

Dedication Is A Necessity

Examples Of The Same - a Challenge For Us

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There is a character quality that is a necessity for continuing service to God by a Christian. It is a quality whose importance is frequently either overlooked entirely, or sadly, greatly undervalued. Elements of this character quality are an absolute necessity for anyone truly living by faith. To have this quality, one must have a fairly high level of vision, of understanding, some courage, and a great deal of humility.

This character trait is devoted dedication to a cause. For us, the cause is God's cause. Jesus admonishes us in Luke 14 that before committing to Him and His cause, we must be willing to put representing Him before all else in our life.

It is my personal observation that this is a major lack in the greater church of God that I perceive following the spiritual collapse of the Worldwide Church of God. It is also my observation that this is a deficiency I perceive from an overview of what the major flaw is in the character of today's American citizens. This is why I believe there is very little patriotism. A large percentage of people seem to have no concept regarding what this nation stood for in its beginning, no vision regarding civically what to do with their lives, and no upholding of the standard that citizens held in the beginning. Without these, you cannot really be dedicated to what is right and good.

I Chronicles 11:15-19 tells of the dedication of three of David's mighty men who were engaged with David in a war against the Philistines. They were having a stiff, intense battle. David was in a cave when he expressed a deep longing for a drink of water from the well in Bethlehem. Remember, that was where he was born. It was his hometown. The three of them took it upon themselves to break through the masses fighting, between the Israelites and the Philistines. They made it to the well, drew some water, returned back through the warfare once again to David, handed him the cup to drink from—and he refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it on the ground, commenting that he should not drink the blood of these men who had put their lives in jeopardy.

It was their dedication to David that motivated them to risk their lives for their commander's pleasure. The thought of this risk humbled David, but we see there dedication to a man.

Jeremiah 35 provides us with a very interesting example of dedication to a principle. Jeremiah used this example to teach the Jews then, and us today, a vital lesson involving devoted dedication. It involves a Jewish clan called the Rechabites. Nebuchadnezzar's army was advancing on Jerusalem, and the Rechabites fled from their lands to the north of the city in order to preserve their lives before the army killed them. Jeremiah took advantage of their being in Jerusalem to call a meeting, and the meeting was held in one of the chambers on a perimeter of the temple itself. He called aside one of the leaders of the clan and set before him a pitcher of wine and commanded him to drink of it. The leader refused. The leader explained that Jonadab, the son of Rechab, commanded all the sons of that man—listen to this command:

Jeremiah 35:6-7 You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever. You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have any of these; but all your days you shall dwell in tents, that you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners.

A little bit of research told me that their obedience to this oath had continued *unbroken* for 200 years. One of the interesting sidelights of all these sacrifices they set themselves to obey is that not *one* of them was commanded by God. They were dedicated in their loyalty to their family. God used this to draw the Israelites' attention, that "the Rechabites can be loyal to their family, but you Jews cannot be loyally dedicated to Me." And thus God pronounced the Jews' doom by saying that He would bring on them the punishments He promised. But Rechab would forever have a man to stand before God. In other words, his family line would never, ever die out.

Many of the Bible's examples of the voted dedication are contained within the records of warfare. But we must never forget that we are involved in a war against the wicked spirits unleashed on this world, and of course, most especially Satan. But all the examples in the Bible of dedication are not from warfare.

Luke w has two of them. Luke 2:25 tells of the dedication of one Simeon, who is called "a just and devout man, waiting for the consolation of Israel." Because of his dedication, it had been revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Christ. Then there was Anna. She who was 84. She dedicated herself, from seven years after her virginity, serving God with fasting and with prayers, night and day at the temple.

Is dedication dead?

What brought this commentary to my mind was an email that I received regarding the men who stand guard in Arlington National Cemetery at the Tomb of the Unknowns. The question was asked on the Jeopardy program, "How many steps do the soldiers take while crossing the tomb?" Not one contestant got it. The answer is 21—exactly 21—for each and every passing before the tomb.

More information was given in the email. The soldier then hesitates for 21 seconds before turning. His gloves are always wet so that he does not lose his grip on his rifle. He always carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. The guards are changed every 30 minutes, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A guard must be between 5 ft. 10 and 6 ft. 2. His waist size—catch this—cannot exceed 30 inches.

Each guard must commit two years of his life to guarding the tomb. He must live in the barracks under the tomb. He cannot drink anything alcoholic, on or off duty, for the rest of his life. He cannot swear in public for the rest of his life, thus disgracing the uniform in any way. After two years, the guard is given a wreath in to wear on his lapel, signifying dedication to guarding the tomb. Only 400 are presently worn. These rules, too, are to be obeyed forever.

During the first six months of duty, a guard cannot talk to *anyone*, nor watch TV. All off-duty time is spent studying the histories of the 175 notable people buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Every day, a guard spends five hours getting his uniform ready for guard duty.

In 2003, Hurricane Isabel approached Washington. Congress took two days off, and it was announced on the TV news that the guarding of the tomb was to be suspended. But the guards respectfully declined, and so they bore the wind, and soaked to the skin, they marched in the pelting rain. They said that guarding the tomb was not just an assignment. It was the highest honor that can be afforded to a service person. The tomb has been patrolled unbroken, 24/7, since 1930.

For your consideration: Is God asking too much of us to be dedicated to Him and His way?

