

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

Obedience

There is one great curse in nominal Christendom - among those people who name the Name of Jesus Christ. That curse is purely and simply **OBEDIENCE**. It ought not to be this way. Every one who names His Name should be saying with both mouth and heart, "I delight to do Your will, O Lord, my God." Obedience ought to be a blessing and not a curse.

Why do I call obedience a curse? Because many who profess to believe in Him despise obedience. They hate His Law and they hate Him. It is not just a monkey on their back but King Kong himself. How do I know? Because when I call for genuine obedience to the Lord, they hate me and rail on me for it. They suppose that religion with all its activities and customs is obedience and when I say otherwise, they gnash their teeth and scoff.

"This people draws near to Me with their mouth, and honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9 MKJV).

Unless you obey God, your words and songs of praise
are as curses.

At one time I saw certain cities as particularly religious when I considered all the churches they had, but now I see many churches in every city. It appears that the worship of Jesus Christ is pandemic in North America. Turn on the TV or radio, and you will be exposed to hours of religious programming and preaching. Open your paper to the religious section, and you will see it filled with advertisements for church services and religious activities. There is no shortage of religious meetings and Bible studies.

Yet I take a second look and everywhere I see lawlessness and corruption. I see wickedness on the right hand and on the left, before me and behind. The land is filled with vileness. Pride is spread everywhere. Greed is a contagious disease spread by a mere glance or thought. I take a third look and see that those who call themselves Christians are no less to blame than those who make no profession of faith. There is nothing left but show and sham. If there is one sin condemned by the Lord, it is hypocrisy. Therefore the ones who call themselves Christians are more guilty.

"And why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46 MKJV)

Turn up your nose at the heathen, "Christian." After all, you're going to Heaven, and they're not, right? You self-righteous vermin; you think you'll make a pillar in the Temple of God? I tell you, you'll be fortunate to become a welcome doormat into hell and even now you serve as custodians at the gates of hell. You invite the blind and the ignorant in, and once you have them, you refuse to let them go.

Go to your churches, have your worship services, sing and shout praises to God, and tell others about the happiness of Jesus, adding another guarantee for your supposed entrance into Heaven. If you are so generous as to part with one of your gods, namely money, give it to your church, until you have nothing left, just to prove your faith and fidelity.

But I have some news for you. Unless you obey God, your money is as the sacrifice of menstrual pads on His altar; your words and songs of praise are as vehement curses; your witnessing is as the spreading of vicious gossip and slander; your upraised arms and open hands are as white-knuckled angry fists ready to tear your Maker apart, which you do in all your ways. The services you hold are as vile orgies. The buildings in which you worship are houses of ill-repute, full of harlots and gamblers - harlots because you prostitute all that is good, gamblers because you suppose that by investing occasional shows of reverence, you will gain so much.

In reality you treasure up for yourselves severe judgment for the last day.

What God wants is obedience and reality.

That day has come; it is now here. You can escape no more. You can hide no more; that which you have hidden is now to be exposed. While you have succeeded in deceiving your neighbor and yourself, you must now be rudely awakened to realize that you have not fooled God. He will take no more.

God is not interested in your works. He is not interested in your tears. He hates your sacrifices, your verbal religious ramblings, your smiles and friendly show to others. He repudiates your church membership and attendance, your Bible verse memorization, your witnessing efforts to save the world. He hates it. What He wants is obedience and reality.

“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...” (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

Know this, you who say you love Jesus, you who say you are born again, you who claim to be baptized in the Spirit, to be able to prophesy, to speak in tongues, to do great things to the glory of God:

“Not everyone who says to Me, Lord! Lord! shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven” (Matthew 7:21 MKJV).

“Obedience to what? What is His will?” you ask. An important question. Ask, genuinely wanting to know, and you will know. The Lord wants you to know, and He has sent me to tell you.

The laws of physical and mental nature are to be obeyed, not ignored.

There are three levels of obedience:

1) You must **give heed to common sense in everyday matters.**

Though the Bible covers many things specifically, it does not say a word about smoking, for example. If a man cannot reasonably conclude smoking to be harmful and therefore wrong, there is no hope for him. That man is stupid and is to be left to his chosen destructions. (I speak not of the one who wants to quit and cannot, but of the one who thinks there is no problem in smoking.)

Common sense principles are laws of God, even the very Ten Commandments. How? Let's continue the topic of smoking and see:

Smoking kills you and all those who breathe in your second-hand smoke. You are guilty of breaking the commandment which says, "You shall not kill." By bringing lung disease, heart disease, and cancer on yourself or others, you create cost for the taxpayer, your neighbor, and everyone in society. You are, therefore, guilty of breaking the commandment which says, "You shall not steal." You also break the law that says, "Honor your father and your mother." After all, do they want you to die? Do you think they enjoy watching you suffer and perhaps pre-decease them? In fact, every one of the Ten Commandments is broken by the smoker. The person who says, "It's my business if I want to smoke," is a damned fool.

The laws of physical and mental nature are to be obeyed, never ignored.

2) You must **obey the explicit commands of the Scriptures.**

If you don't know what they are, find out for your life. Ignorance is not as blissful as it is reputed to be. You are dead without that knowledge.

For example, do you realize that if you hate your neighbor, you are a murderer and are just as guilty before God as anyone you know of on death row? Do you realize that if you are married and lust after another woman, you are guilty of adultery? Or if you are not married and lust after a woman, you are guilty of adultery if she is married or of fornication if she is not?

Do you think you'll escape the consequences for such sins because they are not outwardly manifest, or because man has not confronted or convicted you of those sins? I know people who have received the death penalty or who are in that process of death for their secret murders, because their sins are not secret to God and He is the Judge Who judges every sin. You think people don't get cancer or heart disease because of bitterness or hatred?

How is it you continue in your sins as though He doesn't exist?

“Where’s the justice?” you may angrily ask when you see a murderer get only three years in prison or get off completely. Do you think anyone escapes? Nobody does... ever.

While the laws of man don't cover sins of the mind and heart, the Laws of God do. You say you believe in God, but do you really? Do you believe that He will judge you according to His Law, which is far more demanding than man's, and that He will require of you even the thought or attitude of breaking His Laws? If you believe in God, how is it you continue in your sins as though He doesn't exist?

It is written:

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that he also will reap” (Galatians 6:7 MKJV).

Some say the Bible is a great book. I tell you It is more than a great book. It speaks the truth; if It does, why don't you read It and believe It and do what It tells you to do? Has it not occurred to you that if you don't, the curses for ignorance and disobedience It pronounces will surely fall on you?

Some say Jesus is the Son of God. Even if He is only acknowledged to be a wise man and a great teacher or prophet, people ought to heed what He says. Wise men or prophets of God are neither fools nor deceivers. Teachers are not great teachers if they don't know what they're talking about. But He is the Son of God, and what He says goes. Of the commands of Scripture, He said:

“Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, Till the heaven and the earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any way pass from the Law until all is fulfilled. Therefore whoever shall relax one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 5:17-19 MKJV).

The Lord knows your hearts and your idols.

These two areas of obedience discussed above (common sense and the commands in the Scriptures), though necessary and good, are not enough to be saved, “for by the works of the Law shall no man be justified.” That brings us to the third and crucial area of

obedience:

3) You must obey God by faith.

He has certain personal requirements of each person He calls. These requirements are not specifically spelled out in the Law of God but are incorporated in it. For instance, the Lord commanded my wife and me to come to Lethbridge. By faith we came, obeying God.

How is this incorporated into the Law of God? It is written that we are to love the Lord with all that we are, having no other gods besides Him. If I had chosen not to come to Lethbridge, contrary to God's command, it would only be because I had another preference and therefore did not love Him with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Another preference is a god besides Him. That can be anything good or bad in itself, such as a wife or husband, a child or children, a mother or father, a job, a hobby or sport, security, comforts, leisure activities, cleverness, beauty, education, status, power, money, friends, health, fame or recognition, food, TV, any possession - great or small, movie stars, some lust or vice.

Christians have many gods besides the usual ones of the world, such as church, prayer times, the Bible, worship services, pastors, flocks (congregations), self-righteousness, and acceptance by the church family.

His laws and personal directives are always for our good.

This third point of obedience is crucial because it is the area of faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," and "by faith are we saved." Crucial because herein is **the cross** and your **death**. The Lord knows your hearts and your idols; He knows, therefore, your needs, and He gives personal commands to meet those needs. Obeying, you are saved. Disobeying, you lose. This is where the rubber meets the road.

I once knew a man who was very attached to his dog. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, he told me, had made an agreement with him to purchase the dog, because the dog showed great promise. When the time came for him to surrender the dog, he couldn't do it. I received from the Lord that he needed to give up his dog in obedience to the Lord, and told him so. He walked away, condemning me as a preacher of bondage.

God asked Abraham to give up (even kill) his only son; Jesus asked the rich young ruler to give up all his great wealth; I asked that this fellow give up his dog. If I am a preacher of bondage, then what is Jesus if not the Tyrant of tyrants? This fellow was a slave to his dog, the Lord wanted to free him of his bondage, and He was accused of imposing bondage! So the man remains in his chains to this day, whether he still has his dog or not.

This man spells "dog" backwards. Idolaters have only the lake of fire to which they can look forward (Revelation 21:8).

All of the good works or deeds will not compensate for worshipping other gods. Substitutions He will not accept; they will not solve the problem. God is not unwise or purposeless in choosing the point of obedience for each person. If my boss tells me to put goggles on my eyes because I'll be working at a grind stone, what good is it to put gloves on my hands instead? Will that save my eyes?

People, His laws and personal directives are always for our good; they are to help us and not to hinder or burden us. He is not a selfish dictator; He seeks our very best. Why should we not obey and live?

There is only one way to obey Him in the heart and that is to do as He asks.

This third area of obedience is the most difficult. At times it will appear that God's command may contradict what seems to be good, reasonable, sensible, right, or true. You need to know that what you have received is from the Lord and not just your own imagination or someone else's.

But He does ask for strange things and things that seem to contradict even Himself. Surely Abraham had that problem when he was asked to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, which only the heathen would do; before Abraham's time it was written, "Whosoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed..." (Genesis 9:6). Yet Abraham knew God spoke to him, and he obeyed.

One asked if God will be satisfied if we obey Him in our hearts. In other words, "It's the thought that counts." Truly, obedience must come from the heart, but that obedience will be manifest by what we do. There is only one way we can obey Him in the heart and that is *to do* as He asks. Faith without works is dead as is the body without breath. He causes us to will and *to do* of His good pleasure; we must act.

While Abraham was asked something that clearly contradicted the Laws of God, one may be asked something that only appears to do so, such as leaving one's church. "How can that be?" he or she may ask. "Doesn't God want us to go to His Church?" But I ask, "What is His Church? How does one 'go to church'?" There is no such thing as going to church in the Bible.

Do you *know* that the organization whose meetings and services you attend is God's Church, or have you only been told so by those attending? Did you receive that knowledge by revelation from the Lord, or are you assuming that they are God's Church because they call themselves Christians, call their group a church, have a pastor or leader, hold regular church services, sing hymns, pray, read, preach the Bible, and conduct themselves in friendly fashion? If the latter, you judge after the outward appearance, which is not good enough.

The prophets were sent by God to speak to these very kinds of groups, because His judgment on them was looming; He was displeased. They rejected Him and persecuted His prophets. If you company with such, you are just as responsible for the stoning of the prophets and the crucifixion of Christ as those who personally did it. Believe it; it is true.

“There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end of it is the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12 MKJV).

It is time to examine everything if you are going to walk with God.

God does not overlook what is necessary at any time.

The Lord says that disobedience is rebellion, and rebellion is as witchcraft. Therefore, you who disobey God, while claiming to love and serve Him, cannot condemn witches and Satan worshippers, because you are no better than they and are even worse; you ought to know better. You profess to believe in the Lord, while they do not, and to believe the Bible to be God-sent and inspired, while they do not.

Did not the Lord say He would rather have you cold than lukewarm? It amazes me that the Scriptures declare that the lukewarm believers will be spewed out of His mouth, yet they go on and look down their noses to the left and to the right (at the cold and hot ones), and are quite oblivious to their own state. Such is surely part of the condition of being lukewarm and the essence of it.

You go on in your so-called Christian walk and wonder, “Where is the peace, joy, power, and fellowship with God? Why are my affairs in a mess? Why are my prayers not heard by Him? Why don’t I hear His voice?” The answer is that you don’t do what is required of you.

If you ignore the first area of obedience, why then should He speak to you of the second? If you disobey in the second, why should He make Himself known to you personally by giving you commands to take you higher? God is not a fool, He is not a beggar, and He does not overlook what is necessary at any time. First things first. In Acts 10, Cornelius was a devout man before he was saved, and he was heard by God because he feared, which is just another way of saying he greatly respected what God said and required.

There are those who think or pretend they have God’s blessing. They claim to have peace and joy either because they know they are supposed to have it and do their best to demonstrate it, or because they are seduced by spirits that give them wonderful feelings. There is a hideous thing spread everywhere around the world: People feel all sorts of ecstasies thinking they are of God; and try to talk to them! One may as well talk to the Devil himself. Not only will they ignore you or disagree, but they will at times get violent. If I press them at all, I find they have no foundation, no substance, no knowledge of God or of the Scriptures, but they “feel really great!” They suspect those who speak the truth to be the deluded ones and even antiChrist for speaking against something “so good and obviously of God.”

If you obey, your blood will flow.

Call on the Lord with a true heart and not merely with the lips. If you call on Him, be prepared to do whatever He requires of you. If you don't have a true heart, ask Him for that. That is one prayer that will not go unanswered.

Do you truly want to do God's will? Do you want to know Him and hear from Him in all matters of life? Do you want God to make Himself known to you? Here's how (Lord willing):

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him” (John 14:21 MKJV).

His commandments are those personal directions to you. These are the hardest to obey. They require your heart, your life. Remember the rich young ruler? He kept all the Law from a youth, he said. Then came his personal requirement:

“Jesus said to him, If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven. And come, follow Me” (Matthew 19:21 MKJV).

The man did not have faith. Keeping all God's Commandments, one surely would have thought he did. However, it takes little or no faith to keep the Law.

The Law says, “Honor your father and mother.” But what will you do when Christ says, “Forsake your father and mother,” or, “Let the dead bury the dead”? Will you have faith? Will you obey?

The Lord puts His finger on the issues in your life, and those you will never find easy. If you obey, your blood will flow. God does not commit Himself to the half-hearted. All those He calls must come to His Son by the cross. There is no other way. Giving your body to be burned is not enough; God requires obedience and not sacrifice.

Don't fulfill the lusts of your flesh, especially not in My Name.

My people, who are called by My Name, come out from among the workers of iniquity, who love the praise of men. Come out from among the lovers of pleasures who seek only to enjoy themselves. Repent of your sins, turn from your gods, do away with all falsehood, seek right, seek each one another's good and not your own.

Stop playing games. I am not playing games. Surely you know. Don't fulfill the lusts of your flesh, especially not in My Name. Don't love the world, don't do as you please, but seek after holiness of heart.

Then you shall be My sons and daughters, and I will receive you and be a Father to you, to carry you, to comfort you, to provide for you, to protect you from all harm, and to bless and keep you always. Then you will know the peace for which you search.

Don't let My wrath be poured out on you. Come away from those who take upon themselves My Name in vain, teaching doctrines of devils, deceiving themselves and others, and destroying themselves while they are deluded into thinking they do Me service and honor.

Look around you. I did not bring the death, disease, divorce or financial troubles for nothing. I did not bring them for testing, to try you and those around you. I brought them because of your sins and because of the company you keep.

Repent, and I will forgive. Come out, and I will heal, cleanse, and deliver. Choose life and not pleasure, and I will give you pleasure forevermore. So says the Lord.

Obey Him by faith in whatever He requires of you, and you will be free.

CONCLUSION

There are three areas of obedience:

1) Common sense matters.

Do the right, refrain from the wrong.

2) Keep the Law.

The Law was never done away. (If I am wrong, do all those things your flesh desires. No problem because if the Law is no more, there is no more penalty.)

3) Know that which God requires of you personally, and obey at all costs.

Then you will have the reward of Heaven, and Jesus Christ will manifest Himself to you. You will know the truth and the truth will make you free. ***Are you free?***

The first two areas of obedience will benefit you greatly, but they will not make you free. You must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be free. Obey Him by faith in whatever He requires of you, and you will be free. Do not listen to your religious companions and the leaders in your organized churches. If they were God's servants for your good, they would not be there. Do not confer with flesh and blood. They will hold you back every time; that is their business. You must be prepared to come out, as was Abraham, alone if necessary, and it almost always is.

“He Who calls you is faithful, Who will also do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24 HNV).

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[The Issues of Life](#) | [Blog Wars](#) | [Proverbs](#) | [Poems](#) | [Music](#) | [Home](#)

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[Healthy Living Advice in Everyday Things](#)