

DIRECTION 13 (GOSPEL-DRIVEN USE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE)

SUMMARY:

Now that the Holy Spirit has renewed you, God calls you to live a holy life. To live this obedient life, you must continue to believe in Christ and walk in Him by faith. To live this life of faith, God calls you to diligently use all of the means of grace He has given you in His Word.

INTRODUCTION:

DEF. OF "MEANS:" By the term "*means*," Marshall is referring to the "means of grace" that God has given in His Word for believers to use to grow in their faith in Christ. The modern term for these means is the "spiritual disciplines," but Walter Marshall uses a more Biblical term, "the means of grace." These "means of grace" are not what you do to attain holiness; they are what bring you into a deeper fellowship with Christ who makes you more holy." p. 191

THE MAIN POINT OF THIS CHAPTER: "These are the means of grace that God commends to you in His Word. In themselves they do not make you holy; they draw you into deeper fellowship with Christ, the True Vine, who makes you holy as you abide in Him. What good reason to diligently make use of these means of grace to the glory of God!" p. 224

- A. TWO NECESSARY PREREQUISITES TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE MEANS OF GRACE BEFORE DISCUSSING THEM:
 - 1. Though living a life of faith in Christ attains/achieves/procures holiness, this does not void the use of the means of grace rather it establishes their use. p. 191
 - 2. It is crucial to use the means of grace in the right way. p. 193
- B. 6 NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS: pp. 193-194
 - 1. Helps to the life of faith in its beginning, continuance, and growth

2. As instruments subservient to faith (keeping in mind that faith is the Principle instrument in all acts and exercises of the means of grace and that faith is the sole means by which the soul receives Christ and walks in all holiness by Him)
3. Beware of using them in opposition rather than in subordination to faith so that they do not become a hindrance but serve as helps to our faith.
4. We must not idolize any of the means and put them in the place of Christ, like the RCC/legalists do! The means do not confer grace to the soul.
5. They are not to be performed as conditions for the procuring of the favor of God and the salvation of Christ.
6. They must not be accounted as absolutely necessary for salvation as if true faith were void and of none effect when we cannot partake of them.

PROPOSITION: 10 WAYS HOW TO PROPERLY USE THE MEANS OF GRACE GOD HAS GIVEN IN SCRIPTURE:

LESSON:

I. KNOW THE WORD OF GOD (that we may be made wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus 2 Tim. 3:15) pp. 194-196

II. SELF-EXAMINATION of our state and life according to the Word of God, pp. 196-201

Mark well and understand these two questions: p. 198

A. Even though I am a vile sinner, will God save me through Christ? (NOTE: This question you must answer, "Yes," with confident faith in Christ.)

B. Have I already come into a state of salvation? (NOTE: This question must be answered by self-examination.)

III. MEDITATION on the word of God, pp. 201-202

IV. THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM, pp. 203-205

3 Cautions concerning Baptism:

- A. Beware of turning baptism into a Covenant of Works, p. 203
- B. Beware of making baptism an idol by putting it in the place of Christ. p. 203
- C. Beware of making baptism an equal partner with faith in your salvation. p. 203

V. THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, pp. 205-208

- A. 2 Reasons why some disregard the Lord's Supper and get no benefit:
 - 1. Some think God is only holding out bare signs and symbols of Christ and His salvation. p. 206-207
 - 2. They are afraid to partake! p. 207-208
- B. 4 Abuses of the Lord's Supper: p. 208
 - 1. Beware of setting it in opposition to the life of faith
 - 2. Beware of putting the Lord's Supper in the place of Christ
 - 3. Beware of thinking it so necessary that you cannot have true faith without it
 - 4. Beware of holding to transubstantiation

VI. PRAYER is to be used of as a means of living by faith in Christ, according to the new man. pp. 208-215

8 guidelines to enable us to pray rightly: pp. 210-213

- A. You must pray with your hearts and spirits (Isa. 26:9; John 4:24) where the Spirit of Christ, and of prayer, principally resides (Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:17); with understanding (1 Cor. 14:15-16); for we are renewed in

knowledge (Col. 3:10; 2 Pet. 1:3); so that praying in ignorance cannot sanctify. And it must be with sincere hearty desire of the good things we ask in prayer; for God sees the heart (Ps. 62:8). p. 210-211

- B. You must pray in the Name of Christ, pp. 211-212
- C. You must not think to be accepted for the goodness of your prayers, and trust on them as works of righteousness; which is making idols of your prayers and putting them in the place of Christ, p. 212
 - 1. By reason of the holiness of the form, "Some ignorant Protestants trust on their prayers as duties of righteousness; and they think one prayer to be more acceptable than another, by reason of the holiness of the form...especially the Lord's Prayer." p. 113, original; p. 212, revised
 - 2. Others use prayer as "a spell or charm to drive away the devil." p. 114, 212
 - 3. By reason of the holiness of the place (John 4:21, 24; 1 Tim. 2:8) p. 212
 - 4. Others trust on their much speaking (Matt. 6:7) p. 212
- D. Pray to God as your Father, through Christ your Savior. Come to prayer in faith that your sins really are forgiven, that you are accepted by God, and that you have obtained all other things you need for your salvation (James 1:5-7; 5:15; 1 John 5:14; Mark 11:24; Heb. 10:14; Psalm 62:8; 86:7; 65:16; 67:1; 17:6) p. 114, 212-213
- E. Ask God to enable you to live by faith, so that His grace will sanctify you. p. 114, 213
- F. Strive to bring your soul into order by prayer, no matter how distressed you are by guilt, anguish, inordinate cares, or fears (Philip. 4:6-7) p. 213
- G. Use the whole matter and manner of prayer to bring your heart and soul into a holy frame of mind. pp. 213

- H. Do not confine and limit your prayers to prescribed forms of prayers. p. 214-215
- VII. SINGING OF PSALMS, pp. 215-217
- Songs must be sung in the right manner:
- A. Do not trust in the melody of your voice, as if that pleased God, who only delights in the melody of the heart (Col. 3:16). p. 216
 - B. Use singing for the same purpose as meditation and prayer, according to the nature of what is sung- to kindle your faith...to take joy and delight in the Lord and to glory in God. p. 216
 - C. Particularly use the Psalms for singing. p. 216
- VIII. FASTING is commended to us in the New Testament (Matt. 9:15; 17:21; 1 Cor. 7:5) pp. 217-218
- 3 guidelines for proper fasting:
- A. Do not trust in fasting as meriting the grace or favor of God. p. 217
 - B. Use fasting to help you in special, extraordinary times of prayer and repentance. p. 218
 - C. Only use fasting to accomplish its right purpose. p. 218
- IX. Vows, p. 218 (Not Recommended! No one can keep their own promises/vows, i.e., laws, let alone God's Law.)
- X. FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNION WITH THE SAINTS (Acts 2:42) pp. 218-224
- A. This means must be used diligently. pp. 117-118 (Note: This first point is taken from the original edition)
 - 1. First, in general, God ordinarily saves people through or in a church. p. 219

2. Secondly, in particular, fellowship with other Christians promotes holiness in many ways, p. 219-220
 - a. The Word and Sacraments, p. 219
 - b. Mutual prayer, p. 220
 - c. Mutual admonition, instruction, consolation, p. 220
 - d. External supports, which are meant to help reduce suffering, p. 220
 - e. Excommunication/church discipline/ministry of restoration, p. 220
 - f. The examples of other Christians to teach and encourage you, 220
 - g. Godly discourse, teaching, admonishing, comforting others in Christ, p. 221
 - h. Mutual ministry to other members, doing good to other believers, p. 221

- B. This means must be used rightly, for the attaining of holiness only in Christ. pp. 118-120, original; p. 221, revised (Note: This second point is taken from the original edition)

5 principles to keep in mind in order to use church fellowship correctly for the attaining of holiness: pp. 221-224

1. Do not trust in church membership in and of itself, or in any kind of a relationship with any church, to commend you to God. pp. 221-222
2. Do not follow any church further than you may follow in the way of Christ. p. 222
3. Do not think you must attain a certain level of grace before you join yourself in full communion with a church of Christ. p. 222-223
4. Keep fellowship and communion with a church for the sake of fellowship and communion with Christ (1 John 1:3; Zech. 8:23). pp. 223-224

5. Do not leave your church during a time of persecution. p. 224

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