

## "Obeying God"

In a world devoted to the individual, we lose sight of anything bigger than ourselves. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today, we're going to explore the need to obey God. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We're not afraid of what God teaches, because God wants what's best for us. We trust the Lord to guide us to love, to be kind, and to forgive. And when people follow the Lord, they find joy and goodness. They grow better and stronger. They bless everyone around them. We need the Lord's way in our homes and our community. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Whether we listen and obey the Lord matters to our souls and to our eternity. 1 Peter 1 verses 22 to 23 says, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. My friends, God's message is perfect and without flaw; and obeying the truth found in Scripture causes us to be born again. Loving, faithful, obedient people go to the pure word found in the New Testament. They want it straight from God; they don't want a revised message. When you change the seed message, you corrupt it and then you produce something God never intended. You end up with a false gospel.

To obey means to hear God's Word and act accordingly. And the most common word translated "obey" in the New Testament comes from the word "to hear"; and the idea is that one has heard God's will and is willing to obey it. Now a second family of words translated "obey" comes from the concept of being persuaded or convinced. The idea is that a person persuaded to obey a command will obey it. Have you heard? Are you persuaded? And will you obey?

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The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Romans 6 verses 15 to 19, and we'll explore what it means to obey God.

Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter 6, verses 15 to 19. "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I'm speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification." That's an important reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to present ourselves to you fully and freely. That we may lead righteous lives and imitate Your Son Jesus our Lord. And Father, may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

Let's spend some time considering how the Lord Jesus obeyed the Father in heaven. Jesus is our example, and we should follow His steps. So we ask, how did Jesus obey the Father? Jesus was totally

committed to being obedient to His Father. Doing the will of the Father was so important to Jesus that He could say in John 4 and verse 34, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work." Jesus could also say in John 8 verse 29, "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him," speaking of the Father. Whether in things small or large, Jesus was committed to pleasing His Father. I wish every Christian had that same attitude.

When Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed as one totally committed to the will of the Father. Matthew describes that night this way in Matthew 26 verses 37 to 39: "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.' And He went a little farther beyond them, and He fell on His face and He prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.'" Now Jesus knew what scourging and crucifixion was! He knew that it was a horribly painful and shameful death. Jesus also knew the hearts of His enemies, how they would lie and unfairly condemn Him. He knew how cruel people could be.

The book of Hebrews describes the scene in Hebrews 5 verses 7 to 9: "In the days of His flesh (it says), He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." Now Jesus was deeply troubled and weeping loudly over the things that He must suffer, but His ultimate prayer was one of obedience. He prayed to the Father, "Your will be done"; and the Father heard that prayer!

Jesus learned obedience by the things that He suffered. He learned obedience by actually going through with what He knew would be His worst experience, the worst experience of His whole life. And He faced it knowing that this was His Father's will. He obeyed exactly what the Father commanded Him to do.

Jesus actually predicted His suffering and death. Matthew 16 verses 21 to 23 says, "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Now Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it! This shall never happen to You.' But He turned (that is Jesus turned) and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You're a stumbling block to Me; for you're not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.'" Though His friend and disciple Peter could not imagine death happening to Jesus, the Lord Jesus rebuked Him. Peter was setting His mind on man's interests not God's interests. Jesus set His heart and His mind on serving the Father.

You'll remember Judas led the crowd to Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. They came with swords and clubs. John 18 verses 10 to 11 says, "Simon Peter then, having a sword, he drew it and he struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus." Luke 22 and verse 51 tells us that Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him. Then He said to Peter in Matthew 26:52 to 54, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? Well how then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?"

Jesus could have stopped the arrest anytime he wanted to, He could have stopped the trial, the scourging, or the crucifixion. He could have called twelve legions of angels. Now a Roman legion numbered up to 6,000 soldiers. Why Jesus could have wiped out Jerusalem with 72,000 angels. Now angels don't lose to men. The Lord Jesus, however, didn't put a stop to His suffering. He knew that it

must happen this way. Jesus necessarily suffered for you and for me, so that we might have forgiveness and be reconciled to God.

The Lord offered His body as a sacrifice! He could say, "I have come to do Thy will, O God." Hebrews 10 verses 8 to 10 explains, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have not desired, nor have you taken pleasure in them" (that is which are offered according to the Law), then He said, "Behold, I have come to do your will." And He takes away the first (that is the first covenant) in order to establish the second. By this will, that is the second covenant, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Now if Jesus had not sacrificed Himself, we couldn't enter into this second, new covenant with God. We couldn't be sanctified, that is, made holy in God's eyes. The Lord Jesus sanctified us by His own blood. Nothing else would do. He did it "once for all." That's why those who live in this twenty-first century can have the promise of forgiveness and eternal life! Oh I'm thankful Jesus obeyed His Father and came to do His will!

Oh, to obey as He obeyed! To serve as He served, to love as He loved! Jesus did not go to the right or to the left, He didn't add or take away from the instructions of His Father. He simply and totally gave Himself to the will of the Father just as His Father commanded Him. The Lord Jesus said in John 14 verse 31, "but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me." Now this includes even what Jesus said and how He said it. The Lord Jesus said in John 12 verses 49 to 50, "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; and therefore the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me." Oh I'm thankful Jesus took such care to speak the truth that the Father revealed to Him. You see, since those commandments are eternal life, I want them to be correct!

Jesus didn't argue with the Father over what should be done; He simply obeyed what the Father told Him to do. He didn't think of Himself as an exception to the Father's rules. Being the beloved Son of God didn't exclude Him from obeying the Father's instructions. No, being the Son of God meant Jesus took doing the will of God all the more seriously! Philippians 2 verses 5 to 8 says, "Have this attitude (that is this mind, this mindset) in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." That, my friend, is the heart of the Lord Jesus and how He obeyed His Father.

We're often tempted to listen to the crowds surrounding us rather than listen to God. We want to please people, but in doing so we may displease God. Since God is our Creator and the authority who will one day judge us, we ought to obey God rather than men. God once told King Saul in 1 Samuel 15 verse 3 to "go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." But Saul failed to obey God and he listened to the people. 1 Samuel 15:9 says, that "Saul and the people spared Agag (that is the King) and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed." Oh sadly, Saul still imagined that he had obeyed the Lord, when in reality he did what he wanted to do.

The prophet Samuel heard the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen and then confronted King Saul. He said in 1 Samuel 15 verses 22 to 23, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt

offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed (that is to hear and do) than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you (he told him) have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.”

I tell you, people will pay a price for their disobedience to God. Some think God won't notice; others think God doesn't really care what we do. They forget Proverbs 15 verse 3: that “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good.” God's attitude toward sin is not like our world today; God can never approve of sin. Habakkuk 1 verse 13 says, “Your eyes (that is God's eyes) are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor.” Again, 1 John 1 and verse 5 says that “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” We humans may easily give in to sin, but God has no desire to sin. He is righteous altogether.

Obeying God is how we love Him. Love obeys. The Lord Jesus simply said in John 14:15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” In John 14:23 Jesus promised, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.” Then in verse 24 the Lord says that “He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.” You see, God sees love and obedience as inseparable! Obedience demonstrates our love to the Father.

When God makes a promise and He adds a condition, God always requires us to meet the condition before He blesses us. Hebrews 5 and verse 9 reminds us that Jesus is the source of eternal salvation to those who obey Him. In John chapter 9, Jesus healed a young man who was born blind. John 9:6 to 7 says that Jesus “spat on the ground, He made clay of the spittle, and He applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, ‘You go and wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and he washed, and came back seeing.” When the blind man obeyed by washing, the Lord blessed him with sight.

Now the young man didn't earn his precious sight by mere washing, and we don't earn our salvation by merely obeying. We are saved by grace, but God's grace is no less a gift simply because it has a condition. Both the young man's sight and our salvation are gifts; but God does not give us precious gifts until we meet His conditions. If we are listening and are persuaded, we won't argue with God about His gifts or His conditions. We'll thank God gladly and gratefully for the opportunity to love and serve Him. Like the man born blind, we'll go and wash! Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to be obedient to Your will in everything. And Father help us to obey You the way Jesus obeyed. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name we pray, Amen!

We shouldn't separate faith and obedience as some have done. Just like love and obedience, faith and obedience are inseparable for those who would please God. John 12 verses 42 to 43 speaks of people who believed but would not act on their faith. It says, “Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” Now these folks were not saved by faith alone, because they didn't confess Christ or put the love of God first.

If you believe, your faith will lead you to obey the gospel. John 3 and verse 36 says, that “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Yes, it's that simple. Those who wish to become children of God will do more than merely believe. Galatians 3:26 to 27 says, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Faith alone doesn't make

a Christian. The New Testament never contemplates a saved believer who has not also obeyed the gospel in baptism.

Jesus said in Mark 16 and verse 16, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." Without baptism, you cannot enter God's kingdom. The Lord Jesus said in John 3 and verse 5, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Baptism is an immersion in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). We obey the Lord in baptism, because God offers the promise to those who obey Him.

We hope that today's study about obedience will encourage you to obey the Lord. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. You can also download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can also watch Search anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.