

FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE IS REQUIRED BY GOD

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REF. VERSES/ JOHN 14:15 & 24

"IF YOU LOVE ME, YOU WILL OBEY MY COMMANDMENTS", (24)" HE WHO HAS NO LOVE FOR ME DOES NOT OBEY MY TEACHING; AND YET THE TEACHING TO WHICH YOU ARE LISTENING IS NOT MINE, BUT IS THE TEACHING OF THE FATHER WHO SENT ME."

The life of every true Christian should be inspired by a thirst to know God's Word, and a willingness to accept and follow it in 'faithful obedience'. Then, by the inspiration of the indwelling Holy Spirit, one can be enabled to obey and faithfully apply His Word in every circumstance of their life.

That life of obedience and faith, begins with a true repentance and a personal commitment to begin trusting God, by believing in His Son, and accepting His Word and Promises just as they are written. Making that right start in the true Christian life, is of the greatest importance to the person who is thirsty for God's Word, because it opens the way for the Holy Spirit to come into their life.

A right start begins with a sincere repentance, which means to forsake our old ways (of acting and doing things), and to get on our knees and confess those things to God.

To confess our sins to God and forsake the old ways, enables us to begin to live a life in obedience to God's Word, because it allows the Holy Spirit to enlighten us to know of our forgiveness, and enter into our life to convict us, and make us righteous through Christ. (1 John 1:9) "If we confess our sins, He is so faithful and just that He forgives us our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness."

For a person to welcome and accept the Message and then repent, be baptized, be cleansed from unrighteousness, and receive the Holy Spirit, is the divine order and plan that God established through His messengers. It is the surrender of one's self-will that God is looking for in everyone, and consecration of one's life to obey Him and be led and guided through life via His promised Holy Spirit from that moment.

That is the message John the Baptist was sent to proclaim in the land of Judaea (as a forerunner to Jesus Christ, the Savior who was to come to Israel). (Mark 1:2), "As it is written in Isaiah the Prophet, 'See, I am sending My messenger before Thee Who will prepare Thy way'." (and vs.4-5), "So John the Baptizer came, and was in the Desert proclaiming a baptism of the penitent for 'forgiveness of sins'. There went out to him people of all classes from Judaea, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem of all ranks, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, making open confession of their sins."

The penitent means the repentant person, irregardless of race or nationality, rich or poor, both educated or uneducated, or any other aspect of 'social standing'. Because, when any person truly repents of their past sins, wrong attitudes, disobedience of, and disregard for God's Word, they can receive the promised Holy Spirit within themselves. Through (or via) the work of that Spirit, a person can then become meek and humble in all their ways as Christ was, having all traces of pride removed from their heart.

It is that pride within a person's heart that must be removed, for it is the root-cause of all other sins of the self-life, which will always result in disobedience of God's Word. The pride of self's accomplishments, pride in material gains, pride in 'social status', or getting even with someone, and every other wrong attitude stemming from 'self-pride' (the list can become quite long), will eventually be removed from the heart of a truly repentant person, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. As the pride of the self-life is taken from our heart, we can live an overcoming life of faith and trust, (which is in reality), being a true believer in Christ.

We can recall that Jesus chose for His apostles, meek and humble fishermen and men who were untrained in the schools (as we read from Acts 4:13). Jesus converted Paul who worked in the trade of a tentmaker, (although he had been educated and trained by the Pharisees regarding their outward ceremonies or outward things (as Paul referred to them.) However, after his repentance and then being led by the Holy Spirit, (he said in Philippians 3:8) "And for His sake I have suffered the loss of everything, and reckon it all as mere refuse, in order that I may win Christ and be found in union with Him."

After Paul had repented and received the

Holy Spirit, he soon realized that all the things he had gotten through efforts of the self-life, and all his outward religious acts (*ceremonial things* as he called them), had to be gotten rid of, so that "I may win Christ and be found in union with Him."

The *pride of self* had been removed from Paul's heart by the Holy Spirit, because his repentance had been a *true repentance*. He had made a *right start* in a Christian life of *faithful obedience* to Christ. Our repentance (or *right start* in the Christian life) should be the same as Paul's repentance was. When Paul reverently asked, "Who art thou Lord" (Acts 9:5), (in his spirit of true repentance) he was really asking, "What will thou have me to do, Lord?" That should be the desire and request of every *truly repentant person*.

(In the book of Acts, chapter 26:), Paul told the story of his conversion and repentance. After Paul had asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" (the Lord replied vs 15-16), "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting;" and "I have appeared to you;" and "I will appear to you." Then he answered Paul's question by telling Paul what he was to do for Him (vs 17-18), "I will save you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the obedience to Satan, to God, in order to receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified through faith in Me."

Sanctified means to be consecrated, made holy, purified, free from sin. In the Christian life, for one to turn from obedience to Satan's man-made plans, and Satan-inspired decisions and actions, and instead, turn to faithful obedience to God, is to be sanctified through faith in Him, in order to receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance in Christ.

Everything in the true Christian life should be received by faith, through believing in God's promises. Whatever we have in this life is not nearly so important as, how we get what we have!!! If we can believe in faith to receive material things in this life, we can also believe in faith to receive our Salvation through Christ.

In the same way as Jesus showed Paul through His promised Holy Spirit, the Lord will show each person today who is truly repentant, what they are to do in every circumstance that arises in their life of *faithful obedience* to God's Word. He will take away that deadly *pride* from

the heart of each repentant soul, so they can become sanctified through their commitment of faithful obedience to God and His Word.

That *message of repentance* (given by John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ), is the same message Peter gave (in the second chapter of Acts), to the people who had accepted his testimony about the risen Christ. After they had heard and accepted the Message about the risen Christ, they also asked the question, "Brethren, what are we to do?" (vs 38-39) "Repent," replied Peter, "and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, with a view to the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you belongs the promise, and to your children, and to all who are far off, whoever the Lord our God may call." "Escape from this crooked generation," (Peter said vs.40).

(That *message* or that call for repentance was then (and still is today) for anyone who would accept it, and turn from their sinful ways, to believe in and obey God in faith, just as Christ's 'Message of Salvation' is for everyone today to accept and obey, and so, become a *believer* in Him through their obedient faith. (1 Peter 1:22) "Now that through your obedience to the truth, you have purified your souls for cherishing sincere brotherly love, you must love another heartily and fervently."

John the Baptist emphasized the importance of obedience for those who had repented, by then telling them to, "Live lives which shall prove your change of heart" (Luke 3:8), and he quickly followed up that in verse 9, by saying, "And even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees, so that every tree which fails to yield good fruit will quickly be hewn down and thrown into the fire."

So, we can see from John the Baptist's message (and from Peter's), that a believer receives the Holy Spirit after they have made a sincere commitment to obey God's Word. There are multitudes of people who 'say they obey', but they do not (actually) obey God's Word on one or on many 'life issues'. (James 2:10-12 tells us), "Whoever breaks one commandment is guilty of breaking them all. For the same one who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not commit murder.' Even if you do not commit adultery, you have become a lawbreaker if you commit murder. Speak and act as people who will be judged by the law that sets us free."

Christ showed us via His own example (while He lived here on earth) what it means to be obedient to God, His Father. And He enables us to also obey through the empowerment of His Holy Spirit, whom He promised to send, and did send for anyone who obeys Him. The apostles said (Acts 5:32), “We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

Jesus knew His Father’s Word, and He was also committed to obey it. He always obeyed His Father’s Word, no matter what the risk and regardless of injustice or suffering. He was simply doing His Father’s will in faithful obedience to Him, because He was committed to obeying Him. (Heb.5:8-9), says, “Although He was God’s Son, yet He learned obedience from the sufferings which He endured; and so, having been made perfect, He became to all who obey Him the ‘source and giver of eternal salvation.’”

If we are not committed to obeying everything that Jesus told us to obey, the Holy Spirit’s power would be hindered, and we will find ourselves drifting away from God’s Truth, outside of God’s will, or (simply stated) disobeying the Scriptures. So, we want to be reminded of Jesus’ words, “Only those who are obedient to my Father who is in Heaven, will enter the Kingdom of the Heavens” (Matt.7:21.)

It should be emphasized that faith and obedience cannot be separated in the life of faith. If we have real faith in God’s Word, we will surely obey it, regardless of injustices or difficult circumstances when we are tempted.

The Israelites lost faith in God when they were tempted in the wilderness, so they could not obey Him either. As a result, a whole generation of them were prevented by God from entering their promised land. (A terrible loss because of their disobedience).

When we become convinced that obedience to God’s Truth brings great results in our life, we will be glad to obey every command of God; His Holy Spirit will make it easy for us to do so, and we will soon realize that things work out for the best when we show that our love for God is genuine, by obeying His Word. (Romans 8:28) “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

It should also be emphasized, that obedience to God’s Word, should always be carried out

in God’s strength (not in our strength). God sees and knows our heart, and He does not ask us to obey until we are ready to do so. When are we ready to obey? When our sins are confessed, and we see ourselves forgiven, and the Holy Spirit is accepted into our hearts to guide and control our every word, decision, and action, then all of those things (our words, decisions, and actions), should somehow bring honor and glory to God, because all of that should be Christlike.

The books by Apostles Peter and Paul begin by telling us about that great work of Christ on the Cross, which means that a repentant person’s sins are forgiven, and all guilt removed. We are then to be filled with (or empowered by) the Holy Spirit to start anew in the Christian life of obedient faith.

Their books follow up with directions for every aspect of our life; how to meet financial problems, illness, injustice, persecution; and, how to be kind, considerate, and Christlike in our conduct and our treatment of others. The Bible has the answer to all these things. We must obey God’s Word which tells us how to meet insults, wrongs, and unfair treatment. Any resentment held against anyone, is disobedience to God’s Word, and it is against His will for us. God’s will is to forgive others (from the heart), for that is what His Word says to us (Matt.6:14-15) “For if you forgive others their offences, your Heavenly Father will forgive you also; but if you do not forgive others their offences, neither will your Father forgive yours.”

Joseph had to learn that most important lesson of meeting difficult things and mean treatment, but he ‘learned obedience’ from those experiences, and the false pride was taken out of his heart.

Then, our most exalted example (of course), is Jesus, Himself, who never resented anything, even when (naturally speaking) He had good reason to do so. (1 Peter 2:22-23), Jesus “committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to Him who judges justly.”

King James version says, “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” Deceit or guile means; ‘fraud’, ‘trickery’, ‘craftily’, or ‘cunning’. If we were to say one thing to a person, while in our heart we really mean something else,

we are guilty of the serious sin of guile. If we were to use false flattery toward another person, when in our heart we really don't want to flatter them (nor do we even have any right reason to be flattering them), again, we are guilty of that sin of guile. (Matt.5:8 Jesus told us) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." (And we know from Scripture that "no deceit was found in His mouth." He always told the Truth as we should)

Again, of the Savior (our example to follow), the Bible says, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

When we are obedient to God's Word and do His Will in our meeting mistreatment in a right way, we are promised that even those who may dislike us, will be made cordial and made to treat us well. (Proverbs 16:7) "When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him."

We may not realize (at first) in our Christian life, how important it is to be fully obedient to God's will concerning meeting wrongs done toward us, and meeting spiteful words said about us (or about a loved one). We must always (and with every situation), respond as Christ would have. It is not something for us to take lightly.

At times, Satan may try to convince us that we have a right to resent some difficult thing or injustice that was totally uncalled for. The devil will have us thinking that if we tell someone about it, they will sympathize with us, and that we have a right to "get that off our shoulder."

However, the only 'Scriptural right' we have, is to meet it as Jesus did! "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges righteously."

That Bible example (which is God's will that we must obey) is very plain; we are never to snap back or threaten somebody; we are only to place the matter before God in prayer; to ask for His peace over the situation and to resent nothing. That is faithful obedience to God's Word which tells us to forgive. The words on our heart at those times of mistreatment (as difficult as Satan may try to make it seem), should be the same words Jesus spoke amid His worst suffering; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:24)

That is true religion, and no one should be

deceived to even think that an outward show of religion will get them to heaven. A true Christian should want to be forgiving, truly trusting in the Father, and believing and obeying Words of the Son, to exert obedient faith in God. "Trust in God: trust in Me also." (Jesus told us John 14:1).

So, where our place of obedient trust is, to be enabled to meet people and things right, and, to receive things by faith that we need or want in our life really does define what it means to be a believer who is committed to a life of faithful obedience. (John 3:18) both encourages and reminds us that, "He who trusts in Him does not come up for judgment." That is how important a life of obedient faith and trust in God really is.

And, in closing, we are assured from (John 5:24) that obedient faith and trust leads to Eternal Life, for Jesus promised us, "In most solemn truth I tell you that he who listens to my teaching, and believes Him who sent me, has the Life of the Ages, and does not come under judgment, but has passed over out of death into Life."

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Some main points of:

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- 1./ We show our love for God by our commitment to being obedient and faithful to His Word.
- 2./ Making a right start in the Christian life is emphasized, by some teaching and examples from the Bible.
- 3./ After sincere repentance, the desire to know, and a willingness to follow God's Word, opens the way for the Holy Spirit to sanctify the heart of a surrendered person, through their faith in God.
- 4./ When mistreatment is met the right way, it allows God to control the other person toward us. (Prov.16:7) "When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him." &&&&