

"Obedience"

Have you considered what it means to obey the Lord? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're exploring how we can faithfully obey the Lord Jesus.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God's word gives us guidance in every walk of life. It helps us avoid the things that can destroy us and embrace the good that blesses us. We make choices each day either to serve the Lord or to serve someone or something else. We become the servants of what we choose to serve, so it's important to choose wisely. The Scriptures provide the wisdom that we need. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

Romans 6:16 says, "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?" Now our choices determine the direction of our souls. We're either serving God or serving sin. Many are addicted or enslaved to sinful habits and do things that they hate. What they have chosen to do is hurtful to themselves and to those who they love.

It's a sad thing to be captivated by sin, but it's an amazingly joyful thing to serve the Lord. David wrote about God in Psalm 16:11, "You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." Serving God is certainly wise. The sinful pleasures of this world bring only temporary happiness and in the end they demand the wages of sin, which is death (Romans 6 verse 23). But following Jesus brings us newness of life (John 3:5), an abundant life (John 10 verse 10), and eternal life. Romans 6:23 says that, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We offer this study on obedience free! And if you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, 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. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have many free programs and materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Philippians 2:5 to 11, and examine what it means to obey the Lord.

Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to Philippi, the Philippians chapter 2 verses 5 to 11. Where he talks about the obedience of Jesus.

Have this attitude 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 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. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

What a tremendous example of obedience Jesus is to all of us. Let's pray. Oh Father help us to obey You just as Jesus obeyed You. To love You just as He loved You. And help us to love Him and to love the truth and to do Your will always. In Jesus name, Amen.

Obedience always begins with listening and respecting the one who speaks. It means paying attention to the words spoken and following them. In life we learn to obey our parents, teachers,

police officers, and other officials. We learn that rules matter. One of the great lessons of life is to understand that God means what He says. He doesn't stutter or take back His commandments. He expects people to obey what He said.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 11:15 that, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." He is emphasizing the need to listen carefully to instructions. On the mount of transfiguration when Peter wanted to honor Moses and Elijah, God spoke from heaven in Mark 9 and verse 7, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him." This is why Christians follow the instructions of the new covenant found in the New Testament. We don't look to Moses or the old covenant for our relationship with God in Christ.

Listening is not easy; it requires concentrating on what is being said. When people fail to pay attention, they end up doing something other than obeying the Lord. Many folks want to tell God what they want to do rather than listening to what God tells them to do. The first lesson of a first grade teacher is to get their students to pay attention to instructions. In Proverbs 2 verses 1 to 5 a father speaks to his son about listening and being wise. He said, "My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God."

Second, obedience requires that we humble ourselves. The disciples of Jesus all had a longing to be first in the kingdom of God. James and John wanted to sit at the Lord's right and left hand. Matthew 20 verses 25 to 28 says: "But Jesus called them to Himself and He said well, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Christianity is about humble service not lording it over others. The Lord blesses those who are "poor in spirit" not those who want power over others. God cannot use those who are full of their selfish ambition, because they're not willing to deny themselves, take up their crosses daily, and follow Him. Rather they want their lives for themselves, but in the end they will lose their souls. You must humble yourselves by exalting God in your life. Jesus said, "not My will, but Yours be done." And we too must have that kind of humility.

Third, the idea of obedience is found in the command "to keep." Moses told Israel in Deuteronomy 4 verses 5 to 6, "See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" It is wise to keep God's commandments, and foolish to ignore them, and dangerous to break them. To keep something means to guard conscientiously what you are to do. We have no right to edit God's commands to suit our own desires. We must hold fast to His teaching.

Psalms 78 verses 6 to 7 speaks to fathers and encourages them to teach their children about the Lord. "That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children, That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments." The Lord's teaching remains true for all time. And wise Christian parents pass on the faith as it was given, keeping the commandments of Christ, and abiding in His words. Colossians 2:6 to 7 says, "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in

Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.” We must live our faith, holding fast to the truth.

Fourth, obedience isn’t merely hearing; it’s doing what one is commanded. James 1:22 reminds us, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” Just because we have heard the truth doesn’t mean that we have obeyed it. James 4 verse 17 says, “Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.” We must not only hear, we must act. The concept of “faith alone” that doesn’t act on what is taught isn’t taught in Scripture. Faith always acts.

Hebrews chapter 11 verses 6 to 8 says, “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” God calls us today to become Christians and to follow Him. We must not only hear the gospel, we must obey it. 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.”

Now how do we obey the Lord? Well the book of Deuteronomy teaches us how the Lord wishes His commandments to be obeyed. Four things are prominent in this book. First, God desires to be obeyed carefully. Deuteronomy 6:24 to 25 says, “So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today. “It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.” To obey carefully means to pay close attention to do exactly what God teaches. The words “careful” and “carefully”, those two words, are found 27 times in the book of Deuteronomy in the New American Standard. Being careful shows respect for the Lord.

Second, we are to obey the Lord with love in our hearts. Deuteronomy 5:10 says that God shows “lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” The first and great commandment is, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6 and verse 5). In Deuteronomy 10:12 to 13 Moses asks, “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD’S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?” So love must accompany our obedience.

Third, God expects us to obey all His commandments. Moses cried out in Deuteronomy 5:29, “Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!” In Deuteronomy 8, Moses puts these instructions together. Moses said, “All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your forefathers.” You see the Lord Jesus also said to His disciples in Matthew 28 and verse 20, “teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Fourth, the Lord wanted His people to do “just as the Lord commanded,” to do exactly as they were taught, not changing the commandments in any way. Moses said in Deuteronomy 5:32, “So you shall observe to do just as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left.” Again, Moses told Israel in Deuteronomy 8 and verse 6, “Therefore, you shall keep the

commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.” In Deuteronomy 12:32 says, “Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.”

The Lord Jesus understood the need to obey the Father lovingly, carefully, and just as He said. Jesus told the apostles on the night before He was crucified in John 14:31, “But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.” That’s the King James Version. The New American Standard says, “But so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, (He says and) let us go from here.” As God’s Son, Jesus didn’t vary from His Father’s instructions.

The Lord Jesus is the ultimate example of obedience to the Father in heaven. According to Philippians 2:7 to 8, as we’ve read, Jesus “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.” Though Jesus existed in the form of God, He didn’t take such strong hold on His position as God’s Son that He was unwilling to obey. No, He emptied Himself of all His glory and ability. He humbled Himself and became a bond-servant to the Father. Obedience starts with divesting ourselves of our prestige and recognizing that we’re servants of the Father. And we do what He says.

The Lord Jesus was serious about obeying the Father, He was willing to bear the cross. Can you imagine how difficult it was to face scourging and the crucifixion? He endured false charges and mockery. He was spit upon and beaten. Oh He could have called twelve legions of angels to stop His arrest and crucifixion, but Jesus loved the Father and did just as He said. The heart of Jesus prayed, “not My will, but Yours be done.” My friend you cannot obey the Father if you hold your desires above His commandments. You cannot obey the Father if you change His commandments to suit your own desires or the times.

False forms of Christianity are never content to listen to the Lord. They add their human creeds and traditions. They blindly go beyond what God says and lead people astray. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20:28 to 32, oh, “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. “Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” I do the same today. Go to the word.

Let’s pray. Father we’re thankful that in Your wisdom You gave us Your word so that we might become wise. Help us to be humble and to listen and to be obedient to will. In Jesus name, Amen.

Hebrews 5:8 to 9 says, “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.” Jesus learned obedience by experiencing it. Hebrews 2 and verse 9 says, “But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.” Jesus is able to save us and give us eternal life because He obediently experienced the suffering of death. Our salvation came from His suffering on the cross.

Jesus didn’t just talk about doing God’s will, He humbled Himself as a servant and did what the Father asked. We too must set aside our wills, our ways, and follow the Lord and His ways. When we

desire to do God's will more than follow our own wills, then we have learned to do what it means to obey.

To become a Christian requires a decision to follow the will of God. We must with a full heart of love place our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the gospel. We must repent of our sins. Sin only leads to spiritual death. And we must turn wholeheartedly to God and His ways. Confessing our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, we must be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). When we're baptized God washes away our sins (Acts 22:16) and gives us newness of life (Romans 6 verses 3 to 7). When we're baptized we are united with Christ and by faith become one of His children (Galatians 3:26 to 7). When we're baptized, God adds us to His church (Acts 2 and verse 47). So don't delay your obedience to the Lord. Come to Him and find eternal life.

We hope today's study about obedience has helped you to focus on doing God's will. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send 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. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in that your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH on YouTube any time! So subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and be sure to like the programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. And if you can attend, there's a church of Christ near you. You need to be a part of it. And go there and worship with them. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.