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Obedience

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Obedience

Blessing comes through obedience. There's no other way to put it. It is only when we obey God and live life His way that we truly experience Him and all that He has to offer us.

Obedience is a key concept in how we relate to Almighty God. Our obedience comes out of our relationship with Him; we obey Him because we love Him!

"I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he will grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, that Christ will dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, you will be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you will be filled up to all the fullness of God." —Ephesians 3:16-19

That's what we all want ... to experience God's power, and His love, and His grace. But all of that blessing comes through obedience.

Q. What comes to your mind when you think about obeying God?

Q. At this point in your life, are you willing to obey God ... in what areas of your life?

The entire Bible is full of evidence that God is serious about obedience. He wants us to obey Him. If you type "obey" into the keyword search on the online Bible reference Bible Gateway (www.biblegateway.com), you will come up with more than 200 references ... here are just a few:

"Then Samuel said, 'Does the Lord take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as he does in obedience? Certainly, obedience is better than sacrifice; paying attention is better than the fat of rams.'" —1 Samuel 15:22

"You must obey him and keep his commandments and statutes that I am giving you today." —Deuteronomy 27:10

"Give me understanding so that I might observe your law, and keep it with all my heart." —Psalm 119:34

"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!" —Luke 11:28

Q. What do you learn from the preceding four verses about obedience to God?

Q. How do you feel about the word “obedience,” especially as it relates to your relationship with God?

Q. In what ways is the concept of obedience difficult or easy for you?

Q. Who are some of the people you obey? Why?

Q. What are some of the reasons you choose to disobey people and rules that are in your life?

If we’re really honest, the main problem for us when it comes to our obedience of God is not ignorance, it is defiance ...we don’t obey God because we don’t want to. That’s a tough admission. The Bible records a consistent recurring scenario: God’s people do not listen to Him, they do not take Him seriously, and they repeatedly disobey His commands. After a period of time God punishes them. And as a result, they experience terrible, serious, and painful consequences. This happens over and over and over. “They would not listen” is a tragic, common phrase in the Old Testament!

Are you serious about trusting and obeying our loving heavenly Father?

Unfortunately, many Christians look, dress, act, talk, lie, cheat, and participate in the same godless activities as non-Christians, and therefore our ability to impact our hurting world is seriously compromised. The question is not “What does God want me to do?” but, “Am I willing to do what God wants me to do?”

Q. In what areas of your life do you think God wants you to obey Him?

Never think that your relationship with God is a matter of Him saving you and then handing you a bunch of rules to obey! That is simply dead religion. A relationship with God brings about a changed life, a desire to do what He wants you to do that stems from your relationship with your heavenly Father!

We cannot obey God in our own strength. It is because of our relationship with Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit motivates and empowers us to obey Him! Our act of obedience is to surrender our lives to the Holy Spirit, and allow Him to make us Christ-like.

As an example, let’s consider love for a moment. On our own, it can be almost impossible sometimes to love others. But because of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is actively at work in giving us His supernatural love for others. God’s love is forgiving

rather than judgmental, patient rather than irritable, and compassionate rather than easily angered and embittered towards others. We obey God's command to love others through the Holy Spirit working in us.

Many Christians are able to put on a good front, which appears loving, while holding deep grudges and resentments inside. Christ's love is totally different; it begins on the inside. When we confess our sin of resentment, God's love takes over.

Galatians 2:20 explains it this way:

"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So the life I now live in the body, I live because of the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Q. What part of this verse do you need to claim for your own life?

Biblical obedience is be enabled when we surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be accomplished in any other way!

Application

Q. Make a list of all of the areas in your life that require obedience to God in some way

Q. Evaluate which areas you are actually obeying and in which ones you are not obeying—even a little.

Choose one area where you are disobeying your heavenly Father and find a verse of scripture to memorize and apply to that area of your life. Thank God for the Holy Spirit's power to help you become more obedient.

Additional Study

Soul Prescription: Experience True Healing and Freedom by Bill Bright & Henry Brandt. God longs to see you living in the joy and freedom that He promises in his Word, but sometimes we choose poorly and end up with destructive habits. This book presents a unique, methodical, and biblically based approach to eliminating sin habits so that you can live a victorious Christian life.

Grace Rules by Steve McVey. There's a big difference between living by the rules and letting God's grace rule you. If you're living by the rules, you'll always be exhausted. You'll feel that you're not doing enough for God and that if you don't

quite measure up, He will be displeased with you. But God never meant for the Christian life to be that way! His love for us isn't based on how we perform for Him. He sent Christ to set us free from rules. He didn't call us to serve Him in our own feeble power, but to let His power flow through us—a power that is without limit! What's more, this power is already available to us right now. God has provided everything we need for a truly meaningful, joy-filled life here on earth—all because of His marvelous grace. Rest in God's grace, and let Him live through you—because grace rules!