



Playing by the Rules

Knute Rockne, the famed coach of Notre Dame, once said, “You fellows must do what you’re told if you wish to play on my team. If you are not willing, you need not begin. I care not what your record has been, you must observe the rules or you are disqualified. Should I find you violating the rules in one single instance, I will put you on the bench. Remember this, I can see farther ahead than you, and there is good reason for my insistence.” Not many people will dispute the fact that Coach Rockne was one of the greatest football coaches of all time. This was shown not only through his coaching prowess, but also by his reasoning. He understood the importance of abiding by the rules – his rules! The same holds true for Christians today. If we expect to please God we must “play” by His rules. Notice with me two distinct individuals and their different attitudes concerning the rules of God.

In 2 Kings 5 we read of the man Naaman. Naaman was a captain in the army of the king of Aram and was also a leper. When it was told to him by Elisha what he needed to do in order to be fully restored, he went away angry. Naaman expected a lot more from this man of God than to just be told to dip in the dirty Jordan River seven times (verses 11-12). In fact, he felt it should be more of a ceremony. He wanted Elisha to come out, wave his arms around and call on the name of the Lord – he wanted a show. All he needed to do, though, was dip in the river seven times and he would have been made whole! He chose, however, to get angry and ask a lot of questions.

In Genesis 22 we find a different person, but one who was still in the same situation as Naaman. God told Abraham to sacrifice his only son (22:2). Abraham not only did what the Lord requested of him, but he got up early in the morning and began his journey (verse 3), showing that he was willing to do what God asked of him – no matter how extraordinary the circumstances might be. Abraham didn’t cry, moan, complain, or ask questions. He understood how important it was to serve God and do His will. Abraham submitted himself to following the rules of God.

If people today expect to attain heaven we must, like Abraham, follow the rules of God in every aspect of our lives. Whether it be in the realm of salvation (being baptized for the remission of our sins – Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38) or in living our lives for Him (James 2:24,26), we must submit ourselves to God’s commands. Remember, there is good reason for God’s insistence. Pause. Ponder. Profit.

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