



## Duty Calls

In 2006 I received a letter from a commanding military officer serving overseas with our two boys in *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. I'm sure lots of parents received his letter. It was basically telling us how proud he was and what a good job they all were doing over there. I loved one of his comments, "*Now, more than ever, our nation needs men who understand the value and meaning of duty; in outposts where danger, death, and destruction require soldiers of courage, dedication and intelligence.*" This made me think of what is needed in the Army of God. Yes, duty has to do with protecting and helping others even if we don't always feel like it.

*It is thy duty oftentimes to do what thou wouldst not; thy duty, too,  
to leave undone that thou wouldst do.* --Thomas À Kempis

*I slept and dreamed that life was joy, I awoke and saw that life was duty,  
I acted, and behold duty was joy.* --Sir Rabindranath Tagore

In movies, contemporary songs and on TV today, do you ever hear about duty any more? Do you ever hear about doing your duty? It seems like the very idea of doing something simply because *it is the right thing to do* has become totally passé – way defunct. Instead, today's mentality is more along the lines of: "*What's in it for me?*"

Ever known a Boy Scout? As kids, my brothers and I were always busy with *Tom Sawyer Boy's Camp* -- our dad's business, but we had friends who were Boy Scouts. Maybe you were one and remember the oath: "*On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country, to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.*" Man, I just love that! Did you know that God expects Christians to do their duty as He commands them to.

Many of us feel reluctant though. We don't like words like: "command", "responsibility" or "duty." These words don't feel right when we hear them ...but that's why we must remind ourselves that these concepts are still very important! We shouldn't just go with what feels good. We are not our own. We were bought at a price – yes, you are purchased property of Jesus Christ.

The Bible often likens us to slaves for whom the Lord zealously comes and bids for our freedom. He knew the cost and laid it all down. Then He draws us close to know and serve Him. We used to be shackled to sin under the power of Satan, and then Jesus purchased our freedom with His own blood (1 Cor. 6:20). Very costly!

At home, my son Christian Andraes has all of the privileges that go along with being my son. But he knows that with those privileges come responsibility and duties. When I ask him to help his mother with something, I really don't have to beg or plead with him about it. I don't say, "*Precious son, if you might find the time this month, would you please take out the trash?*" I simply say, "*Can you get the trash.*" But I would never say to someone on the sidewalk near my house, "*You there. Heads up and take out the trash.*" I might feel like doing that, but I just can't do that. That's way over the line, but I can say that to my son, no problem and he doesn't get all bent out of shape over it. In the same way, the Lord has blessed us with lots of Kingdom privileges and perquisites that come with our relationship as His sons and daughters. But we also have accompanying Kingdom responsibilities. May I bring six important biblical responsibilities to your attention?

**1.) Not causing another to stumble spiritually is our duty.** It is inevitable that stumbling blocks will come. But the person who causes another believer to stumble spiritually or fall away commits a very serious offense. According to Luke 17:1-2, it literally would be better to perish in the brink than to be responsible for driving someone from the Christian faith. Therefore, we need to seriously consider the kind of examples we are as Christ's followers.

**2.) Caring enough to correct those who fall into sin is our duty.** This isn't easy to do ...especially in dealing with carnal people, but it's something we are to do if we care about each other and are doing our duty as followers of Jesus (see Lk. 17:3 and Jam. 5:19). If a fellow Christian has deliberately gone astray, what are we to do? According to the Scriptures, we are to pray they'd be receptive and go to that person, try to reach him or her and bring that fellow believer back. If they are open and humble, God will grant them repentance.

**3.) Forgiving those who hurt our friends (or us personally) is our duty.** We've been forgiven so much, so this should come easy for us. Let's say that the same person you reprove falls into sin, makes a mess out of his or her life, and in the process says vicious, libelous (or slanderous) things about you. Then he or she comes back and says, "*I have been thinking about all of these things. My life is a mess. I repent. I have asked God to forgive me. Would you please forgive me?*" What would you do? Jesus told us, "***If another believer sins, rebuke him; then if he repents, forgive him. Even if he wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, forgive him***" (Lk. 17:3-5nlt). Jesus also said, "***If you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins***" (Matt. 6:15). Forgiven people should be forgiving people. Let me turn it around, if you are not a forgiving person, I would have to wonder how much you personally know of God's forgiveness. Are you saved?

Someone once said, "*Forgiveness is not a case of 'holy amnesia' that wipes out the past. Instead, it is the experience of healing that drains the poison from the wound.*" If the Bank of America president rips off my account multiples times, sure I'm to forgive him, but in a free country God certainly isn't going to feel angry if I set up a direct deposit at Chase and start banking there.

A man once said to the famed preacher, John Wesley, "*I never forgive, and I never forget.*" John Wesley countered, "*Then sir, I hope you never sin.*" If someone has sinned against you many times, you should be willing to forgive because you have sinned. It is better to forgive them multiple times, even if that person is not sincere, than to refuse to forgive and thus place a stumbling-block in the way. Even if the person doesn't think they have ever sinned against anyone, we must forgive them in our hearts ...and God can help us. I wouldn't approach an offender who thinks they are innocent, to say "*I forgive you.*"—I just do it ..inside. Otherwise they'd probably think I was religiously whacked and if they are lost what kind of witness would that be?

**4.) Full obedience to God is our duty.** Yes, it's our duty to obey the Word of God. The Lord's duty is to keep His promises. And in God's way of doing things, those two things never conflict.

*Obeying God at first seems hard until we come to see,  
That all He asks is for our good and makes life full and free. —Anonymous*

**5.) Reaching out compassionately to unbelievers is our duty.** Jesus told a man in Luke 9:60, "*Your duty is to go and preach the coming of the Kingdom of God.*" It's our responsibility to do for others what someone once did for us -- sound the warning and give the alarm! Unbelievers must be told of the only way to escape certain judgment and punishment ahead. Time is about up. They may ridicule our Message and make fun of us, but that doesn't change the facts. Let's be righteously-pro-active and prayerful about leading people to the safety that can be found in Christ alone!

*I'll tell the world that I'm a Christian -- I'm not ashamed His Name to bear;  
I'll tell the world that I'm a Christian -- I'll take Him with me anywhere. --Fox*

*Rescue the perishing, duty demands it -- strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;  
Back to the narrow way patiently win them, tell the poor wanderer a Savior has died.  
--Crosby*

**6.) Assisting the needy in practical ways is our duty.** Regarding some poor Jews, the Apostle Paul said, "*If the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.*" I don't believe that the Christian shoemaker does his duty by putting little crosses on the shoes he crafts, but by making good shoes with a good attitude, because God is more interested in his good craftsmanship and character. I don't believe that the Christian homemaker does her duty by putting a fish on the back of her soccer-mom-mini-van, but rather by living consistently as a good example before those alert little eyes she is carting around from game to game, because God is more interested in her daily influence than in what the final score is or in what the other parents think of her. I don't believe that the Christian cell phone salesman does his duty by sticking Billy Graham stickers on the handset boxes he sells, but by handling himself with integrity in how he represents his Boss and company to each customer.

*They who tread the path of righteous labor, follow where Thy feet have trod;  
They who work without complaining do the holy will of God. --van Dyke*

Duty calls. Will we call out to the Lord regarding this? He will supply all the grace to take heed. Jesus said, "***If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.***" (Jn. 15:7). I certainly feel like gravitating towards the latter part of this wonderful promise because I like its reference to what I desire. I have quite a ways to go. However, if I am responsibly maintaining a moment-by-moment communion with the Holy Spirit, and if God's Word is at home in my heart, then it's obviously going to revolutionize my prayer life ...including all that I pray for. I'll be thinking of others, instead of confessing or demanding perpetual health, wealth and blessing. I will be doing my duty to be a good example and not stumble people. With God as my Helper, I will gently reprove the wayward, showing them great respect ...at the right time and I will forgive all offenders, to obey God, to genuinely care for the lost and to help the disadvantaged at the point of their need.

*Steadfast, then, in our endeavor, Heavenly Father, may we be;  
And forever, and forever, we will give the praise to Thee. —MacKellar*

Sure, we Americans have taken hold of the privileges, so now we need to accept the responsibilities. If we will wear the crown; we must also bear the cross. It's our obligation to respond to Christ and to impact those around us. Big blessings are found along the pathway of duty!

Have Kurt's fishing devos blessed you? Click on the "Contact" button and let him know!

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