

## Blessed Requirements

Keep the words of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do (Deuteronomy 29:9).

You mean I have to be blessed? I have to be healthy? I have to go to Heaven? Well, if I *have* to!!!

Everything God requires is good for us. True, often it is like being told that vegetables are good! But they are! Our flesh and our taste buds are sometimes simply unaware of it.

God requires us to be blessed. Romans 3:23 gives what first appears to be only a scathing indictment of humanity, but upon second look, this verse also tells us the blessedness of His requirement for our lives: “for all have sinned and *fall short of the glory of God.*” God requires that we be willing to share in His glory! Well, okay; if *You insist!*

There is a catch, though. God gives us the order in which we are to seek His blessings: “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.” “All things” includes clothing, food, wealth, long life, etc . . . God wants to give us these blessings, as long as we follow His priorities.

However, God’s priorities tend to go 100% against our natural inclinations. Part of the reason is that our inclination is to look at things from a very short term perspective, rarely longer than a lifetime, usually no more than a few months; while God looks at things from a long, from an eternal, perspective. Another reason is that God tends to look at the big picture, while we, on the other hand, are not always even sure where the picture is!

Following God is really very simple: believe that He knows what is best and that He has our best interests at heart. Hebrews 11:6 summarizes our most important requirement: “Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” Faith is trusting that God knows more than you and that if you listen to Him and obey, it will go well for you.

Oh, that it were that simple! There is one little thing (and if we would be honest, we

would acknowledge it is really quite little) that gets in the way: our ego! “What? Acknowledge somebody else knows better than we do?” Habakkuk 2:4 says, “Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith.” Faith is the opposite of pride because faith includes humility that will trust Another. Faith is the acknowledgment of our own weaknesses and inabilities in comparison to God.

Faith accepts these obvious truths. Which is why Paul, when quoting Habakkuk, adds to “the righteous man shall live by faith” the words “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *who suppress the truth* in unrighteousness (Romans 1:17-18).” The reverse of faith is the suppression of the truth we all know so well, so that, as Paul continues, “they are without excuse (Romans 1:20).”

But who wants to be excused anyway? I want to be blessed! Paul says we have become “slaves of righteousness,” but then goes on to say that he is “speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh (Romans 6:19).” Yes, we have to become slaves to God, but that means I must be a slave to joy, peace, love, and victory! Increase this blessed slavery!