

RESPONSIBILITY VS. UNRELIABILITY

KNOWING AND DOING WHAT GOD AND OTHERS ARE EXPECTING OF ME

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12)

DEFINITION OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Biblical word *duty* describes the concept of responsibility. It is translated from the Greek word *opheilo*. It means “to owe” or “the good will due to another.” The word *opheilo* is translated different ways in the New Testament. These include *ought*, *due*, *need*, *owe*, and *bound*. “We then that are strong ought [*opheilo*] to bear the infirmities of the weak” (Romans 15:1); “Let the husband render unto the wife due [*opheilo*] benevolence” (I Corinthians 7:3); “But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need [*opheilo*] so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry” (I Corinthians 7:36). “Owe [*opheilo*] no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8); “We are bound [*opheilo*] to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren” (II Thessalonians 2:13).

DUTIES THAT ARE OUR RESPONSIBILITY

1. Paying on a debt of love

“Owe (*opheilo*) no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8).

2. Supporting faithful ministries

“It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty (*opheilo*) is also to minister unto them in carnal things” (Romans 15:27).

3. Protecting weaker believers

“We then that are strong ought (*opheilo*) to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Romans 15:1).

4. Making marriage decisions

“But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need (*opheilo*) so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry” (II Corinthians 7:36).

5. Giving love in marriage

“So ought (*opheilo*) men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself” (Ephesians 5:28).

6. Being thankful for believers

“We are bound (*opheilo*) to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth” (II Thessalonians 1:3).

7. Suffering for believers

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought (*opheilo*) to lay down our lives for the brethren” (I John 3:16).

8. Being in submission

“For this cause ought (*opheilo*) the woman to have power on her head because of the angels” (I Corinthians 11:10).

9. Caring for children

“The children ought (*opheilo*) not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children” (II Corinthians 12:14).

10. Walking in Christ's love

“He that saith he abideth in him ought (*opheilo*) himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (I John 2:6).

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought (*opheilo*) to love one another” (I John 4:11).

11. Providing hospitality

“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; . . . We therefore ought (*opheilo*) to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth” (III John 5-8).

HOW OUR DEBT REQUIRES RESPONSIBILITY

In the same way that a citizen shares the debt load of his country, so every believer shares a debt of love to every other believer. Paul states, “**Owe** (*opheilo*) no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8). Jesus explained the necessity of paying that debt in His parable of the unjust servant.

Since we owe an unfathomable debt of love to Christ, the question comes, “How can we even *begin* to pay it?” Jesus explained that what we do to benefit others is actually done to Him. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

This same sense of indebtedness should carry over into our employment responsibilities, as explained by Paul. “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23-24).

This gives further meaning to Christ's parable of the unprofitable servant.

“Which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?”

“Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our **duty** (*opheilo*) to do” (Luke 17:7-10).

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESPONSIBILITY

An important aspect of responsibility is being personally accountable for our words, attitudes, and actions. These are to be consistent with the commands of Christ, because in the final judgment they will be exposed and evaluated on the basis of genuine love.

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (I John 2:4-6).

1. Responsibility for thoughts

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Corinthians 10:5).

2. Responsibility for our words

“Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37).

3. Responsibility for actions

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10).

4. Responsibility for actions

“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile” (Psalm 34:13).

5. Responsibility for motives

“I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give very man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17:10).

HOW RESPONSIBLE ARE YOU?

- Do you accept responsibility for the debt of love that you owe every other believer?
- Do you determine to set aside any personal pleasure that could cause a weaker brother to stumble or be offended?
- Do you fulfill all your responsibilities in marriage?
- Do you fulfill your responsibility to pray for other believers?
- Do you look for practical ways to lay down your life for fellow believers?
- Do you accept personal responsibility for all your words, actions, and attitudes?
- Do you purpose to fulfill your responsibilities to train up sons and daughters to be mighty in Spirit?
- Do you show responsibility for the practical needs of believers?
- Do you give support to those who minister to you in the Word?
- Do you take responsibility for your own health and well being to better serve the Lord?