

12 FAITH: A Life of Obedience & Surrender

"Beware of reasoning about God's Word – obey it." ~ Oswald Chambers

Faith: A Life of Obedience & Surrender

According to Holman's Illustrated Bible Dictionary a succinct definition of biblical obedience is "to hear God's Word and act accordingly." Eerdman's Bible Dictionary states, "True 'hearing,' or obedience, involves the physical hearing that inspires the hearer, and a belief or trust that in turn motivates the hearer to act in accordance with the speaker's desires."

Thus, biblical obedience to God means to hear, trust, submit and surrender to God and his Word.

Take all week to work the lesson, look up Bible scriptures and reflect on your life as you are writing your answers.

Grace Lesson:

Faith: A Life of Obedience & Surrender

I dub obedience and surrender as married to each other. They are two different principles that go hand in hand. You really can't have one without the other.

I am going to teach you a little on each one. Obedience and surrender are the foundation of the daily Christian life lived out in purity and honesty.

Why is obedience so important? Why can't we just do what we want in life and it just be okay? Why do we have to have any rules at all?

Well, for one thing, we would have total chaos in society and in our personal lives. Nothing would ever get done or get done correctly because every single person would have a different way of living and doing. Society, as a whole, would break down and destroy itself.

Also, obedience is in the word of God. It is what God requires for us to live in harmony with Him and with each other. Let's look at the definitions first before you go any further.

Obey or obedience – The Biblical word for "obey" comes from the Greek "hupakou" which means to listen attentively; by implication to heed or conform to a command or authority. This word conveys the idea of actively following a command. There is no choice in the matter, it is to be done whether one agrees with it or not. Obedience is involuntary.

Submit (or surrender) – The Biblical word “submit” comes from the Greek “hupeiko” which means to yield; to passively surrender to an authority. Submission is similar to obedience but in this case one might question what is being commanded. Submission is voluntary.

Looking closely, the two words have two different meanings.

I once heard it said that obedience is wonderful as long as it is not required of me and submission is great as long as it is for my benefit and I can surrender how I want. Don't think they quite got the point.

We all like obedience when we are involved on the receiving end, but usually if we have to obey, especially, when we don't want to, we don't like it so much.

In my teachings with women, I have found that obedience and surrender are probably two of the hardest principles to get people to embrace. I usually use them synonymously since they are so close in relation. The two words don't really work without each other and they don't work too well if you don't cooperate. You must first surrender to then obey on some level.

They are the first things, as far as personal integrity, that seem to leave our life when we are in a lot of emotional pain and turmoil. When we find ourselves like this we tend to not obey as quick or at all.

What do you think it means to obey?

Some of why I think obedience is hard is because a lot of us simply do not know what is required by God. If you are not first obedient to God, His word, and His law you will find it quite difficult to be obedient in your daily life.

The word of God is true for all humans and will manifest the same results to all no matter your circumstance or situation.

The word of God talks a lot about obedience. Here are a few scriptures I want you to look up for yourself and write them below.

Colossians 3:22

Hebrews 13:17

1 Peter 4:16-17

As you can see God requires obedience and rewards it. A lot of people think they can sacrifice or cheat their way through obedience to get a God result.

1 Samuel 15:22 says...And Samuel said, "Has the LORD a great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams." (NLT)

The phrase "obedience is better than sacrifice," has caused some to be confused as to what God wants. You have to look at this verse from the Old Testament view point. The law required the Israelite people to offer sacrifices to God, but those sacrifices and offerings were never intended to take the place of obedience. It's the same in your life. You are never to try to do something for God or give anything to God in place of obeying His word.

Here is the entire verse.

But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So, because you have rejected the command of the LORD, he has rejected you as king." (1 Samuel 15:22–23, NLT)

Obedience can be seen

Obedience is something that you can see in the life of an individual. It looks tangible. It's an attitude of the heart that is expressed outwardly in your life for others to see.

Jesus calls you and me to a life of obedience. He is the perfect model for obedience. His disciples followed Him and as His disciple we follow Him and His commands.

Our motivation for this is our love for Him. The more you really love Him the easier it is to obey Him.

I am convinced that a lot of people do not really love Jesus. They know of Him, but they have yet to really fall in love with Him.

Love for the Lord Jesus, is the key to obedience in your life.

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.” - 1 John 5:2–3 (ESV)

Have you ever thought about how you feel about Jesus? How much do you love Jesus? Describe it here. If not, why?

John 15:14 - “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” (Jesus’ speaking) Obedience and keeping God’s commandments looks like something. You can see it in your life and the life of those you give it to. You can see it in society and in your own family.

Obedience has its rewards. These rewards are many and they are great. Look around at society. Many, many people do not obey. They do not obey the laws of land, they do not obey on their jobs, they do not obey God.

Obedience is a personal, as well as, public decision in the lives of each person. You must police yourself as to the level of obedience you are wanting to walk in. It will have to be a choice between you and God.

Just know, that disobedience has a high price and consequences come to all.

Rewards of Obedience

God is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. We know that verse, but He is also a rewarder of obedience.

God wants you to obey His voice, His instruction. To obey Him you must believe what He says. You must believe what He says is for YOU.

Do you struggle to believe what God says to you? Why?

Genesis 22:17-18 – “I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” (The LORD speaking to Abraham through an angel)

You cannot despise the word of God. You have to learn to embrace the voice of God’s word, His scriptures for yourself and love them as our own.

Proverbs 13:13- “Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.”

Generational Obedience

God wants your entire generation to be blessed. Your obedience now will affect those that follow you in your bloodline. This is what is at stake by your obedience or disobedience.

“And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.”- Genesis 22:18 (NLT)

“Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me.”- Exodus 19:5 (NLT)

What makes obedience hard?

Sometimes obeying is harder when we listen to the wrong people or counsel. Sometimes that counsel is your own thoughts, your past, your history with a place or situation, your present circumstances, your friends or your own wrong belief and for lack of knowledge.

Then, sometimes it’s just hard because we hear the Word to obey but simply do not do it.

“But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.” - James 1:22–25(NLT)

Write these verses out.

Luke 11:28

Psalms 1:1-2

Obedience is not something you can play around with. It has far too many consequences when you do not obey. I believe this verse sums it up very well.

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 - "Obey and you will be blessed. Disobey and you will be cursed."

If you are a believer, you are called to a life of obedience. You are called to a life of yielding to a higher authority. To do that you must trust Him.

So, to be an obedient person, Christian, or a believer, means that you will have to hear, trust, and submit and surrender to God and His Word.

True obedience flows from a heart of gratitude. A heart that is full of grace and gratitude is a heart of obedience towards the Lord.

Obedience is a worship to the Lord. You must give all of you to do it.

Now, let's talk about surrender.

But first, let me give you the definition again.

Submit (or surrender) – The Biblical word “submit” comes from the Greek “hupeiko” which means to yield; to passively surrender to an authority. Submission is similar to obedience but in this case one might question what is being commanded. Submission is voluntary.

Did you catch that? Voluntary.

According to this definition, do you think that the life of surrender is working in you as an individual? If so, how do you live a life of surrender out in your daily life?

What does surrendering to God mean to you?

I truly believe that in order to surrender, you first will have to make up in your own mind that you will surrender no matter what you think the outcome will be. You can't predetermine that you will surrender if the situation goes a certain way or not.

This is where a lot of people fall short. They sort of want "convenient surrender." There is no such thing.

What is blocking your surrender to God? (list all the reasons here that you can think of)

I want you to think about your life as a whole. Think about all the areas you know you are not surrendered in. Areas you question surrendering. The areas you know God has been dealing with you on, but you push it away every time it comes. Where are you not surrendered?

"And He said to them all, If, any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me." – Luke 9:23

To follow Christ, to be truly His, you will have to surrender. You will have to deny yourself "daily". You will have to do it **voluntarily**. He will not force you. He does not want forced surrender. There is no other way around it. Here is another verse.

John 15:5

Your flesh life and flesh desires must die.

Galatians 5:24 says, *"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."*

This is a powerful verse. More powerful than people know. A lot of things are in the small phrase "crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Be clear, the affections and lust come with the flesh which must be crucified.

But people think that phrase only means something sexual. No! It is far more than that. Anything that you have a real “lust or affection for” must die. That could be: food, your favorite sitcom, favorite nighttime television drama, gossip, fear, anger, shopping, wanting to always have fun and entertainment, etc.

This verse is an area that will take you out of the mediocre living and propel you to a higher, much higher place in God. A place many will not go because they refuse to give up or surrender things of the flesh and this world.

Surrender is not easy, but it is required. Again, it is a decision you must make in advance of any situation.

It is a lifestyle commitment that you make for your life and your life alone no matter what comes.

You must say, “I will live surrendered to you Jesus, no matter what may come.”

When times of stress come, and it will, you will be ready if you know that your life is not your own and is surrendered to Him. It will make those situations easier to obey in those moments.

When do you find it hardest to surrender?

Surrender means that you trust the Lord Jesus in everything without doubting or finding fault in yourself or your faith.

Surrender means to live your life without any perceived rights, your agenda, or your opinion against what He wants. Now that is a mouthful, because we all have a lot of opinion and we want our rights.

I know this is a lot. This is not something you hear all the time or on Sunday sermons. We don’t like it and we just want what we want, and we think we are entitled. But we’re not.

Not so with surrender. If it was so, then it wouldn’t be surrender.

Surrendering to the love of God is where you would first start. If you surrender to His love you can give your whole life to Him and you will not want your agenda.

Surrender is a daily discipline. It is a daily choice. It is a daily dying to self.

You have to practice this. You may not get it right all the time, but your aim should be to get it right. Your heart should be to do it right for Him.

Surrender is a great freedom. It frees you from fear, from insecurity, from your pain, from the past and from the future.

Surrender is you being free from life’s circumstances because you are not in charge of them. God is. You will get a better outcome when you surrender it all to Him anyway.

What could you surrender from and experience this freedom?

Surrender will help you to know God better and more intimately. You will live a life of not being defeated by every situation that comes up.

Surrender is freedom from the prison of your own emotions or thinking. It is far more freeing than living in the bondage to sin or circumstances. It is a freedom in the inner most part of your being that will cause you to grow beyond what you could ever imagine. It comes from a place of confidence in Him and not in yourself.

What is the cost to your life and to those around you when you do not surrender to Christ?

Again, a lot of people think surrender is a bondage to a rule or law. It's not. The bondage is the bondage. You hold on to the bondage or the sin out of fear.

What areas of bondage do you need to surrender over to Christ in order to live a surrendered life?

Grace Homework:

Surrender is of the heart as I have said. A lot of times we don't see how it will benefit us to surrender. We feel weak and useless a lot of the time. We want our own will and that fights us.

List what you think real surrender would look like in your life?

Name an issue or problem that if you surrendered, you know it would get better?

Faith: A Life of Obedience and Surrender Application

Now having finished the lesson, what did you learn or your take away on obedience and surrender? List here.
