

## OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A CHRISTIAN

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Today, it being the Sunday when those who were baptized yesterday got confirmed, I asked myself the question. What would be the most important thing that we can share, not only for our conformance, but also for us as family and friends? I want to thank you all for being here. It's such a joy to see family and friends of each one of them present, and to be able to thank you for all that you've done in their nurture. But what, as they go forward, do we all need? What is our responsibility as Christians, one might ask?

About a year and a half ago, I had the privilege of speaking at a pastors' conference where I was given the topic, "How Then Shall We Live?". This was a question posed by Francis Schaeffer, and he asked that question almost 50 years ago, looking at the times that we were in and saying, "In these turbulent times, how do we live as Christians?" Do we have a responsibility as a Christian to live in a particular way?

Charles (Chuck) Colson asked the question again albeit in a different form. "How now shall we live?" Again asking the same question – In these difficult, challenging times, what is our role as Christians? Do we have some kind of responsibility in the areas of moral and legal and social arenas to live as Christians?

We look at the Bible and we find that the Bible talks about various things that must be a part of our Christian makeup. The Bible tells us that we are to be in the world but not of the world, that we are to let our light shine, that we are to live holy lives, that we are to live lives that showcase Christian values, to stand up for justice, to care for the poor, the widows, the orphans. And the list goes on as you go through the word of God. And the interesting part is that all of these statements seem to run contrary to the opinions and beliefs of the world. In other words, we seem to be swimming in the opposite direction.

However, Jesus warned us. He said in [John 16:33](#) "I have told you all this so that you may have peace of heart and mind. Here on earth, you will have many trials and sorrows. But cheer up for I have overcome the world."

Couple of things that need to encourage us as we look at our responsibilities as a Christian.

- i. He has overcome the world and He will lead us through it.
- ii. In the midst of doing what we are expected to do as Christians, He will give us His peace to go through this challenging time.

So, living as a Christian and having trouble is kind of par for the course for all of us, that we have to live as Christians with a certain responsibility and to navigate a difficult world. This begs the question: How do we live responsibly in this world? That is a question that almost overwhelms us even before we can think of how to answer it, because it is so vast and so huge. However, as we know, problems or issues that are huge need to be broken down into smaller parts so that we can deal with each of those individually.

I want to offer to you five parts as we look at how we are to live responsibly in this world as a Christian.

1. We have a responsibility towards God.

2. We have a responsibility towards ourselves.
3. We have a responsibility towards others around us.
4. We have a responsibility towards the Church.
5. We have a responsibility towards the world.

### **OUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS GOD.**

What does that mean? I want to give you three areas that I think we can show responsibility to God without them being exhaustive.

#### **i. The whole area of our worship and devotion to God.**

John 4:24 says, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." What does that mean? Worship must come from the depths of our being. It involves a kind of a totality of who we are – our heart, soul and spirit – not just the externals or the rituals. True worship is and must be an internal experience, an intimate connection with God, facilitated by the Holy Spirit. Worship in spirit is supposed to be genuine and sincere. It is not about going through the motions or performing for others, but involves a heartfelt devotion and genuine expression of love and reverence for God.

Psalm 95:6 "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker."

#### **ii. The area of obedience.**

John 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments."

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?"

To be obedient to God, we can just look back to the beginning with Adam and Eve and see what disobedience cost. Disobedience will always bring a fractured relationship and fellowship with God. We always tend to run away when there is sin in our lives. Adam and Eve tried to hide and we do the same. Hence, obedience towards God is our responsibility towards Him.

#### **iii. The area of our stewardship.**

1 Peter 4:10 "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

Matthew 25:14-30 talks about the parable of the talents. The Master went away, and gave 5 talents, 2 talents, 1 talent to each of his servants. When he returned, he asked them what they had done. The one with 5 showed he had doubled it. The one with 2 had done the same. But the one who had only 1 had kept it. And the harshest response was given for him because he was called a wicked and lazy person.

So, as we look at this area of stewardship, we need to ask: What is my responsibility towards God? What do I need to bring to the table as I worship Him in terms of stewardship?

### **OUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS SELF.**

#### **i. Spiritual Growth**

2 Peter 3:18 "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity."

Grow in grace. Experience all that God is doing in our lives. The grace that He affords us, we need to experience day by day. And then in the knowledge of the Lord, are we growing in knowledge of who God is. That's a requirement for spiritual growth.

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Our responsibility towards self in terms of spiritual growth is to make disciplines of the Christian life become our own disciplines. We are to look at those disciplines, spending time in His Word, asking ourselves: am I reading enough of the Word? Am I growing in the Word? And then, to be able to even make prayer an integral part of our lives. As Paul says, "Pray without ceasing." In other words, pray continuously. Prayer must be your language, your conversation with God all the time. Pray without ceasing.

**ii. Holiness and a level of integrity.**

1 Peter 1:15-16 "but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

That's our calling for God. Our responsibility to ourselves is to make sure that we are holy offerings to God.

Titus 2:7-8 "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us." Make sure that the life you live is a life of integrity, so that nobody can say anything about you.

For holiness to be an integral part of our lives, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to work. This is the process of sanctification that we talk about. This means that the Holy Spirit is changing us from glory unto glory – the glory that departed from us in the Garden of Eden is slowly being given back to us as we align with God's holy will and purposes. So from the time when we are justified, when we make Jesus our Savior, invite Him to be our Savior, to the point of glorification when we one day go up to be with Him. That is the path of sanctification where we allow the Holy Spirit to do a regenerating work in us.

**iii. Self-care.**

We rarely think about self-care, of taking care of our own bodies. So often, we find people who hurt themselves through the pain that they may be going through. And yet, we are to consider our bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit. God resides in us.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body."

1 Timothy 4:8 "for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." We need to take care of ourselves, what houses the Holy Spirit. The onus is on us to provide God's Spirit with a wonderful, holy environment. So, take care of your physical self, emotional, mental and spiritual care.

I was in a conversation with Dr. Kamalesan's cousin, and she told me that he had one told her, "Work out and stay fit so you don't let your mind outlive your body."

## OUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS OTHERS.

### i. **Treat others with love and compassion.**

Matthew 22:37-39 "And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

As we look to love and have compassion on people around us, we need to invite God's agape love into our lives. For it is impossible to love people who we don't naturally go to. And yet, we are to love them by praying the highest good for them. And the only way that we can do it is to have God's agape love in our lives.

Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Be kind to one another. Kindness is at such a premium today. We don't have time for being kind people. And yet, that's what we are asked to be as we look to have compassion for the things that we see all around us. I always say this to you, but as we look at scripture, every time the word compassion is associated with Jesus, we find that He did something. Compassion was never an end in itself. Pity, maybe; not compassion. So we need to go beyond being sympathetic and even be empathetic for people around us.

Satya Nadella, Microsoft, says when he joined Microsoft many, many years ago, he was met by a gentleman called Richard Tate who worked there. He said, "I went into that meeting to talk to Richard Tate, and at the end of the meeting, he walked me to the door, and then he asked me, 'Tell me Satya,' he said, 'if you saw a baby on the pavement crying, what would you do?'" And Satya Nadella says, "I'd call 911." Richard Tate put his arm around me and said, "If you see a baby crying on the road, you pick it up. You need to have a little more empathy." We need to be empathetic. When we are only sympathetic, we don't involve ourselves. but empathy involves ourselves; we get in. we are committed; we get dirty, we get involved.

### ii. **We need to be of service and support one another.**

Galatians 6:2 "Bear one another's burdens." Bear, not just your own. Try and bear other's burdens as well and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Philippians 2:4 "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Both Sheila and I have experienced such strength and succour from people who have come alongside of us in challenging times, have spoken words of comfort and encouragement, have shared messages and sent flowers. We have been so encouraged and inspired by these generous ways of support. Bear one another's burdens, which also means that we look deeply into the eyes of people who are around us – to see beyond the façades and see if there's a need that can be met.

### iii. **We are called to be His witnesses.**

To the world around us, we are called to be His witnesses.

Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

To witness is to be able to tell people “This is what God has done in my life. I witness to this fact – God has done something marvelous in my life.” To be able to share it with people around us who have maybe no hope. and be able to provide that hope.

## **OUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE CHURCH.**

### **i. Participation and Fellowship.**

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

This meeting, beloved, on a Sunday, is so important. We often come to church thinking, what can I get out of church? Getting something out of church is only 50% of why we come to church. The other 50% is about giving. There are people who come to church, whom God has brought, who will benefit from something that you can give. And the writer of Hebrews is saying: Don’t neglect the coming together.

I’m so glad that we have our online live-stream. But I always say this: I hope that the online live stream doesn’t mean that you sit at home because it’s convenient to watch a service from home. It cannot and must not be like that. We have to make sure that we come. Service is not about convenience or complacency. It’s about coming here and having a vigorous interaction with God and with His people. Don’t neglect coming together, is what the Bible says. So, unless you’re sick and you’ve got to be home, or somebody else is sick, or you’re traveling, don’t use the online service to stay home because it’s the convenient thing to do. The Bible says we bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. It’s called a sacrifice because we sacrifice what we are feeling in terms of wanting to stay home and bring it into the house of the Lord. it’s a sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord.

### **ii. Using our spiritual gifts within the context of the church.**

1 Corinthians 12:7 “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

I told our young people during confirmation classes – having received the Holy Spirit, do you have a spiritual gift? And the answer to that is yes. To each one. If you know the Lord Jesus today, you have a spiritual gift, at least one. The question then is: Are you using it? Because that is the gift that is given for the common good. that is the gift that encourages, inspires. Those gifts are used in the context of the Church.

The writer of Hebrews says, “It is important for you to come together to use those spiritual gifts.” I always say, “If all of us have a spiritual gift, what a sad moment it will be when we get to heaven and we find in our ‘mansion that has our name’ one spiritual gift lying there, unopened. How say! Because you can’t use it in heaven. It’s done. The only place you can use the spiritual gift is here on earth.

### **iii. Supporting the church.**

2 Corinthians 9:7 “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Malachi 3:10 “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.”

The only time in the Bible that God says, “Test me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse and test me that your barns don’t overflow.”

## **OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE WORLD.**

### **i. Watch out for Social Justice.**

Micah 6:8 “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

To be away of social issues. Get involved where you can, where you see injustice, and stand up for justice yourself.

Isaiah 1:17 “learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.”

We must not be silent in those areas. There must be a Christian witness in areas of injustice in the world that is around us.

Somebody once said, “Silence isn’t always golden; sometimes it’s just plain yellow.”

That’s very true. Sometimes we’re just afraid to do what we know we ought to do. But our call, scripturally, is to be involved in the social issues in the world.

### **ii. Be good stewards of the environment.**

Genesis 2:15 “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

How do we treat the world that we are in, the waste that we have, all the things that we throw out without thinking? Are we thinking of this world that God gave us, that He created? Are we saying, “I have a responsibility towards taking care of it as well.”

### **iii. To be light in this world.**

Matthew 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Our lives cannot be hidden under a bushel. We need to live our lives out in the context of the world where we need to shine.

Philippians 2:15 “that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”

In the midst of all that is going on in the world today, that reeks of so much of ill-will and bad things and evil, God is saying our Christian responsibility in this world that He has placed us in, is to shine as lights.

The Bible provides a comprehensive guidance on what Christian responsibility looks like, from our duties to God, our obligations to ourselves, to people around us, to the church, and then to the world around us. five things, He says, that we need to have a clear Christian responsibility and response to. And so, it leaves us with answers to the question we asked: How then shall we live in the world that God has placed us, in the

time that He has place us, in all these areas, to God to ourselves, to our neighbors, to the church, and to the world? What must be our Christian responsibility?

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