



Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD; Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive To the voice of my supplications.

If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord More than those who watch for the morning-Yes, more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is mercy, And with Him is abundant redemption. And He shall redeem Israel From all his iniquities.

- Psalm 130:1-8

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**The Prize**

Paul said, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). Yes, there is a “prize” in Christianity. It is not social contact, a clean environment for entertainment, or a place for mom to dump the children for a few hours each week. Rather, it is eternal life (Rev. 2:10). It is obtained like any other prize, by hard work and playing by the rules. Yet, many want to ignore both conditions.

Some people believe that the prize is almost absolutely free. Their idea is that faith alone in Christ is sufficient to warrant the crown of life; that rules are optional. However, the Bible repeatedly states that salvation in heaven comes by obeying the commands of the gospel. Paul told Timothy that one is only crowned when he “competes according to the rules” (2 Tim. 2:5). If we flaunt the rules laid out by God, how can we expect to receive the prize?

Along with the idea that the rules are irrelevant, there is the belief that hard work is unnecessary. In fact, we are told that if we “work” we nullify “grace.” The truth is, when we work the works of righteousness, we appropriate grace from God. Paul pointed out when we compete for the crown, we must do so with temperance—great self discipline and control (1 Cor. 9:24-27). This requires an exerted effort on our part. Those who are world-class athletes get there only by diligent training. If we are to be “world-class” in the spiritual realm, we must devote ourselves to continual training; keeping our eyes on the prize.

Paul sums up the subject in Romans 2:6-11. There he says that eternal life comes by “patient continuance in doing good.” In other words, without “patient continuance in doing good” we will not have eternal life. He said, “glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good” (Rom. 2:10). Let us strive for the prize.

- Steven F. Deaton

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# “Keepers At Home”

By Larry Ray Hafley

Aged women are to “teach the young women to be...keepers at home” (Titus 2:3-5). This is in harmony with 1 Timothy 5:14: “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”

Controversy surrounds the fact that Paul says that young, married mothers are to be “keepers at home.” Does this forbid a woman to work outside the home? “Yes,” say some, “it is a sin for a woman to have a public job.” Those of this persuasion should live by their conscientious conviction and not become contentious because others do not share their viewpoint.

Note, however, that the passage does not say a woman sins by working at a public job. It implies that she sins whenever she fails to be a keeper at home. Some women are home all day, but they are not keepers at home. There is no virtue in the fact that a woman stays at home, that is, that she does not have a job outside the home. She may be home all day and be lazy, or she may be a busybody “wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” (1 Tim. 5:13).

On the other hand, a woman may work several hours a day outside her immediate household and not neglect her family in any respect. She may still be a keeper at home.

The virtuous woman of Proverbs fame is described as one who “looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.” Yet, “She perceiveth that her merchandise is good....she maketh fine linen and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant” (Prov. 31:18, 24). Whatever a woman does outside the home, whether it be as a tentmaker like Priscilla, or as a servant in the gospel like Phoebe, she should not let that detract her from her duties in the home (Acts 18:3; Rom. 16:1; Phil. 4:3). A woman may, therefore, perform certain tasks outside the home so long as she does not abandon her responsibilities in the home.

A Christian, like Paul, may give himself wholly to the work of an evangelist while working at secular work. Paul “ceased not” to “warn every one night and day,” but, at the same time, he employed his hands to provide the necessities of life for himself and his companions (Acts 20:31, 33-35). Likewise, a woman may be a keeper at home while finding time to labor at outside work.

The Bible teaches that a woman is to be a keeper at home. She may fail her obligation through idleness or by spending too much time outside the home at another job. However, to say that a woman is automatically guilty of sin because she has a job outside the home is to misunderstand the teaching and meaning of Titus 2:5. See Proverbs 31:10-31.

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## Preparation

We prepare for many things in life. We plan vacations, sometimes years in advance. We get ready for the job market by going to school or receiving some kind of training. We prepare for retirement by setting up a savings plan. So, preparation is not foreign to us.

Parents need to prepare their children for life. Fathers are charged with bring up their children “in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Mothers are to love their children, which most certainly includes helping to mold their souls (Titus 2:4). Parents will prepare their children in word and deed. What our children see and hear will prepare them for life on their own. Therefore, we need to speak the truth and live righteously before them so their lives will be holy.

We all need to prepare for death. With the exception of being alive when Jesus comes back, we will all die (Heb. 9:27). If we are not prepared for death, then we will lose our souls. The instructions for preparation are found in the Word of God. Among other things we must study, pray, assemble with the saints, help the less fortunate, and teach. If we neglect preparations for death, then we will lose our souls in hell. As the old saying goes, we can go to hell accidentally, but can only get to heaven on purpose.

With all the preparation we do for things in this world, we must not disregard or ignore preparation for the next.

- Steven F. Deaton

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For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD,  
and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

- Ezra 7:10