



Obedience and Faithfulness

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By Rev. David Koch

Introduction:

How we admire the obedience a dog shows to its master! Archibald Rutledge wrote that one day he met a man whose dog had just been killed in a forest fire. Heartbroken, the man explained to Rutledge how it happened. Because he worked out-of-doors, he often took his dog with him. That morning, he left the animal in a clearing and gave him a command to stay and watch his lunch bucket while he went into the forest. His faithful friend understood, for that's exactly what he did. Then a fire started in the woods, and soon the blaze spread to the spot where the dog had been left. But he didn't move. He stayed right where he was, in perfect obedience to his master's word. With tearful eyes, the dog's owner said, "I always had to be careful what I told him to do, because I knew he would do it." *Our Daily Bread*.

When I say the word "Obey", what comes to your mind?

Obedience involves hearing, and acting in response to what is heard. Obedience is the reflection of a heart of love.

Before we can obey and act on the directives from God's word, we have to hear the voice of the Lord. Samuel was a lad that learned how to obey God. His mother had prayed for a child and made a covenant with God that if He would bless her with a child, she would give him back to the Lord all the days of His life. God answered her prayer. We see when God begins to speak to Samuel where he was, and how he responded.

I Samuel 2:21 – "Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord." If we are going to know the voice of the Lord to obey Him, then we have to be in the presence of the Lord.

If you have never established a regular daily time with God, I trust that you will integrate that into your daily lifestyle and start it today. If we are going to enjoy a living relationship with the Lord, then we must establish a daily time to be in His presence. He is always with us, but we need to take time to come near Him and be aware of His presence. If we are going to hear from Him and obey His voice, that demands we set aside time to seek Him, to hear from Him, time to be quiet and know Him.

Sad to say, but America in general has not made place for God's presence when we remove the 10 commandments from public places, and we remove prayer from school. Just as an example of this. I understand there were 7 students in a southern state this past week who were given in-school suspensions because they passed out candy canes at their school before Christmas with a gospel message attached.

Listen up parents. If you want you children to grow up knowing God's voice, then you are going to have to make a place for them at home to be in God's presence, and be sure they get to God's house. On Sunday morning before worship service, we have Promiseland – Children's ministry and classes for youth and adults. During mid-week Bible study, we offer Axis Infinity, Missionettes, and Royal Rangers.

One of the core values of CLF is “knowing God.” Through the teaching ministry, we provide opportunities for you and your family to hear God’s word so it can shape and form your life. Take advantage of those opportunities.

Listen to this parable.

Once there was a single mom with 3 kids. This mom loved her children very much and tried her hardest to do what was best for them. She worked hard every day to have enough money just to put food on the table, and buy clothes for them. Because she had to go to work early every day, her children got themselves up every morning and had a bowl of cold cereal before they went off to school. Now on Sunday, it was different. The mother’s father would invite the whole family over for a huge breakfast that he and grandma would prepare. They would make omelets to order, put out fresh strawberries, squeeze homemade orange juice and grandma always had a batch of homemade sweet rolls fresh out of the oven. But Sunday was the only day this mom could sleep in so the kids had to get themselves up and have a bowl of cold cereal. Grandpa and grandma would eat what they could of their great breakfast and then put the rest away hoping that next Sunday their grandkids would come and enjoy all they had prepared. Think about it. Are you taking advantage of all God has prepared for you on a Sunday morning?

Samuel was in the temple, and he was near the place where the ark of God was. In I SAMUEL 3:3, we read about the ark of God, a place that represented many things to the people of Israel.

Inside the ark was placed the two tables of stone which constituted the “testimony” or evidence of God’s covenant with the people, the “pot of manna” and “Aaron’s rod that budded.” The ark to Samuel, Eli and the people of God represented the covenant between God and man, where God’s mercy could be found. It also reminded them of the miracles that God had performed for them.

Samuel was lying in the temple, where the ark of God was, and God spoke to him. Three times this happened. Each time Samuel ran to Eli who was the priest and said, “Here I am, you called me.” The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. When this happened the third time, Eli realized that it was the Lord calling Samuel, and Eli told him, go back and say, if He calls, “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.”

Again the Lord called to Samuel and He responded as Eli had instructed him, “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.”

There is no reason to ask God to speak if we are not listening, or if we are unwilling to respond when He does speak to us. When we hear, then it is our responsibility to respond in obedience to His instruction.

Thomas a Kempis said this about obedience. *“Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from Grace.”*

I understand that Roger Staubach who led the Dallas Cowboys to the World Championship in '71 admitted that his position as a quarterback who didn't call his own signals was a source of trial for him. Coach Landry sent in every play. He told Roger when to pass, when to run and only in emergency situations could he change the play (and he had better be right!). Even though Roger considered coach Landry to have a “genius mind” when it came to football strategy, pride said that he should be able to run his own team. Roger later said, “I faced up to the issue of obedience. Once I learned to obey there was harmony, fulfillment, and victory.”

I. Blessing is found in obeying His instruction to us.

It pleases God when His people listen to Him and respond in obedience. The one who is obedient brings just as much joy to the heart of the father as the one who worships in spirit and truth.

Deut. 15:4-6

However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, He will richly bless you, if only you fully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today. For the LORD your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you.

In this passage of scripture, God promises the Jewish people that if they will obey Him, He will pour out His blessing on them. He promised here that for their demonstration of obedience, they would prosper in such ways, that they would lend to other nations, but

not have to borrow. They would rule over many nations, but none would rule over them. In other places God promised that their crops, their families, their herds and cattle, would be multiplied as a result of His blessing.

God loves unconditionally. His love is not the reward for obedience. He loves us because HE IS LOVE. However He does reward us for our obedience. His blessing will be poured out lavishly on those who obey Him.

James 1:22:25

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does.

God wants to bless us, and he looks for our response of obedience to do so.

II. Demonstration of love is found in obedience.

1 John 5:2-3 - This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

What are the commands that God left us to obey? Love the Lord your God with all your heart. Love your neighbor as yourself. These are not burdensome. When we see how lavish God is with His love, it should be easy to allow our whole heart to love Him back.

Generally we love ourselves too. So, in that way, we should not have great difficulty in loving our neighbor as we love ourselves.

2 John 1:6 - And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, His command is that you walk in love.

Our motivation for obeying His word is not because we are forced to, or for the blessing that obedience brings. We obey Him because we love Him. Love is demonstrated and expressed in our obedient response.

III. Exercise of trust is found in obedience

When we obey, it says we trust the heart of the one to whom we have surrendered our will.

I read the story written by Tim Hansel about his son Zac. They were out in the country, climbing around in some cliffs when Tim heard a voice from above him yelling, "Hey Dad! Catch me!" He turned around to see Zac joyfully jumping off a rock straight at him. Zac had jumped and then yelled "Hey Dad!" Tim became an instant circus act, catching him. They both fell to the ground. For a moment after Tim caught his son he could hardly talk. When he found his voice again he gasped in exasperation: "Zac! Can you give me one good reason why you did that???" Zac responded with remarkable calmness: "Sure, because you're my Dad." His whole assurance was based in the fact that his father was trustworthy. He could live life to the hilt because I could be trusted. Isn't this even more true for a Christian?

[Tim Hansel, *Holy Sweat*, 1987, Word Books Publisher, pp. 46-47.](#)

The words of the hymn – "Trust and obey" come to mind

When we walk with the Lord,
In the light of His word,
What a glory He sheds on our way.
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey.
Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear,
Not a sorrow we share,
But our toil he doth richly repay,
Not a grief nor a loss,
Not a frown or a cross
But is blest if we trust and obey

But we never can prove
The delights of His love,
Until all on the altar we lay
For the favor He shows,
And the joy he bestows,
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet,
We will sit at His feet
Or we'll walk by His side in the way.

What He says we will do,
Where He sends we will go,
Never fear only trust and obey.

IV. Service or bondage is found in obedience.

Peter T. Forsythe was right when he said, “The first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but it’s Master,”

[Warren W. Wiersbe, The Integrity Crisis, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991, p. 22.](#)

Romans 6:16 – Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey - whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

When we find out Who our master is, we find true freedom. We find service and are able to offer ourselves to the Lord to be His fully devoted followers. In not offering ourselves in obedience to Him, we find ourselves bound to sin and bound to self. When we obey Him, we are freed from the bondage that leads to death and instead are led to righteousness.

Conclusion:

Dr. B.J. Miller once said, “It is a great deal easier to do that which God gives us to do, no matter how hard it is, than to face the responsibilities of not doing it.”

[Today In The Word, November, 1989, p.11.](#)

Some of you are having a difficult time of obeying. Perhaps it’s an issue of trust. Perhaps it’s an issue of service, or an issue of love. Perhaps it’s an issue of hearing God’s voice and spending time in His presence. God wants to bless those who follow Him and will obey His voice.

1. Trust
2. Service
3. Hearing His voice