

ASKING GOD FOR “TWO OR THREE WITNESSES” BEFORE WE OBEY?

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The Scripture reads, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established’ (2Corinthians 13:1b).

This Scripture is often misunderstood by God’s people when the Lord speaks to their heart regarding a matter of obedience.

For instance, when the Lord speaks to them to do something, the common response to the Lord is, “Lord, give me ‘two or three witnesses in order that I know that it’s REALLY You.” This Scripture was never meant to be used by God’s people as an excuse for not getting to know His voice intimately or to put off instant obedience.

To reveal the major unseen problems and ramifications that this is causing in the Body of Christ for the Kingdom of God in the earth, let’s look at a few examples:

Could you imagine a commanding officer of an army giving direct orders to his subordinates and then his subordinates going to look for a “confirmation” to what the commander has said?

As parents, we give our children instructions on what to do or what not to do. Could you imagine, if after our children heard what we had to say, they left our presence and then asked for what you said to be “confirmed out of the mouth of two or three witnesses” before they obeyed?

If you were an employer and you gave strict instructions and procedures to your employees to accomplish a certain task but instead of doing what you said, they wanted your words to first be “confirmed” by two or three witnesses before obeying?

It sounds quite ridiculous but that is exactly what is happening amongst Christians in their responses to God. The reality is, Jesus is our Commanding Officer over us who are in His army; We are God’s children to Whom we have to answer and obey; We are also stewards of what God has entrusted to us, which is everything that we have, and in establishing His kingdom on earth by living in the Spirit. Should we not obey the first time we hear the voice of God with questions about it? The Scriptures declare, “My sheep hear (intimately) my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27).

We shouldn’t have to second guess God’s voice. Could you imagine a husband and wife speaking to each other and the husband coming back to his wife saying, “Honey, I didn’t know it was you?” The husband would probably have a frying pan stuck to the side of his head for a comment like that. If we don’t know the Lord’s voice as we ought to, we need to spend daily time in His word and intimate time with Him so we can get to know Him. This is where growing in a meaningful relationship starts with our spouse or with God.

Let’s examine every Scripture that speaks of “two or three witnesses.” As we study it shall become abundantly clear that these Scriptures were never intended to be a substitute for an intimate knowing of the Lord’s voice, or for immediate obedience. Rather, they were given as a means to accurately establish the truth of an accusation brought against someone.

From the Old Testament:

1. “Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness” (Deut 17:6).
2. “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established” (Deut 19:15).
3. “Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty” (Num 35:30).

Now let's go to the New Testament Scriptures (which are quotes of the Old Testament Scriptures):

4. "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses" (1Tim 5:19).
5. "I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced. This will be the third time I am coming to you. By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established" (2Cor 12:21-13:1).
6. "Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses" (Heb 10:28).

There are no Scriptures that use "two or three witnesses" as a tool to find out whether or not they are to follow the Holy Spirit's leading, or as a substitute for knowing God's voice. "Two or three witnesses" are ALWAYS used to establish the truth of an accusation, NEVER to prove if the Lord is speaking or not.

Even Jesus used that specific Scripture twice to teach about addressing accusations. Once was on the subject of when your brother or sister in the Lord sins against you and the proper way of going about establishing their guilt: "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church" (see Matt 18: 15-17). Jesus used this Scripture once in His own defense against accusations that were hurled at Him from the Pharisees denying that He was the Light of the world (see John 8:12-17). Never did Jesus use that Scripture to verify if God really wanted Him to do something or not.

Therefore, let us no longer deny God the right to have instant obedience. If we are lacking in this area, it is even more important for us to diligently grow and mature in our love relationship with Him so that His voice and heart intentions are not foreign to us. It takes sacrificing selfishness and diligence in spending quantity and quality time with Him. This is our Father's heart, to know Him even as He knows us.

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(All Scriptures taken from the King James Version Bible or the New King James version.)

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