

“Read and Follow The Directions”

I thought it would be easy. No problem. Slap a few parts together and then tackle another project. Four little heads followed my every movement. Ah, I had a chance to be a hero here. After all, how hard can it be to assemble an air hockey table? Silly question.

It’s great to be Dad when things work smoothly. Then on the other hand, when the assembly started heading south in short order, it was time to see if there was a “Plan B.” No doubt the children could tell that my frustration level was rising. Then the sweetest young voice proposed the simplest of remedies. Caroline offered me a piece of paper from the box. *“Here are the directions, Daddy. Maybe they’ll help.”* As it turned out, “Plan B” should have been “Plan A” all along. *“But real men don’t read the directions. They don’t ask for directions.”* Yes they do—but often times only after they’ve lost their way or made a mess of assembling something. So, right then...I read the directions. I followed them. The holiday gift was soon ready for action. And guess what? I still got to be the hero in the eyes of four precious children.

Are you confused concerning your salvation? ***Read the directions!*** Maybe some have intimidated you into thinking that you need a college degree to understand the Bible and God’s will for your life. A group might say, *“We’re large in number—we can’t be wrong.”* Or maybe they’ve asked you to digest some sweet-tasting placebo—easy to swallow but worthless when it comes to salvation. Then there might be one who says, *“Follow me—I’m popular, handsome, charming, and witty.”* Here’s the only way to be right with God: ***Read and follow the directions.***

After is all is said and written, your salvation still depends on your relationship to God. Are you saved or lost in His sight? It doesn’t matter how or what you feel. It doesn’t matter what your favorite religious leader said. Your parents can’t save you. You’re not saved until God says you’re saved.

Is it possible to think you’re religiously right, and be all wrong? An apostle of Christ serves as an example of a sincere man who did the wrong thing. And he thought he was right when he persecuted the church! One time when Paul made defense of his actions, he said, *“...Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day”* (Acts 23:1). What? Good conscience when he had previously sought to destroy the church? Later Paul said,

I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. 11 And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities (Acts 26:9-11).

And he wrote to Timothy,

Though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief (1 Timothy 1:13).

If you can be sincere and still be wrong, how then will you know where you are in God's sight? **Read and follow the directions!** You do not have to know everything in life. But there are some things that you can and must know. If you're driving, you need to know the difference between a one-way street and a multi-lane highway. If you're a doctor, you know the difference between healthy and sick (we hope!). If you want to be saved, then you must know the difference between that which pleases God and that which is sinful. The Apostle of Love says you can know that you're saved.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:13 NKJV).

What's that? How will you know that you have eternal life? Read the directions God gave you—the Bible. Compare your life and beliefs with what you read there. It wasn't written to fool or confuse you. And John said you can **know** by reading what he wrote through inspiration. You can know for sure that you know God—that you're in the proper relationship. Read the directions and follow them!

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked (1 John 2:3-6 NKJV).

That's not hard to understand. Saying something doesn't make it so. A Ford is not a Chevrolet even if a hundred mechanics say it is. You don't know God—you're not in a right relationship with Him—if you do not keep His commandments. You can holler from the highest mountain top, "I love God." But the one who really loves God is "whoever keeps His word."

You see, real men and real women do indeed read and follow the directions—if they want to be right with God.

