

John 6:28,29 WHAT GOD REQUIRES

The Bible asks vital questions, this is one! Here is another from Job? “*How can a man be **in the right** before God?*” [Job 9:2]. Micah asks “*...what does the Lord **require** of you?*” [Mic 6:8]! I was really fascinated with what I read about **Leo Tolstoy**! He was a world famous novelist with wealth and riches and fame. But he was **concerned** about **these** questions!!

GOD DEMANDS

For Tolstoy, God demanded 100% perfection – and he tried with all his heart to reach that! But he didn’t manage! His friends had to hide all the ropes/guns around his home to **prevent** him from the temptation to commit **suicide**. He had a wonderful ambition – to reach **God’s** Ideal! To reach what the Bible & Christ’s Sermon on the Mount taught! [**Read Dens Digest, pages 2,3 marked**]. “*What shall we do that we may work the works of God?*”! **APP** Are **you/I** as concerned as Tolstoy was about such an important subject?

What’s the **answer** to Tolstoy’s great **dilemma**? “*Who then can be saved?*” The **next verse** of our **text** gives us the answer! “*This is the work of God, that you **believe** in Him whom He has sent*”! Isn’t that **music** to your ears? Tolstoy knew **nothing** of Christ’s **pardon** and **forgiveness**. It wasn’t in his vocabulary! Tolstoy knew about God’s **Law** – he feared the Law of God, but knew nothing of His pardon – he **knew nothing** of this verse “*and this is His commandment: that you should **believe** on the name of His Son Jesus Christ*” [1J3:23]. The Philippian Jailor was in terror “*What must I do to be saved?*” = “**believe on the L J C...be saved**”! + “*a righteousness from God **apart from law** is revealed...even the righteousness of God through **faith** in Jesus Christ to **all** and for **all who believe***” [Rom 3:21] + “*a man is **not justified** by observing the **law** but by **faith** in*

Jesus Christ” [Gal 2:16]! The answer is not in ‘doing’ but in ‘believing’ (ie, trusting) having **faith** in Jesus.

So what about the **law** that God seems so ‘fussy’ about? After we believe, can we just live as we like? No, no. The law **does** have to be **kept** - but note the **two things Tolstoy never understood!** For all his reading of the NT, he never understood:-

(a) the law is kept on **our behalf** by Jesus Christ – if we are **believers** in Him! God did **not waive** His law (because it is important to Him). Christ kept the law on behalf of those who believe in Him. “*God demonstrates His own love **for us** in that while we were still sinners Christ died **for us***”[R5:8] God “*did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up **for us*** (believers) **all**”[R8:32] “*Christ our Passover was sacrificed **for us***”[1C5:7] “*God **made Him** who knew no sin to be **sin for us***”[2C5:21]! “*Christ has **redeemed us** from the curse of the law being **made a curse for us***”[Gal 3:13]! Tolstoy never realized **Christ died on the behalf** of **sinners** who **believed** in Jesus! *Second Tolstoy never knew...

(b) “**Love is the fulfilling of the law**”[Rom 13:10b] “**all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: you shall love your neighbour as yourself**”[Gal 5:14] + “**If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself,” you do well**” [Jam 2:8]. If we are **true believers** in Christ there’s one thing that will happen to us – we will **love God AND people** more than anything else – more than your car, house! What is the **greatest commandment** in the **law**? Jesus replied ‘To love God’ and **added** for our benefit ‘The next is like it ‘To love your neighbour’! It seems Jesus really wanted us to ‘get’ this point for He **added** as if it was too important to be left out “**On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets**”[Mat 22:36-40]!

Love for **God** and **people** is the **one outstanding characteristic** of true believers! **Look:** “*A new command I give you **Love** one another. As I have loved you, so you **must** love one another. **By this** all men will know that you **are** My disciples, **if** you love one another*” [John 13:35]! This is the **mark** and **sign** that you **are** ‘born again’! True Xians are **identified, not** by their love of **doctrinal beliefs**, but by their **love** for other Xians! “*We **know** that we **have passed** from death to life **because** we **love** the brothers*”[1J3:14]. That might be hard but it is what we’re **called to!** We must love Xians with whom we disagree!

True faith in Jesus Christ **manifests** itself! You can’t have faith without ‘**tell-tale**’ **signs!** What are they? “*faith working through **love***”[Gal 5:6]! **Particularly** love to **God’s people!** Paul “*as we have opportunity let us **do good** to all people **especially** to those who belong to the **family of believers***”[Gal 6:10]! How you/I treat other Xians is very important to God! They are **His children** and we better not despise them!

Now God knows this will be **hard** for us – so He has put us into situations where we can **practice** this love! God has set us all in **families** – where love **ought** to be the dominant principle. We must love our families – despite their failings! You know we can be **trained** to **love** people! We are commanded to love our **enemies**.

Relationships – every epistle mentions them – with husband/wife, parents/children/ employee/employers etc. Human relations are so, so **important!** Have you noticed that the Ten Commandments are **all** about **relationships!** **4 re God, then 6 re our neighbours!** ‘When we say we are **making** time for the family, we are acknowledging they are only part of our lives – whereas God says relationships is what life is **all** about!

Relationships **must** have the **priority** in our lives! To be able to get on with people – all kinds – especially our family. A man who is **not** easily **offended**, that can **control** his anger/temper, that can **suppress** his pride, and **overcome** his greed, and **forgive** an injury, who can **repent** and **apologize** is a man worth his salt – you can do a lot with that Xian.

The **great enemy** of relationships? **Busyness!** Doing **very lawful/necessary** things! Legitimate work in the home and office! To be **preoccupied** with our own wee area of work and ignoring those around you who are needing for our attention/our interest is a sin that has a heavy cost to pay! The **computer** is much more **attractive** to us!

Do you know what is the **most important gift you can give** your family, loved ones, the Church? A lot of people think it is your **money** – but it isn't. It your **time!** Quest: How much do you love Christ? **Answer:** How much **time** do you spend in **His company?** When you give someone your time, you are giving something you **cannot get back**. You can get **money back** – just work overtime! But you can't get yesterday afternoon back – its gone for ever! 'Tomorrow' will only come once. Who are you going to spend it with? Who are you going to spend tomorrow night with – the one you love most? TV, friends, or God? The **best** way to **spell love** is **T – I – M – E**.

Tolstoy did **not spend TIME** with God or Jesus Christ – and therefore, he had **no time** for his wife or family! Jesus said "*whatever you did for one of the least of these My brothers, you did for Me*" [Mat 25:40]. Jesus **equates** time spent with His people as time spent with Him! **If** you/I truly **believe** in Jesus "*in Him whom He sent*", (and thus 'work the work of God') we will understand, unlike Tolstoy, that God's Ideal is **not** our ideal but believing = "*faith working thru love*" primarily love to God resulting in love to people!