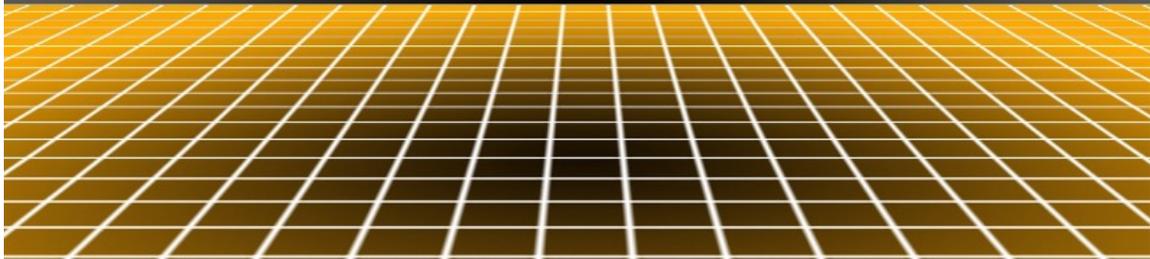


Obedience



Thinking About

Obedience

By

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What do you think of this statement?

“Obedience to God’s Word is a measure of one’s real faith and core values.”

Is obedience to God’s Word really necessary in these enlightened times? Does it actually have anything to do with faith and core values? I mean, come on, we live in the 21st Century! Why should obedience to words written by people who lived thousands of years ago have any place in our lives today? The people who lived during Bible times lacked so much information about life. Their avenues of learning were limited and they didn’t have any of the modern communication techniques that make our society the greatest the world has ever seen. What scientists and modern theologians are declaring now is far superior to the writings in the Bible. Right?

I would have agreed with those statements 45 years ago – when I was an atheist. The idea of obedience to ancient writings by people who lacked the advantages of modern knowledge and scientific discovery seemed ludicrous. Why they even believed in God! Some even claimed they saw Him – actually met Him and talked with Him. Ridiculous – right?

Well, now I also believe in God. I met Him – personally – at the Cross. Jesus Christ is as real to me as someone putting their hand on my shoulder, looking me in the eye and speaking my name with a clear voice. Atheists who I talk to now about my belief in Jesus Christ believe I’ve lost my mind. One atheist told me I must have been on

drugs to have “switched sides.” Another atheist told me I was a “bad atheist.” He said a good atheist would never believe in God. I’m reminded of the Psalm that reads – “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (Psalm 53:1) I’d rather be a bad former-atheist than a dying fool.

If there is no God – as atheists believe – then obedience to what He says is not necessary because He’s not real. However, that’s a big “if.” If there is a God (and there is), then obedience to what He says is necessary and vital to life. A God Who has the power to create the universe and everything in it is a God to **fear** -

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.” Psalm 111:10

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Proverbs 1:7

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Proverbs 9:10

“The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.” Proverbs 15:33

A God Who has the power to create the universe and everything in it is also a God to **obey**. God is Eternal, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, All-Seeing and Everywhere-Present-At-The-Same-Time. Those who do not obey the Lord God of Heaven will live to regret that decision.

The king of Egypt is one example - "And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.'" (Exodus 5:2) The pharaoh lived to regret that decision. The Israelites who God freed from slavery in Egypt also lived to regret their decision to disobey God – "For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD—to whom the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, 'a land flowing with milk and honey.'" (Joshua 5:6)

A God Who has the power to create the universe and everything in it is also a God to **love**. Why? Because He Loves us with a *Love* that is beyond imagination and explanation:

"For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus 3:3-7

Can you fathom that? Can you take it in? I've been a child of God for almost 45 years – spent thousands of hours studying His Word, asking Him to help me understand His Great Love – and I still feel like a little child trying to grasp what it means to be in this great Family of Faith. God is beyond my comprehension – beyond my ability to understand how truly amazing is His Grace.

How in the world could God ever let me – a foolish, disobedient, deceived atheist, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another – enter into His Holy Presence? There is only one Way – **through the kindness and the love of God our Savior**, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of Eternal Life. Praise the Lord!

Christian author and former atheist C.S. Lewis wrote this about the importance of obedience to God - "Obedience is the road to freedom, humility the road to pleasure, unity the road to personality" (*The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 1949, The Macmillan Company). Obedience to God is the road to freedom! How simple and profound. The human race has been a slave to sin for thousands of years. Disobeying God got us into this mess – obeying God will get us out. Jesus said - "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). It's interesting that the next thing Jesus said to His disciples

was this – “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16-17). Jesus had just told them that He was the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6) – then Jesus told them He would ask His Father to give them another Helper, the Spirit of Truth.

Do you see how **love, truth and obedience** are tied together in a way that none of them can be extracted without destroying the unity of the whole? Jesus repeated this truth in the same context – “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21). See it? Whoever has Jesus’ commandments and keeps them loves Jesus – and the person who loves Jesus will be loved by God the Father – and Jesus will love him and make Himself known to him. Wow! That is amazing!

Jesus isn’t finished yet – “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me” (John 14:23-24). If a person loves Jesus, he will keep (obey) His Word and God the Father will love him – and Jesus and the Father will come to him and make Their home with him. Did you see that? God makes His Home in you!

What does this mean for us as Christians – obedient followers of Jesus Christ? Same context – “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart

be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). Jesus gives us something the world cannot know – His Peace.

The keys that unlock the peace of God in our lives are **love** and **obedience** - God’s Love for us and Christ’s Obedience to die for our sins on the Cross and our love for Christ and obedience to His commands. That’s it – that’s how it works. If we want God’s peace, we need to listen to what the Spirit of Truth tells us. There’s just one way – and that Way is Jesus.

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

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