

Some Things Not Optional in Religion

This article assumes man wants to do right, and wants to go to heaven.

"Optional" means that something is left to one's own discretion. That is, we can exercise the power of choice. It simply means we have a choice. When we say there are some things not optional in religion, we mean that man does not have a choice.

When we buy a car, we may or may not want a radio in it. It is optional! When we buy an appliance, the brand is optional. Indeed, even in religion there are many areas that are left to human judgment. As such, we may indeed choose. For example, God has left the time to meet on Sunday for worship up to us. Other optional matters include how many songs to sing in worship, how to get to worship, and where and how large our buildings are to be. Once matters are left to our judgment, we may believe about them as we wish. Although God does not want us to be arbitrary and selfish.

However, although we have this liberty in Christ, there are many areas about which we do not have a choice. For example, we do not have an option in believing the virgin birth of Christ, or in the miracles of Christ, including the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Some Things Are Optional, and Some Things Are NOT Optional

In obeying the commands of Christ, we do not have an option. In fact, many commands of Christ are framed with the word "must," one of the strongest words in the English language.

Some examples:

- You **must** worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)
- You **must** be born again. (John 3:5) This includes water and the Spirit.
- We **must** be saved by the name of Christ. (Acts 4:12)
- Except you repent you will perish. (Luke 13:3)

- The one who comes to God **must** believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of the ones who **diligently seek** him. (Heb. 11:6)

There are two motives for doing God's will:

- "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;" "Knowing therefore the **terror** of the Lord, we persuade men;" (II Cor. 5:10,11)
- "If you **love** me, keep my commandments." "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words:" (John 14:15, 23-24)

Let us always be found obeying in love the Lord's commandments.