



Three for One

Ageless Basics Separating Your Faith from Your Works

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Why do you worship? Why do you study the Bible (with or without others)? Why do you serve? Answer these three questions plainly and simply then read on.

Q1 Why do you personally worship?

We worship Jesus because He deserves it (attending corporate worship as a body of believers is one important way). God deserves your praise because He is God. Yes, we worship because Jesus died on the cross saving us from the final consequences of our sin. Yes, we sing His praises in a church and at home and in our mundane daily moments because we feel closer to Him, and more spiritual, more righteous when we do. But if your reason is because it makes you better somehow, then **what happens when that “dark night of the soul” comes and you don’t feel closer to Him anymore, or your child dies... can you still praise Him?** You can if you have a serious relationship with Him and you recognize in your soul and spirit that He deserves your praise simply because of who He is.

Q2 Why do you study?

This **should** be a reason: to get closer to God; here, you **would** expect to become a better person. By studying the Scriptures you should see more of who God is and, therefore, desire to become more like Him. Some thought that I meant, “why do you go to Bible study?” Studying with others is a really great way to learn and to keep yourself from error because Scripture says, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another,” (Proverbs 27:17), and, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil,” (Ecclesiastes 4:9). But if you study in a group simply to have better friends, or because that is where your friends gather, then you may have missed actually using the Bible in your studies, or you **have forgotten that you can’t be finished growing closer to Him just yet; you are not yet perfected.** “Not that I... am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own,” (Philippians 3:12).

Q3 Now, for the kicker: why do you serve?

Why did you decide to go on a mission trip to Mexico this last Holy Week, or volunteer to work at that soup kitchen at Thanksgiving, or assist the Pastor with worship recently, passing the plate, handing out bulletins, ushering others to an open seat, reading the Scripture or teaching Sunday School?

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to **advance the gospel**, so that it has become known... that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to **speak the word** without fear. (Phil. 1:12-14)

‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them..., teaching them... And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’



Any other reasons simply are obstacles in the way of your relationship with Him. Martha was interested in serving because it needed to be done. Mary was interested in spending time with Jesus. Judas sounded like he was interested in taking care of the poor. Jesus answers us all: The poor you will always have with you. If we want to find a worthy cause there are always going to be millions of them. But, you have one life, and one shot to know Him and to share His offer with others. Don't share it because you must, but because you want others to have what you have: emancipation.

From Oswald Chambers, The Complete Works,

(c) The Grasp of Intellect

Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. (1 Peter 3:15)

Peter does not say "give an explanation," but "a reason of the hope that is in you"—be ready to say what you base your hope on. Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God Whose ways you cannot understand at the time. "I don't know why God allows what He does, but I will stick to my faith in His character no matter how contradictory things look." Faith is not a conscious thing, it springs from a personal relationship and is the unconscious result of believing someone. My faith is manifested in what I do, and I am able to explain slowly where I put my confidence. The faith that swallows is not faith, but credulity or fatalism. I have to get a grasp of the thing in my intellect, but that is second, not first.

Paul puts everything down to the words of Jesus Christ; if He is not what He claims, there is nothing in religion, it is pure fiction. If, however, Jesus Christ is not a humbug, and not a dreamer, but what He claims to be, then Christianity is the grandest fact that ever was introduced to any man.

World War I (1914-18).

Chambers, O. (1996, c1946). *Approved unto God*. Hants UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott. pg 27.

Facing Reality:

(C) The Growth of Institutions

The essence of Christianity is not a creed or a doctrine, but an illumination that emancipates me-- "I see who Jesus Christ is." It is always a surprise, never an intellectual conception.

