

Obedience to God's Commands

8 November, 2009

By Rev. Lonny R. Bower

Scripture Reference – Leviticus 18:1-5; Deuteronomy 6:13-25; John 14:23, 24; Galatians 3:1-25, 5:1-6, 13, 14

Unit Theme: “The Gospel Fulfills the Law”

Central Truth: Salvation through Christ must be followed by a life of obedience to Him.

Focus: Realize that saving faith in Christ results in obedience to God and His Word.

Key Verse: John 14:15

Introduction:

Obedience is often crucial to life and death. Consider the serviceman who must immediately obey his commanding officer, if he doesn't he may very well risk not only his life, but the lives of countless others. The Christian life is no exception if there is any hope of attaining eternal life; one must obey the commands of God. Not only is it directly impacting on the one who obeys, it also has eternal consequence for those around them. Countless souls have been lost or saved through the disobedience or obedience of God's people. Therefore, it is not merely for personal gain that one obeys God's commands; on the contrary, the consequences are far reaching, touching the lives of untold souls throughout the world. Only eternity will reveal the full affects of ones obedience or disobedience. Until then one should strive with everything within them to obey the commands of God. However, without love for God this is an impossible task. Love for God will transform ones thinking, the inner man, and enable him/her to obey His commands free from any burden of doing so.

I. Obedience to God Demanded – Leviticus 18:1-5; Deuteronomy 6:13-25

The Lord does not speak in a vacuum, that is, His commands apply to all and will equally be beneficial to all who will obey. The scripture tells us in **Numbers 23:19** that He is not a man that He should lie...that He will do what He says He'll do. What a great promise to us! As then, so it is today, God does not want His people to live according to the world, His desire is that we separate ourselves and come out from among them (**2 Corinthians 6:17**). Of course this is easier said than done, especially if we lack love for Him. Jesus said, “If you love me you'll obey my commands,” (**John 14:15** –NIV). We cannot love Him on whom we do not believe, therefore it is our belief in Him that becomes the enabler of obedience. Consider the example of the serviceman used in the introduction. It is much easier for servicemen to obey their commanding officer when they believe in him, take away their belief and insubordination runs rampant, but add love to the equation and they become a force to be reckoned with. So, whether we obey God or not really boils down to what or how much we believe. If we believe that He is the Lord and that there is no other, that He is the one who gives life and therefore the only one who can take it. Then it makes our choice of obeying or not obeying a simple one – if we want life, we obey. For

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those who truly believe, the alternative is not an option, for just as eternal life is the promise for those who obey; eternal damnation is the promise for those who disobey.

➤ **Think about it:**

Do you find it difficult to obey God? If so maybe the problem is your unbelief.

In 2003 Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore was removed from his judgeship after refusing to follow a federal court ruling that ordered him to take down a monument of the Ten Commandments erected outside his courtroom. His response to the media was direct: "To do my duty, I must obey God." Obeying the commandments of God must always remain the believer's priority, no matter the consequences.

II. Justified by Faith not Law – Galatians 3:1-25

In every culture there is an inherent desire for the eternal – we were created as eternal beings. Sin, however, interrupted our eternity and brought death. Therefore, God made a way for all people to once again gain eternity. In the Old Testament, He provided the law that exposed our need for a redeemer. For there was only one who would fulfill the entire law, He never transgressed on any point. His righteousness would qualify Him to be the perfect sacrifice for our unrighteousness, so that we, by believing in Him, may once again attain righteousness and gain eternal life as a result. This is not done apart from faith however. It is impossible to gain eternal life by following rules, even the Old Testament saints were made righteous by their belief in God (**Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23**) and not solely by their obedience to the law – for as Paul points out it was an impossible task to fulfill the law on ones own, therefore we are all under a curse. This is why God made a way of redemption through the sacrificial system, which ultimately Christ would become our final sacrifice. So it is our faith in Him that brings us again to the threshold of eternal life. There is nothing that God has ever done that the devil has not opposed with all the powers of darkness he can muster. The devil has mounted an all out attack against the Kingdom of God by stealing (**John 10:10** he has come to steal...) or destroying the faith of many. Apart from the law, one cannot see their dire need for a Savior. In our postmodern

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society, the devil has introduced “knowledge” that in effect has left those who are led astray by it without faith. He tried to do the same thing to the Galatians, this is why Paul wrote to them and asked them, “Who fooled you, who convinced you that you did not need faith?” Just as in the beginning, so it is today, we are justified by faith and faith alone. Take a way faith and eternal life is lost. The law simply brings us to Christ the one and only Redeemer of our soul.

➤ **Think about it:**

How has modern society (postmodernism) affected your faith?

“Men have left God not for other gods...but for no god; and this has never happened before.” – **T.S. Eliot**

III. Freedom to Love and Obey – John 14:23, 24; Galatians 5:1-6, 13, 14

Regardless of whether we say we love God or not, the evidence is born out in our actions. How we live our lives and how we treat others will either affirm our love for God and further establish us as a genuine Christian, or incriminate us as Charlatan. The result of our love for God is true freedom; I find it ironic that people the world over are seeking freedom. Freedom from hate, tyranny and injustice. In their attempt however, they seemingly reject the only one who can provide absolute freedom – Christ. If we are to love others, we must first love God, if we are to be free from sin, we must first love God. Loving God brings the fullness of His promise and blessings upon our lives, loving Him enables us to obey his commands and as John stated they are not burdensome (**1 John 5:3**). Take away love for Him and His commands not only become burdensome, they become impossible. Someone may ask, “How can I love God whom I cannot see?” apart from His word we will never see Him. This is the dilemma that not only the world is in, but the church herself. Having separated themselves from God’s word they do not know Him and cannot see Him. Jesus told the religious of His day that they did error because they didn’t know the scriptures or the power of God (**Matthew 22:29**). Be sure that they had knowledge, but

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what did it gain them? They did not love God, but loved their knowledge instead; in essence, knowledge had become their god. Likewise, many today have left God for nothing and have been led astray by worldly knowledge and in the end are no different than the Gnostics of the past who were convinced that salvation was attained through knowledge and only a select few could attain it. If the world ever needed a redeemer it is now – come quickly Lord Jesus, save us from the enemy and deliver us from ourselves!

➤ **Think about it:**

Are you free to walk in love and obedience? If not what is it that holds you back?

If so what or who is the source of your love and freedom?

“The Christian, like a chalice without a base, cannot stand on his or her own nor hold what he has received any longer than God holds him in His strong hands.” —William Gurnall

Conclusion:

We live in a world that has rejected the absolute truth of the gospel and as a result is headed to hell. Like a brakeless runaway semi nearing the end of a hill, there is little hope for recovery. Like the semi that has one chance near the bottom of the grade to engage the runaway truck ramp, Christ stands at the gates of hell willing to catch all who would look to him for salvation. The Lord is strategic in that He has placed us here in this generation for the purpose of proclaiming His Gospel to a lost and dying world. The challenge before us now is greater than at any other time in history, great than that of the Apostles, or those who lived through the Enlightenment and the Renaissance, even greater than the times of the Great Awakening. We now live in a generation who no longer sees their need for divine intervention. It is up to us to reach them and we do this by simply loving God, living for Him and by loving them enough to share the truth with them. Many will scoff, but rejection is a small price to pay for the few or even one who will hear the Word and turn to God in faith, hope and love. Like so many

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servicemen who have gone before us and have faced seemingly insurmountable battles. We must be determined to take the fight to the enemy knowing that if we don't, souls will be lost for eternity to the damnation of hell. What will compel us to live such a life? Love, it is love that will compel us. If we love God, we will love people and desire as He does, to reach them before they are lost for eternity. Jesus said, "if you love me you will obey my commands". One of His commands was that we go and share the Gospel. Does the love of God compel us, are we going, or are we all out of love?

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Except where I have paraphrased all scripture is taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

This study and others can be found at www.fullmessage.org.

Next Week's Lesson – The Ten Commandments, Part 1

- I. Prologue: Our Covenant Making God – Deuteronomy 5:1-6**
- II. Worship God Only – Deuteronomy 5:7; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6**
- III. Idolatry Forbidden – Deuteronomy 5:8-10; 1 Corinthians 10:14-22**
- IV. Honor God's Name – Deuteronomy 5:11; Matthew 5:33-37**
- V. Keep the Sabbath – Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Hebrews 4:6-11**