

## What Our Obedience Says to God

### INTRODUCTION:

1. One of the things that Tricia and I sought to impress upon our children was that their actions spoke loudly as to who they are.
  - A. When they were leaving the house, we would tell to *remember who they are*. And, we weren't talking about their names, but that their action should say *they are Christians and serve God!*
  - B. For, who hasn't heard the truthful old saying: "Actions speak louder than words"?
2. Our actions have a lot to say to the world about who we are, what we think is important, what the focus of our life truly is, and what our views on life might be.
3. What I want to talk about today is how our actions also have something to say to **God**, seeing He has always looked at our actions as proof of our relationship with Him (1 John 2:3-6 – "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup> He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. <sup>5</sup> But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. <sup>6</sup> He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.").
4. So, my friends, it is very important as we begin this lesson to understand that our **obedience says a great deal to God**.
  - A. Biblical obedience is defined by *Eerdman's Bible Dictionary* as follows: "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."
  - B. This is an excellent definition and many of its parts will come to play in our lesson today.
  - C. With these things in mind let's consider **what obedience says to God**.
  - D. To do that I want to look at how our obedience says I have **faith in God, I fear and revere God, and that I love God**.

### BODY:

#### **I. Obeying God says I have faith:**

- A. Understanding this is important because "...without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).
  1. So, faith is vital to our salvation. But how do we show God that we have faith?
  2. Many say that our trust in God is most clearly expressed by trusting God to do it all—that we do nothing—saved by faith only. But is this what the Bible teaches? NO!
- B. The Bible says saving faith must be expressed by obedience.
  1. James says faith that isn't expressed in obedience is dead faith (Jas. 2:14-17 – "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.").
    - a. Note that the point at hand is whether faith can save apart from works that express it.
    - b. Answer: Saving faith can no more exist without works of obedience than acceptable care and concern for another can exist without doing something for them!
    - c. Conclusion: Works of obedience express to God that we have a living faith. Without obedience faith is dead (2:17)!
2. Abraham, the father of the faithful, shows us faith is expressed in obedience (Heb. 11:8 – "By **faith** Abraham **obeyed** when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.").

  - a. It was his obedience that proved his faith, seeing Abraham left home and family and followed God *without even knowing where he was going*.
  - b. This command was given in connection with God's great promises (Gen. 12:1-4 – "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great;

and you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” <sup>4</sup> **So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him**, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”).

- i. If Abraham had refused to obey and leave his home and family, would he be called the father of the faithful and have received the promises (Rom. 4:16)?
- ii. The answer to both is a resounding “No!,” seeing we have no evidence of that.
- iii. Everything—His saving faith and the reception of the promises—was conditioned upon Abraham obeying God and going wherever God led him!

3. So, know that obedience says to God that you have true, saving faith!

## II. Obeying God says that I fear and revere Him:

A. Fear and reverence toward God have always been required of His people.

1. As Israel entered the land of Promise they were commanded, “You shall **fear** the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name” (Deut. 6:13).
2. The Psalmists wrote: “God is greatly to be **feared** in the assembly of the saints; And to be held in **reverence** by all those around Him” (Ps. 89:7).
3. God condemned priests of old for their lack of honor and reverence toward him (Mal. 1:6 – “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My **honor**? And if I am a Master, where is My **reverence**? Says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’”).
  - a. Note that honor and reverence are presented as God’s rightful possession.
  - b. I wonder if we as His *priests today* truly understand what this requires of us!

B. There is a definite connection between God’s desire for fear and reverence in His people and His people obeying His will.

1. God’s commands to fear Him were regularly coupled with the demand for obedience.
  - a. Deut. 6:1-2 – “Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, **that you may observe them in the land** which you are crossing over to possess, <sup>2</sup> **that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments** which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.”
  - b. Deut. 6:24-25 – “And the Lord **commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God**, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. <sup>25</sup> Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.”
  - c. In these passages we see that **true fear of God**...
    - i. Is directly **connected to obeying His will**.
    - ii. Is **learned**, being taught to us by God’s word and obedience to it (6:1).
    - iii. Is a **assurance** that God’s people will **keep His commandments** (6:2).
    - iv. Produces *obedience* resulting in good and righteousness for God’s people.
2. We can prove that obedience expressed true fear of God by Abraham’s example (Gen. 22).
  - a. Here God *tested* Abraham to see if he **feared** Him by **commanding** him to offer Isaac, his son of promise, as a burnt offering (Gen. 22:1-2 – “Now it came to pass after these things that God **tested** Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>2</sup> Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”).
  - b. Abraham passed the test by **obeying**, only to be stopped by an angel that said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; **for now I know that you fear God**, since you **have not withheld your son**, your only son, from Me” (Gen. 22:12).
    - i. Note that it was Abraham’s obedience that expressed to God that he truly feared Him.
    - ii. And, **because Abraham obeyed**, God reaffirmed His promises (22:15-18).

3. As God's people today, fear and reverence continue to be expressed by our obedience.
  - a. Connected to godly service (Heb. 12:28-29 – “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may **serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.** <sup>29</sup> For our God is a consuming fire.”).
  - b. Connected to our holiness of life (2 Cor. 7:1 – “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**”).
  - c. Without this fear/reverence expressed in obedience, there is no assurance of salvation (Acts 10:34-35 – “Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. <sup>35</sup> But in every nation **whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.**”).
  - d. We must understand that obedience is necessary to express our true fear and reverence.

### III. Obeying God says that I love Him:

- A. Love for God is foundational to our relationship with Him (Deut. 7:6-11).
  1. God showed His love upon Israel in delivering them from bondage and making them His nation because He *chose* to do so (Deut. 7:6-8 – “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup> The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; <sup>8</sup> but **because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers,** the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”).
  2. Because of this, they were to know that God is faithful to those who love him and express this love in obedience (Deut. 7:9-11 – “Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations **with those who love Him and keep His commandments;** <sup>10</sup> and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. <sup>11</sup> **Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments** which I command you today, to observe them.”).
  3. Here we see that obedience to God's Law was not just some legalistic exercise, but a means by which people could learn to express their love to God in acceptable fashion.
- B. Christians must express their love to God in obedience.
  1. This is so very important because God's love was first shown to us (1 John 4:19 – “We love Him because He first loved us.”).
  2. Without obedience, we cannot acceptably show our love whether it be to God or others.
    - a. Consider Jesus' words during His ministry.
      - i. John 14:15 – “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
      - ii. John 14:23-24 – “Jesus answered and said to him, “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. <sup>24</sup> 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.”
    - b. Consider the words of Jesus through His apostles (1 John 5:2-3 – “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”).
  3. Obedience to Christ is the means by which we express true love to God or His people!

### CONCLUSION:

1. I hope that I have impressed upon you that your obedience says a great deal to God. It says...
  - A. I have saving faith in God
  - B. I fear and revere God
  - C. I love God with all my heart

2. So, I want to encourage you as did Paul to the Corinthians: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, **always abounding in the work of the Lord**, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).
3. Will you begin your journey of faith, fear and reverence, and of love to God by obeying the gospel today by trusting in Christ, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith Christ as the risen Son of God, and being baptized into Christ for forgiveness of sins and salvation?