



Obedience  
Expressed Through A  
Sanctified Life

Compiled by Harold Bollinger, D.A.

## **FORWARD**

**In making decisions, we may try to determine what is best for us. We may wonder what would impress others. The decisions may be logical, emotional or sound.**

**When we learn to obey God, and leave the consequences to him, we become wise. There is nothing more important in life than knowing and following Jesus. Trusting him to meet our needs is always the best choice.**

**Both sanctification and justification are gifts of God. Sanctification is a work of God's free grace. In this, we are renewed in the image of God. We die to sins and live unto righteousness. Ephesians 5:8**

**Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Isaiah 1:18**

**Through this study, we will see the necessities of obedience as well as the promises of obedience.**

**As you view both Old Testament and New Testament examples, may you relate with these who have gone before, and prove yourself to God and to others. Allow God's plan of obedience be instrumental in bringing others unto Christ. To obey is better than sacrifice.**

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[Psalm 95:6](#)

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;



## **THE BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE**

### **Chapter I**

There is an awesome blessing promised to those who follow the Lord in total obedience. God laid down the provisions for these blessing in Deuteronomy 28:1-14 (NLB)

#### **Deut. 28:1-14**

If you fully obey the Lord your God by keeping all the commands I am giving you today,

the Lord your God will exalt you above all the nations of the world. You will experience all these blessings if you obey the Lord your God:

You will be blessed in your towns and in the country.  
You will be blessed with many children and productive fields.  
You will be blessed with fertile herds and flocks.

You will be blessed with baskets overflowing with fruit, and with kneading bowls filled with bread.

You will be blessed wherever you go, both in coming and in going.  
The Lord will conquer your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter from you in seven!

The Lord will bless everything you do and will fill your storehouses with grain.  
The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.  
If you obey the commands of the Lord your God and walk in his ways, the Lord will establish you as his holy people as he solemnly promised to do. Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the Lord, and they will stand in awe of you.

The Lord will give you an abundance of good things in the land he swore to give your ancestors—many children, numerous livestock, and abundant crops.  
The Lord will send rain at the proper time from his rich treasury in the heavens to bless all the work you do. You will lend to many nations, but you will never need to borrow from them.

If you listen to these commands of the Lord your God and carefully obey them, the Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always have the upper hand.

You must not turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today to follow after other gods and worship them.

There is a terribly curse promised to those who do not obey the commandment of the Lord.

**Deut. 28:15-20 (NKJ)**

But if you refuse to listen to the Lord your God and do not obey all the commands and laws I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overwhelm you:

You will be cursed in your towns and in the country.

You will be cursed with baskets empty of fruit, and with kneading bowls empty of bread.

You will be cursed with few children and barren fields.

You will be cursed with infertile herds and flocks.

You will be cursed wherever you go, both in coming and in going.

The Lord himself will send against you curses, confusion, and disillusionment in everything you do, until at last you are completely destroyed for doing evil and forsaking me.

Obedience to God is very important in our Christian growth. No one will ever become sufficiently sanctified to the point where they are always obeying the law, but we can honor and maintain obedience to God by pondering on, or meditating on, the words of Jesus. The apostle Paul when writing to the church in Rome said:

### [Romans 12:2](#)

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

Moving from the theological to the practical, Paul gives guidelines for living as a redeemed people in a fallen world. We are to give ourselves to Christ as living sacrifices, obey the government, love our neighbors, and take special care of those who are weak in the faith. He closes with personal remarks. Throughout this section, we learn how to live our faith each day.

God wants us to offer ourselves, not animals, as *living* sacrifices—daily laying aside our own desires to follow him, putting all our energy and resources at his disposal and trusting him to guide us. We do this out of gratitude that our sins have been forgiven.

God has good, pleasing, and perfect plans for his children. He wants us to be transformed people with renewed minds, living to honor and obey him. Because he

wants only what is best for us, and because he gave his Son to make our new lives possible, we should joyfully give ourselves as living sacrifices for his service.

Our refusal to conform to this world's values, however, must go even deeper than the level of behavior and customs. It must be firmly planted in our minds. We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds." It is possible to avoid most worldly customs and still be proud, covetous, selfish, stubborn, and arrogant. Only when the Holy Spirit renews, and redirects our minds are we truly transformed.

### **Romans 8:5**

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Holy Spirit.

Through Jesus, God gives us power to overcome sin through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the Bible there are stories of those who were dedicated to following God in sanctified obedience. We will discuss many of these people and see how their relationship and dedication to God brought sanctification through obedience and faithfulness to God. May we relate to their Godly examples.

Jesus is very concerned about us and He wants us to do more than participate in good works, He We must believe in Him. He wants us to be "like" Him". When we are being obedient to God, we are doing just that: knowing Him, loving Him, and having a personal, intimate relationship with Him. To do this, we must be attentive to God's laws. This is not an option, because you can't have an intimate relationship with Jesus and trample on the words He taught. Obedience to God is living God's Word because you want to and enjoy being filled with the love of Jesus

Moses was obedient to God, and God used him to do great things. God wanted to use Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, out of slavery, and into the Promised Land.

### **Exodus 3:7-10**

Then the Lord told him, "You can be sure I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries for deliverance from their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. So I have come to rescue them from the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own good and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites dwell.

The cries of the people of Israel have reached me, and I have seen how the Egyptians have oppressed them with heavy tasks. Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You will lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

Obedying God comes from not believing in our own abilities, but in trusting in God's promise to sustain us through *whatever* we are about to go through, whether that be facing temptations or dealing with sorrow in our lives, or overcoming our addictions to things of this world. On our own, it might be impossible. But with God's help, all things are possible. So never use the excuse that you can't be obedient to God because it is too hard. God promises to aid us in the things that we have to go through.

### **Matthew 28:20**

Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Jesus was with the disciples physically until he ascended into heaven, and then spiritually through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4).

The Holy Spirit would be Jesus' presence that would never leave them (John 14:26). Jesus continues to be with us today through his Spirit.

The Old Testament prophecies and genealogies in the book of Matthew present Jesus' credentials for being King of the world—not a military or political leader, as the disciples had originally hoped, but a spiritual King who can overcome all evil and rule in the heart of every person. If we refuse to serve the King faithfully, we are disloyal subjects, fit only to be banished from the kingdom. We must make Jesus King of our lives and worship him as our Savior, King, and Lord.

## **Genesis 28:15**

What's more, I will be with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. I will someday bring you safely back to this land. I will be with you constantly until I have finished giving you everything I have promised."

Because Moses was obedient to God's calling, Moses went back to Egypt, and through God he was able to eventually free the Israelites and lead them out of slavery.

Moses was used by God and went on to do great things because he was obedient to God's instructions. God is still seeking for those, like Moses, who will dedicate themselves to His calling.

## **Psalm 95:6**

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;



## SET APART FOR SERVICE

### Chapter 2

#### Romans 12:1-2

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

When sacrificing an animal according to God's law, a priest would kill the animal, cut it in pieces, and place it on the altar. Sacrifice was important, but even in the Old Testament, God made it clear that obedience from the heart was much more important.

God desires for us to offer ourselves, not animals, as *living* sacrifices—daily laying aside our own desires to follow him, putting all our energy and resources at his disposal and trusting him to guide us. We do this out of gratitude that our sins have been forgiven.

The plan God has for his children is good, pleasing, and a perfect plan. He wants us to be transformed people with renewed minds, living to honor and obey him. Because he wants only what is best for us, and because he gave his Son to make our new lives possible, we should joyfully give ourselves as living sacrifices for his service.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Psalms 51:17.

Every sacrifice must be put on the altar to be burned by fire, so the sweet smelling savor can come forth. “For our God is a consuming fire.” Heb. 12:29

When we give ourselves as a living sacrifice and are consumed by the fire of God, the Glory of God will be seen, which is Christ. “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” Col. 1:27

The Presence of the Lord is an “All consuming fire”.

### **Isaiah 33:14-17**

The sinners in Jerusalem shake with fear. "Which one of us," they cry, "can live here in the presence of this all-consuming fire?" The ones who can live here are those who are honest and fair, who reject making a profit by fraud, who stay far away from bribes, who refuse to listen to those who plot murder, who shut their eyes to all enticement to do wrong.

These are the ones who will dwell on high. The rocks of the mountains will be their fortress of safety. Food will be supplied to them, and they will have water in abundance.

Your eyes will see the king in all-of-his splendor, and you will see a land that stretches into the distance.

You may have heard the statement: “He is so heavenly minded, he is no earthly good”

God is not going to remove us from the earth to sacrifice and obey him. Rather we are to live in the earth, using the power of the Holy Spirit to bless and encourage others who are also living in the earth.

Jesus said “I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They are not part of this world any more than I am. Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth. As you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world”. John 17:15-18

A follower of Christ becomes sanctified (set apart for sacred use, cleansed and made holy) through believing and obeying the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). He or she has already accepted forgiveness through Christ’s sacrificial death (Hebrews 7:26-27).

Daily application of God’s Word has a purifying effect on our minds and hearts. Scripture points out sin, motivates us to confess, renews our relationship with Christ, and guides us back to the right path.

Jesus didn’t ask God to take believers *out* of the world but instead to use them *in* the world. Because Jesus sends us into the world, we should not try to escape from the world, nor should we avoid all relationships with non-Christians. We are called to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16), and we are to do the work that God sent us to do.

## **1 Peter 1:16**

For he himself has said, "You must be holy because I am holy."

We are not destined to happiness, nor to health, but to holiness. Today we have far too many desires and interests. Our lives may be consumed and wasted by them. Many of them may be right, noble, and good, and may later be fulfilled, but in the meantime, their importance to us must decrease. The only thing that truly matters is whether a person will accept the God who will make him holy. At all costs, a person must have the right relationship with God.

God has only one intended destiny for mankind— holiness. His only goal is to produce saints. God is not some eternal blessing-machine for us to use, and He did not come to save us out of pity— He came to save us because He created us to be holy. Atonement through the Cross of Christ means that God can put me back into

perfect oneness with Himself through the death of Jesus Christ, without a trace of anything coming between us

The Apostle Paul is a great example of one is completely dedicated to live in obedience to the Calling that Christ gave him.

### **Romans 1:1-16**

This letter is from Paul, Jesus Christ's slave, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. This Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. It is the Good News about his Son, Jesus, who came as a man, born into King David's royal family line. And Jesus Christ our Lord was shown to be the Son of God when God powerfully raised him from the dead by means of the Holy Spirit.

Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.

You are among those who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ, dear friends in Rome. God loves you dearly, and he has called you to be his very own people. May grace and peace be yours from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me say first of all that your faith in God is becoming known throughout the world. How I thank God through Jesus Christ for each one of you. God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart by telling others the Good News about his Son.

One of the things I always pray for is the opportunity, God willing, to come at last to see you. For I long to visit you so I can share a spiritual blessing with you that will help you grow strong in the Lord. I'm eager to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours. In this way, each of us will be a blessing to the other.

I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see good

results, just as I have done among other Gentiles. For I have a great sense of obligation to people in our culture and to people in other cultures, to the educated and uneducated alike. So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach God's Good News.

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ for it is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—Jews first and also Gentiles.

When Paul, a devout Jew who had at first persecuted the Christians, became a believer, God used him to spread the gospel throughout the world. Although it was as a prisoner, Paul did eventually preach in Rome (Acts 28), perhaps even to Caesar himself.

Paul humbly calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ and an apostle. For a Roman citizen—which Paul was—to choose to be a servant was unthinkable. But Paul chose to be completely dependent on and obedient to his beloved Master.

Paul states that Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and the resurrected Lord. Paul calls Jesus a descendant of King David to emphasize that Jesus truly had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures predicting that the Messiah would come from David's line. With this statement of faith, Paul declares his agreement with the teaching of all Scripture and of the apostles.

Here Paul summarizes the Good News about Jesus Christ, who (1) came as a human by natural descent, (2) was part of the Jewish royal line through David, (3) died and was raised from the dead, and (4) opened the door for God's grace and kindness to be poured out on us. The book of Romans is an expansion of these themes.

Christians have both privilege and a great responsibility. Paul and the apostles received forgiveness ("grace") as an undeserved privilege. But they also received the responsibility to share the message of God's forgiveness with others. God also graciously forgives our sins when we believe in him as Lord.

In doing this, we are committing ourselves to begin a new life. Paul's new life also involved a God-given responsibility—to witness about God's Good News to the world as a missionary. God may or may not call you to be an overseas missionary, but he does call you (and all believers) to witness to and be an example of the changed life that Jesus Christ has begun in you.

Paul says that those who become Christians are invited by Jesus Christ to (1) become part of God's family, and (2) be holy people ("to be saints," set apart, dedicated for his service). What a wonderful expression of what it means to be a Christian! In being reborn into God's family we have the greatest experience of love and the greatest inheritance. Because of all that God has done for us, we strive to be his holy people.

Paul showed his love for the Roman Christians by expressing God's love for them and his own gratitude and prayers for them. To have an effect on people's lives, you first need to love them and believe in them. Paul's passion to teach these people began with his love for them. Paul was not ashamed because his message was the gospel of Christ, the Good News.

It was a message of salvation, it had life-changing power, and it was for everyone. When you are tempted to be ashamed, remember what the Good News is all about. If you focus on God and on what God is doing in the world rather than on your own inadequacy, you won't be ashamed or embarrassed.

#### [Psalm 95:6](#)

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;



## **THE CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN**

### **Chapter 3**

We study the Bible to learn about the kind of character God desires in His people. Self-discipline is a key ingredient to being obedient to God, defeating sin in our lives, and putting on Christ-like qualities. Christian character is developed by allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives through the study of God's Word.

#### **Jesus prayed:**

#### **John 17:9-20**

"My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. And all of them, since they are mine, belong to you; and you have given them back to me, so they are my glory! Now I am departing the world; I am leaving them behind and coming to you. Holy Father, keep them and care for them—all those you have given me—so that they will be united just as we are. During my time here, I have kept them safe. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

"And now I am coming to you. I have told them many things while I was with them so they would be filled with my joy. I have given them your word. And the

world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They are not part of this world any more than I am. Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth. As you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself entirely to you so they also might be entirely yours.

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me because of their testimony. God's glory is the revelation of his character and presence. The lives of Jesus' disciples reveal his character, and he is present to the world through them. Jesus was asking that the disciples be united in harmony and love as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united—the strongest of all unions

Joy is a common theme in Christ's teachings—he wants us to be joyful (see John 15:11; John 16:24, 33). The key to immeasurable joy is living in intimate contact with Christ, the source of all joy. When we do, we will experience God's special care and protection and see the victory God brings even when defeat seems certain.

A follower of Christ becomes sanctified (set apart for sacred use, cleansed and made holy) through believing and obeying the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). He or she has already accepted forgiveness through Christ's sacrificial death (Hebrews 7:26-27). But daily application of God's Word has a purifying effect on our minds and hearts. Scripture points out sin, motivates us to confess, renews our relationship with Christ, and guides us back to the right path.

Jesus didn't ask God to take believers *out* of the world but instead to use them *in* the world. Because Jesus sends us into the world, we should not try to escape from the world, nor should we avoid all relationships with non-Christians. We are called to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16), and we are to do the work that God sent us to do.

Jesus prayed for all who would follow him, including you and others you know. He prayed for unity (John 17:11), protection from the evil one (John 17:15), and sanctity (holiness) (John 17:17). Knowing that Jesus prayed for us should give us confidence as we work for his kingdom. Jesus' great desire for his disciples was that they would become one. He wanted them unified as a powerful witness to the reality of God's love.

## **Titus 2:11-12**

For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God. He will keep you strong right up to the end, and he will keep you free from all blame on the great day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. 1 Cor. 1:8

The power to live as a Christian comes from the Holy Spirit. Because Christ died and rescued us from sin, we are free from sin's control. God gives us the power and understanding to live according to his will and to do good. Then we will look forward to Christ's wonderful return with eager expectation and hope. It is not enough to renounce sin and evil desires; we must also live actively for God. To fight against lust we must say no to temptation, but we must also say yes to active service for Christ.

Paul guaranteed the Corinthian believers that God would consider them "blameless" when Christ returns (see Ephes. 1:7-10). This guarantee was not because of their great gifts or their shining performance, but because of what Jesus Christ accomplished for them through his death and resurrection. *All* who believe in the Lord Jesus will be considered blameless when Jesus Christ returns.

**All must appear before the judgment seat of Christ.**

## **2 Cor. 5:16-17**

So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though he were merely a human being. How differently I think about him now!

What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!

Christians are brand-new people on the *inside*. The Holy Spirit gives them new life, and they are not the same anymore. We are not reformed, rehabilitated, or reeducated—we are re-created (new creations), living in vital union with Christ (Col. 2:6-7). At conversion we are not merely turning over a new leaf; we are beginning a new life under a new Master.

## **2 Corinthians 5:10-11**

For we must all stand before the judgment of Christ. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies. It is because we know this solemn fear of the Lord that we work so hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too.

Eternal life is a free gift given on the basis of God's grace (Ephesians. 2:8-9), Each of us will still be judged by Christ. This judgment will reward us for how we have lived. God's gracious gift of salvation does not free us from the requirement for faithful obedience. All Christians must give account for how they have lived (see Matthew 16:27; Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians. 3:10-15).

### [Psalm 95:6](#)

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker



## **A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE**

### **Chapter 4**

When the apostles were told to stop praying in Jesus name they reported: "We must obey God rather than man". **Acts 5:29**

**Galatians 6:7** says, "What ever a man sows, this he will also reap". Every action has an impact for good or evil. Our decisions and the choices of others will determine the quality of our lives.

#### **Consider some in the Bible who practiced disobedience:**

Adam and the woman ate of the forbidden fruit.

The children of Israel failed to go into the promise land the first time around.

When Jonah with called to preach to Nineveh, he went the other way.

Perhaps you know of an incident in your life or the life of another when disobedience was practiced.

#### **Consider the obedience of some Biblical characters in the Bible:**

**Noah** was faithful to his calling to build the ark.

**Moses** appeared before Pharaoh to ask him to let the children of Israel leave Egypt.

**Joshua** led the people around the walls of Jericho as commanded of the Lord.

**Nehemiah** boldly asked the Babylonian King for supplies to rebuild Jerusalem.

**Daniel** and his friends refused to eat the Kings meat.

**Peter** and the apostles refused to stop preaching about Jesus.

God is sovereign. He controls all things at all times. **Psalms 103:19**

**To walk in obedience, what then must we believe:**

We must believe that God is sovereign. He controls all things at all times **Psalms 103:19**

We must believe that God will work for our good in every situation and in all circumstances. **Romans 8:28**

We show our love for the Lord by keeping his Commandments. **1 John 5:3**

When we pray and we must listen to what he has to say.

Obeying God takes courage, and sometimes leads to conflict. We must be willing and courageous in obedience.

A fully surrendered life is an obedient life.

You will experience a personal victory if you follow his will. **Joshua 1:8.**

Obedience leads to peace and joy. Spiritual growth and maturity will result when believers continued to walk with God in the midst of suffering.

When you make an important decision, don't rely on just your own reasoning or the opinion of others. Come before the Lord and pour out your heart. Spend time prayerfully reading the word. Listen to his boss and then follow his guidance in your life. Through obedience God can accomplish great things in and through you.

[Psalm 95:6](#)

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker



**OBEDIENCE IS MANIFESTED  
THROUGH OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES**

**Chapter 5**

**Exodus 19:5**

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

God choose Israel as his nation? God knew that no nation on earth was good enough to deserve to be called his people, his “treasured possession.” He chose Israel, not because of anything they had done, but in his love and mercy he chose Israel in spite of the wrong the nation had done and would do. God wanted to have a special nation on earth to represent his way of life, to teach his Word, and to be an agent of salvation to the world.

“All nations on earth” would be blessed through Abraham’s descendants (Genesis 18:18). Gentiles and kings would come to the Lord through Israel, predicted Isaiah (Isaiah 60:3). Through the nation of Israel, the Messiah, God’s chosen Son, would

be born. God chose one nation and put it through a rigorous training program, so that one day it could be a channel for his blessings to the whole world.

### **Exodus 24:7**

And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.

God is the sovereign judge of the universe. He is also absolutely holy. As the holy judge of all, he condemns sin and judges it worthy of death. In the Old Testament God accepted the death of an animal as a substitute for the sinner. The animal's shed blood was proof that one life had been given for another. So on the one hand, blood symbolized the death of the animal, but it also symbolized the life that was spared as a result. Of course the death of the animal that brought forgiveness in the Old Testament was only a temporary provision, looking forward to the death of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:9-10:24).

In this ceremony described here, Moses sprinkled half the blood from the sacrificed animals on the altar to show that the sinner could once again approach God because something had died in his place. He sprinkled the other half of the blood on the people to show that the penalty for their sin had been paid and they could be reunited with God. Through this symbolic act God's promises to Israel were reaffirmed and lessons are taught to us about the future sacrificial death (or atonement) of Jesus Christ.

### **Deut. 6:4**

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

Monotheism—belief in only one God—was a distinctive feature of Hebrew religion. Many ancient religions believed in many gods. But the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God of the whole earth, the only true God. This was an important insight for the nation of Israel because they were about to enter a land filled with people who believed in many gods. Both then and today, there are people who prefer to place their trust in many different “gods.” But the day is coming when God will be recognized as the only one. He will be the king over the whole earth (Zech. 14:9).

We are to love God, think constantly about his commandments, teach his commandments to our children, and live each day by the guidelines in his Word. God emphasized the importance of parents' teaching the Bible to their children. The church and Christian schools cannot be used to escape from this responsibility.

The Bible provides so many opportunities for object lessons and practical teaching that it would be a shame to study it only one day a week. Eternal truths are most effectively learned in the loving environment of a God-fearing home.

### **Deut. 11:13-24**

"If you carefully obey all the commands I am giving you today, and if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, and if you worship him, then he will send the rains in their proper seasons so you can harvest crops of grain, grapes for wine, and olives for oil.

He will give you lush pastureland for your cattle to graze in, and you yourselves will have plenty to eat.

"But do not let your heart turn away from the Lord to worship other gods. If you do, the Lord's anger will burn against you. He will shut up the sky and hold back the rain, and your harvests will fail. Then you will quickly die in that good land the Lord is now giving you.

So commit yourselves completely to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again.

Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that as long as the sky remains above the earth, you and your children may flourish in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors.

"Be careful to obey all the commands I give you; show love to the Lord your God by walking in his ways and clinging to him. Then the Lord will drive out all the nations in your land, though they are much greater and stronger than you.

Wherever you set your feet, the land will be yours. Your frontiers will stretch from the wilderness in the south to Lebanon in the north, and from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

### **1 Samuel 15:22**

But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Obedience is far better than sacrifice. Listening to him is much better than offering the fat of rams.

This is the first of numerous places in the Bible where the theme "to obey is better than sacrifice" is stated (Psalm 40:6-8; Psalm 51:16-17; Proverbs 21:3; Isaiah 1:11-17; Jeremiah 7:21-23; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 12:7; Mark 12:33; Hebrews 10:8-9).

Was Samuel saying that sacrifice is unimportant? No, he was urging Saul to look at his reasons for making the sacrifice rather than at the sacrifice itself. A sacrifice was a ritual transaction between man and God that physically demonstrated a relationship between them. But if the person's heart was not truly repentant or if he did not truly love God, the sacrifice was a hollow ritual. Religious ceremonies or rituals are empty unless they are performed with an attitude of love and obedience. "Being religious" (going to church, serving on a committee, giving to charity) is not enough if we do not act out of devotion and obedience to God.

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Rebellion and arrogance are serious sins. They involve far more than being independent and strong-minded. Scripture equates them with divination (witchcraft) and idolatry, sins worthy of death (Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 20:6; Deut. 13:12-15; Deut. 18:10; Micah 5:10-14).

Saul became both rebellious and arrogant, so it is little wonder that God finally rejected him and took away his kingdom. Rebellion against God is perhaps the most serious sin of all because as long as a person rebels, he or she closes the door to forgiveness and restoration with God.

### **[. Psalm 81:11](#)**

"But no, my people wouldn't listen. Israel did not want me around.

God let the Israelites go on blindly, stubbornly, and selfishly, when they should have been obeying and pursuing God's desires. God sometimes lets us continue in our stubbornness to bring us to our senses. He does not keep us from rebelling, because he wants us to learn the consequences of sin. He uses these experiences to turn people away from greater sin to faith in him.

### **[Psalm 95:6](#)**

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;



## **OBEDIENCE IS MANIFESTED THROUGH NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES**

### **Chapter 6**

#### **Romans 1:5**

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Paul summarizes the Good News about Jesus Christ, who (1) came as a human by natural descent, (2) was part of the Jewish royal line through David, (3) died and was raised from the dead, and (4) opened the door for God's grace and kindness to be poured out on us.

Christians have both privilege and a great responsibility. Paul and the apostles received forgiveness ("grace") as an undeserved privilege. But they also received the responsibility to share the message of God's forgiveness with others. God also graciously forgives our sins when we believe in him as Lord.

In doing this, we are committing ourselves to begin a new life. Paul's new life also involved a God-given responsibility—to witness about God's Good News to the world as a missionary. God may or may not call you to be an overseas missionary,

but he does call you (and all believers) to witness to and be an example of the changed life that Jesus Christ has begun in you.

### **Romans 16:26**

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

As Jerusalem was the center of Jewish life, Rome was the world's political, religious, social, and economic center. There the major governmental decisions were made, and from there the gospel spread to the ends of the earth.

The church in Rome was a cosmopolitan mixture of Jews, Gentiles, slaves, free people, men, women, Roman citizens, and world travelers; therefore, it had potential for both great influence and great conflict.

Paul had not yet been to Rome to meet all the Christians there, and, of course, he has not yet met us. We too live in a cosmopolitan setting with the entire world open to us. We also have the potential for both widespread influence and wrenching conflict. We should listen carefully to and apply Paul's teaching about unity, service, obedience and love.

### **2 Cor. 10:5**

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Paul assures us that God's mighty weapons—prayer, faith, hope, love, God's Word, the Holy Spirit—are powerful and effective (see Ephes. 6:13-18)!

These weapons can break down the proud human arguments against God and the walls that Satan builds to keep people from finding God. When dealing with the pride that keeps people from a relationship with Christ, we may be tempted to use our own methods. But nothing can break down these barriers like God's weapons.

Paul uses military terminology to describe this warfare against sin and Satan. God must be the commander in chief—even our thoughts must be submitted to his control as we live for him.

## 2 Thes. 1:8

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The “everlasting destruction” that Paul describes is the lake of fire (see Rev. 20:14)—the place of eternal separation from God.

## Hebrews 5:9

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Christ was always morally perfect. By obeying, he demonstrated his perfection to us, not to God or to himself. In the Bible, *perfection* usually means completeness or maturity. By sharing our experience of suffering, Christ shared our human experience completely. He is now able to offer eternal salvation to those who obey him. See Phil. 2:5-11 for Christ’s attitude as he took on human form.

## 1 Peter 1:2

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Peter encouraged his readers by this strong declaration that they were *chosen* by God the Father. At one time, only the nation of Israel could claim to be God’s chosen people; but through Christ, all believers—Jews and Gentiles—belong to God. Our salvation and security rest in the free and merciful choice of almighty God; no trials or persecutions can take away the eternal life he gives to those who believe in him.

## 1 Peter 1:14

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

The God of Israel and of the Christian church is holy—he sets the standard for morality. Unlike the Roman gods, he is not warlike, adulterous, or spiteful. Unlike

the gods of the pagan cults popular in the first century, he is not bloodthirsty or promiscuous.

He is a God of mercy and justice who cares personally for each of his followers. Our holy God expects us to imitate him by following his high moral standards. Like him, we should be both merciful and just; like him, we should sacrifice ourselves for others.

### [1 Peter 1:22](#)

Now you can have sincere love for each other as brothers and sisters because you were cleansed from your sins when you accepted the truth of the Good News. So see to it that you really do love each other intensely with all your hearts. (NLT)

Sincere love” involves selfless giving; a self-centered person can’t truly love. God’s love and forgiveness free you to take your eyes off yourselves and to meet others’ needs. By sacrificing his life, Christ showed that he truly loves you. Now you can love others by following his example and giving of yourself sacrificially.

### [Psalm 95:6](#)

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;



## JESUS TAUGHT THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE

### Chapter 7

#### [Matthew 7:21-23](#)

"Not all people who sound religious are really godly. They may refer to me as 'Lord,' but they still won't enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The decisive issue is whether they obey my Father in heaven. On judgment day many will tell me, 'Lord, Lord, we prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Go away; the things you did were unauthorized.'

Jesus exposed those people who sounded religious but had no personal relationship with him. On “that day” (the day of judgment), only our relationship with Christ—our acceptance of him as Savior and our obedience to him—will matter. Many people think that if they are “good” people and say religious things, they will be rewarded with eternal life. In reality, faith in Christ is what will count at the judgment.

#### [Matthew 7:24](#)

"Anyone who listens to my teaching and obeys me is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.

To build “on the rock” means to be a hearing, responding disciple, not a phony, superficial one. Practicing obedience becomes the solid foundation to weather the storms of life

James advises us to get rid of all that is wrong in our lives and “humbly accept” the salvation message we have received (“the word planted in you”), because it alone can save us.

### [James 1:22-27](#)

And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself. For if you just listen and don't obey, it is like looking at your face in a mirror but doing nothing to improve your appearance.

You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law—the 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.

It is important to listen to what God's Word says, but it is much more important to obey it, to *do* what it says. We can measure the effectiveness of our Bible study time by the effect it has on our behavior and attitudes. Do you put into action what you have studied?

It seems paradoxical that a law could give us freedom, but God's law points out sin in us and gives us the opportunity to ask for God's forgiveness (see Romans 7:7-8). As Christians, we are saved by God's grace, and salvation frees us from sin's control. As believers, we are free to live as God created us to live. Of course, this does not mean that we are free to do as we please (see 1 Peter 2:16). We are now free to obey God.

If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are just fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.

Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us.

In the first century, orphans and widows had very little means of economic support. Unless a family member was willing to care for them, they were reduced to begging, selling themselves as slaves, or starving. By caring for these powerless

people, the church put God's Word into practice. When we give with no hope of receiving in return, we show what it means to serve others.

To keep ourselves from being polluted by the world, we need to commit ourselves to Christ's ethical and moral system, not the world's system. We are not to adapt to the world's value system, which is based on money, power, and pleasure. True faith means nothing if we are contaminated with such values.

"That day" is the final day of reckoning when God will settle all accounts, judging sin and rewarding faith.

### Luke 6:46

"So why do you call me 'Lord,' when you won't obey me?"

Obedying God is like building a house on a strong, solid foundation that stands firm when storms come. When life is calm, our foundations don't seem to matter. But when crises come, our foundations are tested. Be sure your life is built on the solid foundation of knowing and trusting Jesus Christ.

Why would people build a house without a foundation? Perhaps they do this to save time and avoid the hard work of preparing a stone foundation. Possibly they find the waterfront scenery is more attractive or because beach houses have higher social status than cliff houses. Perhaps they want to join their friends who have already settled in sandy areas. Maybe because they haven't heard about the violent storms coming, or because they have discounted the reports, or for some reason they think disaster can't happen to them.

Whatever their reason is, those with no foundation are shortsighted, and they will be sorry. When you find yourself listening but not obeying, You need to consider your reasons.

### Luke 8:15

But the good soil represents honest, good-hearted people who hear God's message, cling to it, and steadily produce a huge harvest.

Like many of the religious leaders, people refused to believe God's message, and like many in the crowds who followed Jesus, believed his message but never got around to doing anything about it.

People, overcome by worries and the lure of materialism, left no room in their lives for God. “Good soil” people, in contrast to all the other groups, followed Jesus no matter what the cost. Should we not do a soil test?

### [Matthew 28:18-20](#)

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. [19] Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. [20] Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

God gave Jesus authority over heaven and earth. On the basis of that authority, Jesus told his disciples to make more disciples as they preached, baptized, and taught. With this same authority, Jesus still commands us to tell others the Good News and make them disciples for the kingdom.

When someone is dying or leaving us, his or her last words are very important. Jesus left the disciples with these last words of instruction: they were under his authority; they were to make more disciples; they were to baptize and teach these new disciples to obey Christ; Christ would be with them always. Whereas in previous missions Jesus had sent his disciples only to the Jews (Matthew 10:5-6), their mission from now on would be worldwide. Jesus is Lord of the earth, and he died for the sins of people from all nations.

We are not all evangelists in the formal sense, but we have all received gifts that we can use to help fulfill the Great Commission. As we obey, we have comfort in the knowledge that Jesus is always with us.

[Psalm 95:6](#)

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;



## THE APOSTLES TAUGHT THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE

### Chapter 8

#### **Understand Christ's attitude as he took on human form.**

#### [Philip. 2:5-11](#)

Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. [6] Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. [7] He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. [8] And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross. [9] Because of this, God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus Christ was humble, willing to give up his rights in order to obey God and serve people. Like Christ, we should have a servant's attitude, serving out of love for God and for others, not out of guilt or fear. Remember, you can choose your attitude. You can approach life expecting to be served, or you can look for opportunities to serve others.

These verses are probably from a hymn sung by the early Christian church. The passage holds many parallels to the prophecy of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53. As a hymn, it was not meant to be a complete statement about the nature and work of Christ. Several key characteristics of Jesus Christ, however, are praised in this passage:

- (1) Christ has always existed with God;
- (2) Christ is equal to God because he *is* God (John 1:1ff; Col. 1:15-19);
- (3) though Christ is God, he became a man in order to fulfill God's plan of salvation for all people;
- (4) Christ did not just have the appearance of being a man—he actually became human to identify with our sins;
- (5) Christ voluntarily laid aside his divine rights and privileges out of love for his Father;
- (6) Christ died on the cross for our sins so we wouldn't have to face eternal death;
- (7) God glorified Christ because of his obedience;
- (8) God raised Christ to his original position at the Father's right hand, where he will reign forever as our Lord and Judge. How can we do anything less than praise Christ as our Lord and dedicate ourselves to his service!

At times, people excuse selfishness, pride, or evil by claiming their rights. They think, "I can cheat on this test; after all, I deserve to pass this class," or "I can spend all this money on myself—I worked hard for it," or "I can get an abortion; I have a right to control my own body." But as believers, we should have a different attitude, one that enables us to lay aside our rights in order to serve others. If we say we follow Christ, we must also say we want to live as he lived. We should develop his attitude of humility as we serve, even when we are not likely to get recognition for our efforts. Are you selfishly clinging to your rights, or are you willing to serve?

Death on a cross (crucifixion) was the form of capital punishment that Romans used for notorious criminals. It was excruciatingly painful and humiliating. Prisoners were nailed or tied to a cross and left to die. Death might not come for several days, and it usually came by suffocation when the weight of the weakened body made breathing more and more difficult. Jesus died as one who was cursed (Galatians 3:13). How amazing that the perfect man should die this most shameful death so that we would not have to face eternal punishment!

At the last judgment even those who are condemned will recognize Jesus' authority and right to rule. People can choose to regard Jesus as Lord now as a step of willing and loving commitment, or be forced to acknowledge him as Lord when he returns. Christ may return at any moment. Are you prepared to meet him?

### [Romans 2:4-11](#)

Don't you realize how kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Or don't you care? Can't you see how kind he has been in giving you time to turn from your sin?

But no, you won't listen. So you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself because of your stubbornness in refusing to turn from your sin. For there is going to come a day of judgment when God, the just judge of all the world, will judge all people according to what they have done.

He will give eternal life to those who persist in doing what is good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and practice evil deeds.

There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on sinning—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

### [Psalm 95:6](#)

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker



## **OBEDIENCE EXPRESSED THROUGH A SANCTIFIED LIFE**

### **Chapter 9**

#### **2 Thes. 2:13**

As for us, we always thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation, a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and by your belief in the truth.

#### **God grants his grace to the sinner**

#### **1 Peter 1:2**

God the Father chose you long ago, and the Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed Jesus Christ and are cleansed by his blood. May you have more and more of God's special favor and wonderful peace.

At one time, only the nation of Israel could claim to be God's chosen people; but through Christ, all believers—Jews and Gentiles—belong to God. Our salvation and security rest in the free and merciful choice of almighty God; no trials or persecutions can take away the eternal life he gives to those who believe in him.

## 2 Cor. 5:17

What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!

Christians are brand-new people on the *inside*. The Holy Spirit gives them new life, and they are not the same anymore. We are not reformed, rehabilitated, or reeducated—we are re-created (new creations), living in vital union with Christ (Col. 2:6-7). At conversion we are not merely turning over a new leaf; we are beginning a new life under a new Master.

## 2 Cor. 4:16

That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.

No matter what happens to us in this life, we have the assurance of eternal life, when all suffering will end and all sorrow will flee away (Isaiah 35:10).

It is easy to lose heart and quit. We all have faced problems in our relationships or in our work that have caused us to want to think about laying down the tools and walking away. Rather than giving up when persecution wore him down, Paul concentrated on experiencing the inner strength from the Holy Spirit (Ephes. 3:16). Don't allow fatigue, pain, or criticism force you off the job. Renew your commitment to serving Christ. Don't forsake your eternal reward because of the intensity of today's pain. Your very weakness allows the resurrection power of Christ to strengthen you moment by moment.

Our troubles should not diminish our faith or disillusion us. We should realize that there is a purpose in our suffering. Problems and human limitations have several benefits: (1) they remind us of Christ's suffering for us; (2) they keep us from pride; (3) they cause us to look beyond this brief life; (4) they prove our faith to others; and (5) they give God the opportunity to demonstrate his power. See your troubles as opportunities!

## Romans 7:19-25

When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it.

It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

The “law at work in the members of my body” is the sin deep within us. This is our vulnerability to sin; it refers to everything within us that is more loyal to our old way of selfish living than to God.

This inward struggle with sin was as real for Paul as it is for us. From Paul we learn what to do about it. Whenever Paul felt lost, he would return to the beginning of his spiritual life, remembering that he had already been freed by Jesus Christ. When you feel confused and overwhelmed by sin's appeal, follow Paul's example: thank God that he has given you freedom through Jesus Christ. Let the reality of Christ's power lift you up to real victory over sin.

### [Hebrews 12:2](#)

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside God's throne in heaven.

### **Friends may abandon you.**

### [Amos 3:3](#)

Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?

Amos shows how two events can be linked together. Once one event takes place, the second will surely follow. Amos was showing that God's revelation to him was the sure sign that judgment would follow.

### Hebrews 13:12

So also Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates in order to make his people holy by shedding his own blood.

Real love for others produces tangible actions: (1) kindness to strangers (Hebrews 13:2); (2) empathy for those who are in prison and those who have been mistreated (Hebrews 13:3); (3) respect for your marriage vows (Hebrews 13:4); and (4) contentment with what you have (Hebrews 13:5). Make sure that your love runs deep enough to affect your hospitality, empathy, fidelity, and contentment.

Three Old Testament people “entertained angels without knowing it”: (1) Abraham (Genesis 18:1ff), (2) Gideon (Judges 6:11ff), and (3) Manoah (Judges 13:2ff).

### 2 Thes. 2:13

As for us, we always thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation, a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and by your belief in the truth.

Paul consistently taught that salvation begins and ends with God. We can do nothing to be saved on our own merit—we must accept God's gift of salvation (see the note on +Ephes. 1:4). There is no other way to receive forgiveness from sin. Paul is encouraging the Thessalonian believers by reminding them that they were chosen by God from the beginning.

*Sanctification is the process of Christian growth through which the Holy Spirit makes us like Christ (Romans 8:29).*

**God's truth is working in the believer:**

### John 17:17

Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth.

A follower of Christ becomes sanctified (**set apart for sacred use, cleansed and made holy**) through believing and obeying the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). He or

she has already accepted forgiveness through Christ's sacrificial death (Hebrews 7:26-27). But daily application of God's Word has a purifying effect on our minds and hearts. Scripture points out sin, motivates us to confess, renews our relationship with Christ, and guides us back to the right path.

### **God opens our eyes to understanding.**

#### [Acts 26:18](#)

to open their eyes so they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.'

Paul took every opportunity to remind his audience that the Gentiles have an equal share in God's inheritance. This inheritance is the promise and blessing of the covenant that God made with Abraham. Paul's mission was to preach the Good News to the Gentiles.

#### [Col. 1:21,23](#)

This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions,. But you must continue to believe this truth and stand in it firmly. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed by God to proclaim it.

Because we were alienated from God, we were strangers to his way of thinking and were "enemies in our minds."

Sin corrupted our way of thinking about God. Wrong thinking leads to sin, which further perverts and destroys our thoughts about him.

When we were out of harmony with God, our natural condition was to be totally hostile to his standards. See Romans 1:21-32 for more on the perverted thinking of unbelievers.

*No one* is good enough to save himself or herself. If we want to live eternally with Christ, we must depend totally on God's grace. This is true whether we have been murderers or honest, hardworking citizens. We have all sinned repeatedly, and *any*

sin is enough to cause us to come to Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life. Apart from Christ, there is no way for our sin to be forgiven and removed.

In order to answer the accusation that Jesus was only a spirit and not a true human being, Paul explained that Jesus' physical body actually died. Jesus suffered death fully as a human so that we could be assured that he died in our place. Jesus faced death as God so we can be assured that his sacrifice was complete and that he truly removed our sin.

The way to be free from sin is to trust Jesus Christ to take it away. We must remain "established and firm" in the truth of the gospel, putting our confidence in Jesus alone to forgive our sins, to make us right with God, and to empower us to live the way he desires. When a judge in a court of law declares the defendant not guilty, the person has been acquitted of all the accusations or charges. Legally, it is as if he or she had never been accused. When God forgives our sins, our record is wiped clean. From his perspective, it is as though we had never sinned. God's solution is available to you. No matter what you have done or what you have been like, God's forgiveness is for you.

### [Hebrews 12:23](#)

You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge of all people. And you have come to the spirits of the redeemed in heaven who have now been made perfect.

As Christians, we are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem right now, because Christ rules our lives, the Holy Spirit is always with us, and we experience close fellowship with other believers. The full and ultimate rewards and reality of the heavenly Jerusalem are depicted in Rev. 21.

Eventually the world will crumble, and only God's kingdom will last. Those who follow Christ are part of this unshakable kingdom, and they will withstand the shaking, sifting, and burning. When we feel unsure about the future, we can take confidence from these verses. No matter what happens here, our future is built on a solid foundation that cannot be destroyed. Don't put your confidence in what will be destroyed; instead, build your life on Christ and his unshakable kingdom.

[Psalm 95:6](#)

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;



## THE REWARD OF OBEDIENCE

### Chapter 10

#### **Leviticus 26:2-7**

"If you keep my laws and are careful to obey my commands, I will send the seasonal rains. The land will then yield its crops, and the trees will produce their fruit. Your threshing season will extend until the grape harvest, and your grape harvest will extend until it is time to plant grain again. You will eat your fill and live securely in your land.

"I will give you peace in the land, and you will be able to sleep without fear. I will remove the wild animals from your land and protect you from your enemies. In fact, you will chase down all your enemies and slaughter them with your swords.

There are two paths of obedience and disobedience that God set before the people. The people of the Old Testament were warned over and over against worshiping idols. We wonder how they could deceive themselves with these objects of wood and stone. Yet God could well give us the same warning, for we are prone to put idols before him. Idolatry is making anything more important than God, and our lives are full of that temptation. Money, looks, success, reputation, security—these

are today's idols. As you look at these false gods that promise everything you want but nothing you need, does idolatry seem so far removed from your experience?

### **Deut. 28:1-14**

"If you fully obey the Lord your God by keeping all the commands I am giving you today, the Lord your God will exalt you above all the nations of the world. You will experience all these blessings if you obey the Lord your God:

You will be blessed in your towns and in the country. You will be blessed with many children and productive fields. You will be blessed with fertile herds and flocks. You will be blessed with baskets overflowing with fruit, and with kneading bowls filled with bread.

You will be blessed wherever you go, both in coming and in going."The Lord will conquer your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter from you in seven!

"The Lord will bless everything you do and will fill your storehouses with grain. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

"If you obey the commands of the Lord your God and walk in his ways, the Lord will establish you as his holy people as he solemnly promised to do. Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the Lord, and they will stand in awe of you.

"The Lord will give you an abundance of good things in the land he swore to give your ancestors—many children, numerous livestock, and abundant crops. The Lord will send rain at the proper time from his rich treasury in the heavens to bless all the work you do. You will lend to many nations, but you will never need to borrow from them.

If you listen to these commands of the Lord your God and carefully obey them, the Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always have the upper hand. You must not turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today to follow after other gods and worship them.

### **Romans 10:5-8**

Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. [6] But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) [7] Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) [8] But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

Paul adapts Moses' farewell challenge from Deut. 30:11-14 to apply to Christ. Christ has provided our salvation through his incarnation (coming to earth) and resurrection (coming back from the dead). God's salvation is right in front of us. He will come to us wherever we are. All we need to do is to respond and accept his gift of salvation. The *deep* as used here refers to the grave or Hades, the place of the dead.

God has called us to keep his commands, while reminding us that his laws are not hidden from us or beyond our reach. Have you ever said you would obey God if you knew what he wanted? Have you ever complained that obedience is too difficult for a mere human? These are unacceptable excuses. God's laws are written in the Bible and are clearly evident in the world around us. Obeying them is reasonable, sensible, and beneficial. The most difficult part of obeying God's laws is simply deciding to start now.

#### **References**

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: New Living Bible translation.

Additional comments taken from:

*Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print