

**John 14:23: The verb “Tereo”: “to keep”; The Fiduciary Responsibility of the Believer to Protect, Preserve, Guard, & Maintain the Lord’s Word**

**John 14:23** - Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone develops reciprocal love for Me, he will learn, protect, and execute My word; and My Father will love him in response to his loyalty, and We, both the Father and I, will establish fellowship with him, furthermore, we, both the Father and I, will take up residence in him by means of indwelling.”

1. Our responsibility under reciprocal love is to “learn, protect, and execute” the Written Word proclaimed by the Living Word, Jesus Christ.
2. This duty is found in one word of the text, the predictive future active indicative of the verb **τηρέω, tēreō** which is translated “will keep” in the New American Standard.
3. In our analysis of *tēreō* we discovered that “to keep” involves the duty “to watch over in order to protect,” “to guard,” “to preserve,” and “to maintain.”
4. These ideas define the obligation of not only the original disciples but also all who become believers. Whereas at salvation our faith is directed toward Jesus Christ, in the Christian walk our faith is directed toward the Word.
5. When faith is placed in the Word then reciprocal love is developed in the soul of the believer and with it the obligation to take a fiduciary responsibility regarding the Word.
6. When a person is saved he automatically takes on the obligation to learn the Word and after having done so to become its fiduciary. He does this by making sure that it is protected from erroneous interpretations, guarded from those who would misuse or abuse it, preserved by not allowing anything to be added or subtracted, and maintained by its accurate communication.
7. To do this the believer must learn what the Bible says through intensive Bible study. As a matter of fact, the Lord grants supervisory power over His Word to every believer at salvation.
8. This is a fiduciary responsibility, a legal term that defines the relationship between the owner of a property and his agent, called a trustee.
9. Christ owns the Word and he deposits it into our safekeeping. Definitions of the legal terms related to fiduciary arrangements help amplify this point:

**Black, Henry Campbell.** *Black’s Law Dictionary.* Rev. 4th ed. (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1968), 753:

**Fiduciary.** [Latin: *fido*: to trust.] Derived from Roman law, and means a person holding the character of a trustee in respect to the scrupulous good faith and candor which it requires.

**Fiduciary Capacity.** One is said to act in a “fiduciary capacity” when the business he transacts is not his own [it is the Lord’s Word placed in his care], but for the benefit of another person [Jesus Christ], necessitating great confidence and trust on the one part [of Christ] and a high degree of good faith on the other part [of the believer-trustee].

**Fiduciary Contract.** An agreement by which a person [Christ] delivers a thing [the Word] to another [a believer] on the condition that he will restore it to him [through the production of divine good, accomplished by accumulation of Bible doctrine in the soul, manifest outwardly as honor].

**Fiduciary Relation.** Those relations which exist whenever one man [Christ] trusts and relies upon another [a believer].

10. Christ places His trust in us to properly handle His Word. It is His possession and we are given responsibility to take care of it by means of the spiritual life designed for the Church Age.
11. Our fiduciary capacity is through the enabling power the Holy Spirit. Our fiduciary contract is His mandate to us to “keep the Word.” Our fiduciary relationship is with Christ who has made us His trustees.
12. Our fiduciary function is the subject of many passages of Scripture:

**2 Corinthians 2:17** - We are not like the many [unbelievers who reject the Word], who huckster [καπηλεύω, *kapēleuō*: to manipulate the Word for personal profit, i.e., false teachers, e.g., many TV evangelists] the Word of God, but from discernment [εἰλικρίνεια, *eilikrineia*: metaphorically for analysis done in the clear light of day] from the source of God we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

**2 Corinthians 4:2** - We have renounced those things hidden by shame [a reluctance based on a fear of being found dishonorable, e.g., huckstering the Word], not in wheel-tracks of personal expediency, nor by adulterating the Word of God, but by clearly revealing the truth, which commends us favorably to every man in the sight of God.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13** - We keep on thanking God that having received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the Word of God which performs its work in you who believe.

**2 Thessalonians 2:15** - Fellow believers, stand fast, seize and hold the doctrines you have been taught, whether face to face or by Epistle [the written medium for teaching the Word of God].

**1 Timothy 4:12** - Let no one reject your authority because of your youth, but keep on being an example to believers in your speech, behavior, virtue love, faith, and purity of thought.

**1 Timothy 5:17** - Pastor-teachers who have ruled well must be considered worthy of double honor [remuneration and respect], especially those who work hard at studying [λόγος, *logos*: the written Word] and teaching [διδασκαλία, *didaskalia*: the spoken word].

**v. 18** - For the Scripture says, “You should not muzzle the ox while he is threshing” [Deuteronomy 25:4; 1 Corinthians 9:9], and “The laborer is worthy of his wages” [Deuteronomy 24:15; Luke 10:7].

**2 Timothy 2:15** - Be motivated [σπουδάζω, *spoudazō*: take pains; be diligent, make every effort] to present yourself approved to God as a skillful workman without shame, accurately handling the Word of truth.

**2 Timothy 4:2** - Preach the Word! Be prepared when it is convenient or inconvenient. Rebuke, exhort with patience by means of instruction.

**Titus 1:9** - Holding fast to the faithful Word according to the teaching of doctrine so that he [the pastor-teacher] might be capable to consistently exhort and refute those who contradict.

**1 Peter 2:2** - Like newborn babies, desire the pure milk of spiritual reasoning so that you may grow up in respect to your salvation.

**James 1:22** - Keep on becoming [ present middle imperative of: γίνομαι, *ginomai*: a work in progress ] doers of the Word [ ποιητής, *poiētēs*: refers to the transfer of divine policy into the *kardia* ], and not merely hearers [ ἀκροατής, *akroatēs*: listening to the teachings of the Bible but rejection of them ] who delude [ παραλογίζομαι, *paralogizomai*: to delude, deceive, and defraud oneself; to reason falsely or incorrectly ] themselves.

13. Each of these verses contains the concept of fiduciary responsibility, ether by the believer-priest or by the pastor-teacher.
14. If we love Christ, we will accept our fiduciary responsibilities and be more motivated to advance in the divine system from which will develop our capacity to serve Him and God to the maximum.
15. One more time, here is the verse that contains the concept of our fiduciary duties before Christ and God:

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