

The Obedient Christian

1 John 5:2-4

Why be Obedient? (1 Peter 1:2; Romans 16:25-26; Genesis 4:7; 2 Corinthians 9:13cp Matthew 5:16; Ecclesiastes 5:1)

God, in His foreknowledge, set us apart by the Spirit not only to be justified by the blood of Christ but to go on to live obedient lives.¹ It is only when we fulfill that high calling that grace and peace can multiply in our lives.

Not only were we foreknown and selected for this great task, but Elohim also has the power to strengthen us so that we CAN obey the commands of the eternal God.²

When we fulfill our mission we will:

1. advance the obedience of faith among all nations
2. we will be accepted by God³
3. the people in our community will glorify God for our obedience, and
4. our good works will count as an acceptable confession of the gospel of Christ⁴

It is against this backdrop, it is for this reason that Solomon warned that we should guard our steps when we go to the house of God. It's better to draw near in obedience than to offer our sacrifices as ignorant fools who do wrong and then seek God's blessing.⁵ We should be very careful to not glibly attend church without accompanying our profession with action.

The basis for obedience

What should be the basis for our obedience? Upon what do we draw in order to accomplish what so many have failed? First,

Obedience is evidence of freedom (Romans 6:22-23; 8:1-4; 2 Corinthians 3:17)

We have been liberated from sin and become enslaved to God and the result, the fruit, the consequence, is sanctification. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ our Lord.⁶

Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those of us who have submitted to the sovereign call of Christ upon our lives. The Spirit's law of life has set us free from the law of sin and death. What mere obedience, unaccompanied by the Spirit's help, could not accomplish, the Spirit has now made possible. The law's requirement can be accomplished in us who do not live fleshy, carnal lives but instead choose to live our lives directed, empowered and obedient to the Spirit.⁷

Where the Spirit of the Lord resides, there is freedom!⁸ Freedom FROM sin; freedom TO serve.

Obedience is evidence of salvation (1 John 3:8-9)

We should be driven by a desire to please our adoptive heavenly Father, if we are truly His children. The one who unrepentantly and blithely commits sin is of the Devil, for the Devil was the first sinner and everyone who does as he does demonstrates that they are of their spiritual father the Devil. Jesus came to earth for this very purpose: to destroy the Devil's works. Everyone who has been born of God therefore does not sin, because God's seed, the Holy Spirit, remains in us and we are not able to sin without it hurting, without it disturbing our

¹ 1 Peter 1:2

² Romans 16:25-26

³ Genesis 4:7

⁴ 2 Corinthians 9:13 cp Matthew 5:16

⁵ Ecclesiastes 5:1

⁶ Romans 6:22-23

⁷ Romans 8:1-4

⁸ 2 Corinthians 3:17

conscience and weighing upon us.⁹ Being born of God means we cannot stand the separation from our Father that sin brings.

Obedience is evidence of love (John 14:15, 23-24; 15:10; 1 John 5:2-4)

Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."¹⁰ "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. The one who doesn't love Me will not keep My words."¹¹ "If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love."¹²

This is how we know that we love God's children: when we love God and obey His commands.

For this is what love for God is: to keep His commands. Now His commands are not a burden, because whatever has been born of God conquers the world.

This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith.¹³

Two keys to consistent obedience

It must be lawful (Matthew 7:21-23; Mark 7:7-8)

Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but *only* the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. (22) On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' (23) Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! **Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!**'"¹⁴

Like Cain with his sacrifice of "some vegetables", we don't get to choose what God gets. We can't insist on giving Him what WE want Him to have instead of what HE wants. We may think that He wants prophecies, exorcisms, and miracles; all these flashy, in-your-face, external forms of religion. God says what He wants is simple, humble obedience. Whenever we choose to give God something other than complete, absolute, unconditional surrender we are teaching as doctrines the commands of men. We are disregarding the command of God and keeping the traditions of men instead.¹⁵

It must be humble (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23)

We must begin thinking of our great works as something unclean. All our most righteous acts must be considered in our minds as a polluted garment. We must consider ourselves to be withered leaves,¹⁶ carried away by the winds for we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.¹⁷ When we come to God with our puny works in hand, we must humbly bow our heads and confess that "**We are good-for-nothing slaves; we've only done our duty.**"¹⁸

The practice of obedient living (Isaiah 50:4-10)

In closing, let's look at Isaiah 50:4-10 and determine some of the characteristics of the proper practice of obedient living.

- **Isaiah 50:4-10 HCSB** The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens *Me* each

⁹ 1 John 3:8-9

¹⁰ John 14:15

¹¹ John 14:23-24

¹² John 15:10

¹³ 1 John 5:2-4

¹⁴ Matthew 7:21-23

¹⁵ Mark 7:7-8

¹⁶ Isaiah 64:6

¹⁷ Romans 3:23

¹⁸ Luke 17:10

morning; He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed. (5) The Lord GOD has opened My ear, and I was not rebellious; I did not turn back. (6) I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting. (7) The Lord GOD will help Me; therefore I have not been humiliated; therefore I have set My face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. (8) The One who justifies Me is near; who will contend with Me? Let us confront each other. Who has a case against Me? Let him come near Me! (9) In truth, the Lord GOD will help Me; who is he who will condemn Me? Indeed, all of them will wear out like a garment; a moth will devour them. (10) Who among you fears the LORD, listening to the voice of His servant? Who *among you* walks in darkness, and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD; let him lean on his God.

Derashot

1. **Be confident in the sovereignty of the Lord.** Four times God is called “Sovereign Lord”
2. **Be positive and expectant (v.4).** Live an extroverted life. Instruct and sustain others. Awaken each morning expecting the power and victory of the Lord in your life.¹⁹
3. **Be cheerfully willing (v.5).**
4. **Be determined (v.7).** Set your face like a flint to the task, no matter the cost, no matter who does or does not go with you. Like Jesus, be so focused on your work that even open threats will not turn you back.²⁰
5. **Remain dependent (vv.8-10).** Realize that with all your works and all your obedience you remain completely, abjectly dependent upon the Lord. Without Him you can do nothing.

¹⁹ Psalm 5:3

²⁰ Luke 13:31-32