

Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
149 Main Street
Madison Heights, VA 24572



MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

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Open doors-----Open hearts

Brenda Harris
Secretary

All Your Heart and All Your Soul

I felt quite an honor to be asked to do the benediction for the service honoring veterans this year at Monument Terrace. During the prayer I mentioned that it is both an honor and a duty to serve. Well, the same is true with ministry; it is an honor and a duty to serve the Lord. We receive blessings from the Lord all the time. We get fresh food, clean air, clean water, a surplus of luxuries, and the list goes on and on. The evidence of nature verifies God's love for us through the beauty of the earth. If we could possibly count the vast resources that God supplies to us we could count the many blessings but they are too numerous to count. On top of all of this we receive mercy and love from God. After giving us so much, what does God require of us?

Taking guidance from the Bible, in **Deuteronomy 10:12-13** we see the question being asked "what does the Lord your God require of you?" The Bible follows up the question by providing the answer "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 of the Lord your God" (NRSV). So, there it is, the Bible tells us what God wants of us. The Bible teaches us we are to fear God, to walk in God's ways, to love God, and serve God. I think it is important to point out that the Bible not only tells us to serve God but to serve the Lord with all of your heart and with all of your soul. This Scripture is so important that Jesus referred to it in **Matthew 22:37** when a lawyer among the Pharisees asked Jesus which commandment in the law is the greatest.

It is our honor and duty to fear the Lord. The word fear means reverence not fright. We are to adore the majesty, acknowledge the authority, stand in awe of the power, and avoid anything that might cause us to transgress from the will of God. I think the three commandments to walk in God's ways, keep the commandments, and the decrees, are pretty much saying the same thing. It is using repetition to emphasize the necessity to obey God. The people of God are to be devoted to keeping the Lord's commandments. We are not just to have them, or to know them, we are to live by them. We are also instructed to love God. There are various degrees of love. I prefer to think of our relationship with the divine as a parent and child relationship. This is the type of relationship emphasized by Jesus. Our love for the Lord dictates obedience and approval seeking like a child obeys the parent and seeks approval out of appreciation once the child realizes the extent of the parents love.

I will close with the commandment to serve. I preach and teach the call to serve many times and wonder if I am, at times, too demanding. However, it is not my commandment. The call to serve comes from God. It is an honor and duty to serve the Lord. There is a very interesting characteristic about this particular Scripture that we simply cannot ignore. If you recognize it for what it is, and reflect upon it's true meaning, it will change your life. There is a very specific characteristic about serving the Lord your God - with all your heart and with all your soul. If you live by the Scripture there is no way you can say no when asked to serve. If you live by the Scripture, you will give honor to God by being devoted to serving God in every way that you possibly can. With love for the Lord it is not only an honor and a duty it is also a joyous response to the Lord's blessings. Serve the Lord with all your heart and all your soul it is a wonderful joyous response that comes from your love for the Lord.

In Christian Love,
George Harris