such as the need for rest. The average person spends one third of his life sleeping. Even God rested after the six days of creation. It is wrong, however, to be lazy, or to do anything that does not bring glory to God.. The man who regards a day of rest as special must do so as “to the Lord” (Rom. 14:6).

The Scriptures are consistent. Whatever we do in word or deed, we do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

THE LUST OF THE EYES

God created man with eyes to see. The retina of the eye has 137 million rod like cells that enable us to see black and white, and 7 million cone like cells that enable us to see color. Our eyes enable us to hunt for food, meet our daily needs, and even enjoy the beauty of God creation. It is wrong, however, to use our eyes in an attempt to satiate lust. Remember! The lust of the eyes is from Satan and never brings lasting satisfaction.

The wicked one took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of this world and their splendor (Matt. 4:8). Like forbidden fruit, these kingdoms were good to look at. Jesus was promised all He could see if He would “merely” bow down and worshiping the devil. This was a real temptation. The wealth and grandeur of the whole world was offered to Jesus without sacrifice or pain. No cross was necessary. All Jesus had to do was bow down and worship the devil.

As a point of interest, the devil didn't have to offer Judas the whole world, for he knew that Judas was so inept that he would sell out for a measly 30 pieces of silver. The devil will probably

not offer you all the kingdoms of this world either, but even if he did you would be a fool to take the deal. What would it profit you to gain the whole world and lose your soul (Lk. 9:25).

Remembering Judas will help us to not forget that the devil is a liar and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Desires that seem so harmless give birth to sin, and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death (Ja. 1:14, 15). The trap the devil used to destroy Judas didn't work on Jesus. If we stay close to Christ it won't work on us either.

The "lust of the eyes" has been used by the devil to destroy millions of people. Take Achan, for example. The devil tempted him to steal by something that he "saw". He saw a beautiful robe, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold (Josh 7:21). His imagination must have run wild with seductive dreams of how such wealth would make him happy. Unfortunately, it was a trap, and Achan was a fool for falling into it. After the crime was committed he had a garment he couldn't wear and money he couldn't spend. Ultimately, as you know, his sin not only resulted in his death, but also the death of his family and many of his countrymen who died in the battle at Ai.

- Eve was tempted to sin by what she saw (Gen. 3:6).
- Man's depravity before the flood was increased because the sons of God "saw" that the daughters of men were beautiful (Gen. 6:2).
- Pharaoh took Sarai to be his wife because he "saw" that she was beautiful (Gen. 12:14)
- Lot pitched his tent near Sodom because he "saw" that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord (Gen. 13:10 - 17).
- When Shechem, the Hivite prince, "saw" Dinah he raped her (Gen. 34:2).
- Tamar was able to seduce Jacob by disguising herself. When Jacob "saw" her he thought she was a prostitute (Gen. 38:15).
- David was tempted to sin because of what he "saw" (2 Sam. 11:2). This sin resulted in the death of an innocent husband, an innocent child, and innocent soldiers.
- Later David determined to never set a wicked thing before his eyes (Ps. 101:3).
- Hamaan was tempted to sin when he "saw" that Mordecai refused to bow down and pay him honor (Esther 3:3). This sin, as you know, resulted in his own death (Esther 7:9).
- Job made a covenant with his eyes that he would not look lustfully at a girl (Job. 31:1).
- Jesus said that a man who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matt. 5:28).

Augustine, in his Confessions, describes the addictive nature of the gladiatorial games in Rome. He, and his friend Alhypius, attended those games in A.D. 385. At first, Augustine vowed not to watch the carnage, but the shouts, the screams, and the clash of weapons aroused his curiosity and he reluctantly opened his eyes. Instead of being repulsed, however, the blood letting drew his eyes like a magnet and he could not look away. In the same way the devil uses the addictive nature of violence and pornography today to destroy the lives and families of those seduced into sin by the lust of the eyes.

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Those who are “born again” and are “new creations” no longer “see” anyone, or anything from a purely human point of view (2 Cor. 5:16). The goal of the disciple is to be like his teacher (Lk. 6:40). Thus, as followers of Christ should do everything we can to see things as Jesus saw them.

- Jesus could look at women without lust, and so can we. Like Jesus led the woman at the well, we can also lead sinners to the fountain of “Living Water”. (Jn. 4:1 - 42)
- Jesus saw the multitudes like sheep without a shepherd, and had compassion on them (Matt. 9:36). With help from the Holy Spirit we can see multitudes of people just like Jesus did.
- In the upper room everyone saw the basin and towel and knew that their feet had not been washed. Only Jesus, however, saw the basin and towel as instruments to be used in service to others. Jesus said: **“You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”** (John 13:13-17)

Don't forget! **“whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”** (Col 3:17)

THE PRIDE OF LIFE

“Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.” (Ezek 28:17)

It is generally believed that this verse not only refers to the King of Tyre, but to Satan himself. It is the devil who was the first to be cast down because of pride. Remember! **“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”** (Prov 16:18)

So the wicked one wanted Jesus to fail, just as he had failed. That's why he took Jesus to the highest part of the temple and challenged him to throw himself down and allow the angels to rescue Him from death. On this occasion Satan even embellished the temptation by quoting Scripture. As you might imagine, however, the old liar left out a key component in the text (Ps. 91:11) God promised those who follow Him that His angels would **“guard you in all your ways”**. That's the part that the devil left out. The Psalm promises protection to those whose love for God directs their ways (Ps. 91:14). When God directs our steps, His angels will indeed protect us. There is a dramatic difference, however, between doing something to bring glory to God, and doing something to bring glory to yourself.

The devil, that old serpent, pointed out that the forbidden fruit was desirable for gaining wisdom (Gen. 3:6). What's that all about? There were only two people in the whole world and yet apparently both wanted to be praised. Each coveted admiration if only by one person. When their eyes were opened, however, they weren't happy. They had been tricked. Instead of gaining respect they became ashamed. The same pride that caused them to disobey God now caused them to sew fig leaves together to cover the shame of their nakedness.

Genesis chapters 4 and 5 contain two genealogies. Genesis 4:17 - 24 contains the genealogy of Cain. Genesis 4:25 - 5:32 contains the genealogy of Seth. The genealogy of Seth is noted for calling on the name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26). The seventh from Adam in Seth's family was Enoch. He was the most righteous man on earth and walked so closely with God that he was translated without having to die (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5; Jude 14). Lamech, by comparison, was the seventh in the genealogy of Cain and he was probably the most wicked man on earth. He is the first man to have two wives (Gen. 4:19). Further, when a young man wounded him, Lamech killed him. He was so proud of what he had done that he composed a song bragging about it (Gen. 4:23, 24).

Those destroyed by the flood are described in Scripture as "heroes" and "men of renown" (Gen. 6:4) Surely pride had a part to play in their downfall. These were the ones whose thoughts were only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). The sin of pride has been responsible for the downfall of millions throughout history.

- Sennacherib was lifted up with pride (2 Kings 19:20).
- When Uzziah became powerful he too was lifted up with pride (2 Chron. 26:16).
- Job said that the joy of the godless lasts but a moment. Though his pride reaches to the heavens (Job 20:5-6)
- Ephraim and Samaria were filled with pride (Is. 9:9).
- The king of Assyria had pride in his heart and haughtiness in his eyes (Is. 10:12).
- Babylon was the jewel of kingdoms, and the glory of the Babylonians' pride (Isa 13:19)
- Moab was filled with pride, insolence and conceit (Is. 16:6).
- Nebuchadnezzar's heart was arrogant and hardened with pride (Dan. 5:20).
- King Herod was also filled with pride and arrogance and refused to give glory to God (Acts 12:23).
- Etc.

IN EACH INSTANCE PRIDE WENT BEFORE DESTRUCTION AND A HAUGHTY SPIRIT BEFORE A FALL!

That's why whatever you do in word or deed should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him!

CONCLUSION

Brother Lawrence was a medieval monk who lived hundreds of years ago. He captured the

essence of true Christianity in his classic book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*. In that book he said that his earthly duty of scrubbing pots and pans brought him into the presence of God as much as taking the blessed communion. This was also true in his life of other small jobs that at first glance seem to be “secular and insignificant”. Because Bro. Lawrence did them “all in the name of the Lord Jesus”, however, they became acts of worship that brought him closer to Christ.

The Scriptures remind us that the Body is not one member, but many (1 Cor. 12:14). All are not apostles. All are not prophets. All are not teachers. All do not work miracles. All do not have gifts of healing. All do not speak with tongues. All do not interpret tongues. (1 Cor. 12:29 - 30). All do not have the privilege of being paid by the church to do “spiritual” things. While we are to desire the greater gifts, we must remember that it is the Holy Spirit Who distributes these gifts according to His own sovereign will.

If God has called you to do something, then you need to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. The widow of Zarephath was commanded to feed Elijah (1 Ki. 17:9). Was this secular? Peter was commanded to catch a fish (Matt. 17:27). Was this secular? John was commanded to take care of Mary, the Mother of Jesus (Jn. 19:27). Was this an earthly assignment? Paul taught the Thessalonians to work with their hands (1 Thess. 4:11). Was this a commandment of the Lord? (1 Cor. 14:37). Paul told Timothy to bring three things to him in prison, a cloak, his scrolls, and especially the parchments (1 Tim. 4:13). Were these assignments earthly or spiritual?

Mere words are not sufficient to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Our faith without works is like a body without a spirit (Ja. 2:14 - 26). When we see a brother in need we must not shut up our bowels of compassion on him (1 Jn. 3:17). It has been almost 2,000 years since our blessed Lord ascended to heaven. We can no longer prepare him a meal like Martha, or wrap his naked body like Nicodemus, but we can do the next best thing. We can do it to the least of His brothers (Matt. 25:40). The Lord does not forget these acts of kindness that seem to be secular. On Judgment Day He will remember the food and clothing that we gave away. He will reward us for visiting the hospitals and prisons. Even a cup of cold water given with love will not be forgotten. Jesus said that when we do good things for His brethren, we are doing them for Him!

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