

God's Shoulds

A look at the use of the word SHOULD in the New Testament. Don't let it scare you! I explain why.

*1Jn 3:11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we **should** love one another, ...*

The Bible can be a very condemning read if we do not come to see through Jesus eyes of faith. When we come across verses like that above and believe that we fall short in loving our brethren we feel condemned by the Word and steel ourselves to try harder to love others.

Or we may throw up our hands in self disgust and condemn ourselves as fake Christians.

The problem however is one of seeing. The word "SHOULD" seems to shout a command at us to do the thing it says. And when we are immature in our faith we take up the challenge we think God is giving us and try to love the unlovely ones around us. In our early stages we think that it is up to us to do all the pleasing things for God...with His help. We imagine ourselves to be clean now, having the Holy Spirit in us. But we do not realise that we are not the same person we were before faith came.

We are not a clean version of our old self

We are entirely a new creation once Faith has come to us. You did not just believe in Jesus and He came into your heart. You were crucified with Him and put to death. That person that you were died. Now you are raised up a new person completely who is joined in spirit with Christ.

We are as He is in this world.. 1Jn 4:17

This is something we will not grasp unless we experience many

failures to keep the commandments of God. When we go 15 rounds in the ring with the Accuser of the Brethren accusing us constantly before the throne that we have failed again to love, to serve, to be patient, to be kind, to be like Jesus...then we begin to ask God what is wrong with my belief system?

Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

By His Spirit in us the Father desires to show us who we are and where we live now as new creations. You see, as long as we think that we are that same old person but a cleaned up version, a forgiven version...we will keep trying to please God and to produce the fruit with that false mindset as the power source. Paul could not produce the goods. He learned that he could not stop coveting no matter how hard he tried.

In fact he learned that the more he tried,(to obey)the more he failed!

My friend, God is not looking for people that He thinks will make a good Christian if they will just believe in Jesus. Sometimes I hear people say, 'Oh, so and so would make a great Christian, they are so determined in all that they do.' By saying that they reveal that they do not understand the New Creation at all. All that determination a person may have displayed as an unbeliever dies at the Cross. It has no value for God and no use. Jesus said it this way....

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. Jn 6:63 a

Paul said it this way...

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who

loved me and gave(traded) His self for me. Gal 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

We are told by John that "The commandments of God are not burdensome." Yet we can quite often feel that they are too heavy for us especially when we obviously fail to love people more than ourselves. The Law of God, whether through Old Testament Moses or New Testament Jesus and the Apostles is "a heavy yoke we nor our fathers could bear."

Act 15:10 Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? Act 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

That was the early days of the Church...but what do we do with John writing years later that we should love one another?

What about Paul's writings and the use of the word should?

The simple answer is that the commandment is not a burden to the New Man that we are.

It is not aimed at the old Man to keep it...for God knows that the old man was unable to keep it. That is why He crucified your old man with Jesus long ago. God is not expecting you to try to love believing that in doing so you are denying yourself...or crucifying the flesh.

YOUR FLESH WAS CRUCIFIED LONG AGO!! Gal 5:24

Many are thinking that they are that old man, now forgiven, who is expected by God to live righteously for Him. They try to die to them selves , they try to love more, pray more do more FOR God. They are on their to a breakdown...just like Paul in Romans 7. God awaits the day that each of us will cry out

in brokenness and desperation

Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

What is the answer that was shown to Paul? Romans 8!!

We are not in the flesh any more but in the S/spirit. We are IN Christ Jesus, Who is in God...and God is in Jesus in us. We are ONE with God.

All that He is we are.

We love others. We are patient, kind caring, joyful, peaceful, loving, compassionate. We are faithful and gentle and humble...we are as HE is!! God has not left producing fruit up to the old creation..even if that old man thinks he is a forgiven old man. No!! God did away with the old and made you totally NEW.

You are joined as one with Jesus spirit soul and body so that all the doing is He doing it...even though it is you as well. Do not judge yourself as if you are that old man. He is dead and gone forever. The new has come...and the new you is acceptable in God's eyes...in fact you are just as acceptable to Father as Jesus is. How?! You and He are one person in your fleshy body.

Rom_6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

This is declaring the truth of the new creation that you are. You are NO LONGER A SLAVE TO SIN. It is not something you try to make happen, but the truth to be declared in faith and believed. It is a description of you. "I am no longer a slave to sin."

Try saying it, even if the accuser says "Oh yes you are...look

at what you keep doing!" The way to defeat the Accuser is through the word of your testimony...which is Jesus Christ. (Rev 12:11,17)

Rom_7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Again..the only one who bears fruit to God is Jesus Christ. But we are married to Him...that is we are one spirit with Him. (1Cor 6:17)

Thus God has joined us as ONE so that we DO BEAR FRUIT.

We do...not by trying and not consciously...we are "Christ in us"...we are "if you have seen me you have seen Jesus"...we do and are bearing fruit.

It is not something to try to make happen, but is the natural out-flowing of the Life that we share in Him. One person, One life.

Rom_7:6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

We should serve in the newness of the Spirit. Yes we should...and beloved WE DO...if we have come to know and believe and take it by faith that we have been delivered from the Law and in fact have died to the demands of the law. Sin no longer has dominion over us for sin is tied to the law. You see...if you still imagine that you are that old man now forgiven...you will continue to minister out of the oldness of the letter. The result will be a ministry of condemnation and death. But when you come to the end of trying to please God...and see that you cannot please Him at all..that in fact you died with Christ...then you can begin to take up on your lips Jesus

Christ as your only testimony...your own personal self story.
This is life and peace.

Rom_8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

This verse reveals again this struggle to rest in Jesus. We do not know what we should pray for. But God in us does. So we do not beat ourselves up and try to pray...but God prays in us when we are not even aware. The responsibility is His.

1Co_10:6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

COMMAND!! We should not lust after evil things!!! Doesn't it hit you like a ton of bricks? What happens when you read that? If you do not know your true identity as a new creation, one who has died and now is risen in God a new person...then you will read this as a command that you must make sure you keep. So you inwardly set up fences to try to stop yourself lusting. You declare within that I will not lust after evil things.

The deception in this is that you imagine that you have some ability to not lust after evil things. When in fact you have no ability at all. By setting up the law, "I will not lust", you have guaranteed your fall. You have set God's grace aside and are now trying to be pleasing to God by the old man.

2Co_1:9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,

Paul here is telling us how this all works. They were brought into an experiential knowledge of their own death in Christ..when they found themselves totally unable to deliver

themselves. The knowledge of our own death and total weakness and inability is a great prize and gift from God. At the same time that we realise this weakness we are given faith and eyes to see that it is He in us and through us and as us that is sufficient for all these things.

2Co_13:7 Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified.

Paul prayed that the Corinthians did no evil, but rather that they did honourable things. Yes of course. But remember that Paul understood this identity issue and the power of the endless life that we share dwelling in us. He understood that no man can keep the Law(perfectly), whether self imposed laws we make or the Law of Moses. So when Paul prayed for people he also prayed that they be strengthened with might in the inner man. Read how Paul prayed and you will see that he did not expect them to do good things and not do bad things by their own separated mindset. He understood that it is Christ in them that does the living.

Eph 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, Eph 3:17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, Eph 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— Eph 3:19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

Another should that seems to be a command for us to strive to obey

Eph_1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of

the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

It would be easy to let the second half of that sentence above to overwhelm us. And before we see Christ in us this is what we do. All we see in that verse is that 'we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.' We see it as a commandment which we must strive to keep.

" I should be holy!"

Yet the truth is that we are holy/separated unto God in Jesus. Jesus makes us holy, not our works. In fact this is what the verse is saying. God chose us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world...so that we would be holiness unto the Lord. So that we would be made the holiness of God in Christ Jesus. He knew we are not holy and not capable of becoming holy. SO He chose us...intended us to be in Christ-The Holy One – so that we are imputed as Holy and blameless in love. It is definitely not something you can become by doing things or not doing certain things.

Eph_2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

We are created in Christ Jesus. Not in Adam, but in Jesus. That is why John says "AS HE -JESUS- IS...so ARE we in this world. 1Jn 4:17 Because we are in Christ Jesus we do not need to try to find good works to do. Just being ourselves and doing what we choose to do daily are those good works God has chosen. If there is to be some kind of big ministry then God is able to move you along into that too.

Tit_2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

We should live soberly righteously and godly shouldn't we? Again I ask you who is the "we" referring to? With Paul it always the new creation man that each believer has become in Christ Jesus. Paul is not telling the believers to try to live soberly and righteously etc...he says that the GRACE OF GOD HAS APPEARED to us and this Grace—Jesus in us – teaches us of Himself. He teaches us who He is in us and who we are in Him. It is this knowledge of the truth that sets us free to live with Him in all things. It is no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me...but I still live. Yet now I live by the faith of the One who lives in me...the one who traded his own self in at the cross for my old self...taking me upon Himself and dying.

1Jn_3:11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

We should love one another. Yes we should love one another. But do we realise that only Jesus loves perfectly? That is why we died on that cross for we fell far short of His perfect love. Jesus Himself does not love as if He had anything of his own to love with. No...Jesus loves because the Father lives in Him as that PERFECT LOVE. Jesus confessed that of His own self HE COULD DO NOTHING...not even love. If Jesus loved it was the Father loving as Jesus and with Jesus and through Jesus. It is the same for us.

We should love one another, and we should love our enemies. But until we discover this UNION of the Two People living inside of us we will keep trying and failing to love...and trying again. "In that day you shall know that I am in my Father and you in Me and I in you." John 14:20 This verse describes what we are. We are bound up in unity with Father and Son. Our spirit is Holy Spirit for we are one spirit together. This is the union that we are. He is love, therefore we love.

1Jn_3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

Finally we should believe in Jesus and love one another. Yet we know that Faith to believe in Jesus and repentance are gifts from God. We should believe in His name. The one who does not believe in Jesus has not been given repentance yet. God will give them repentance eventually. And when He does, and they also believe...then they shall love the brethren for the Love of God shall be poured out in their hearts by the Holy Spirit who shall be in them then. He is the Potter we are the clay. We are the vessel that contains the treasure. The Love and power of God belong to the Father and He gives it to us through Jesus. This Jesus has come to live fully His life in you and as you. We rest in Him.