

Fil-Am Community Church
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Challenge of Obedience

Good morning Fil-Am it is so good to see you here this morning, your presence means a great deal to us and is not taken for granted, we are glad you are here to celebrate with us.

For time's sake let us get into the Word of God more importantly let us get the Word of God into you!

Today we are going to try and tackle the **Challenge of Obedience**.

We are going to start by spending a little time looking at the definition to make sure we get started on the same sheet of paper, because this is where we need to start from.

Let us start by stating the importance of making sure we are starting at the same place of looking at the same thing, because you this is where you can run into a lot of issues down the road.

Let's just say for illustration sake that you are in a relationship and you have been struggling for years because you both think you are heading toward different things, goals, plans, visions, because you are not on the same sheet of music, it could all be as simple as you have unrealistic expectations because you have a different starting point or ending point, either way you are not working together, so before we get into the Challenge of Obedience we are going to spend a little time and make sure we fully understand what obedience is.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible has a lot to say about obedience.

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 sums it up like this: "Obey and you will be blessed. Disobey and you will be cursed."

In the New Testament, we learn through the **example of Jesus Christ** that believers are called to a life of obedience.

The general concept of obedience both in the Old and New Testament relates to **hearing** or **hearkening** to a **higher authority**.

According to Holman's Illustrated Bible Dictionary a succinct definition of biblical obedience is "to **hear** God's Word and **act accordingly**."

So, biblical obedience to God means, simply, to **hear, trust, submit** and **surrender** to God and his Word.

One of the Greek terms for obedience conveys the idea of positioning oneself under someone by **submitting** to their **authority** and command. Another Greek word for obey in the New Testament means "*to trust*."

Eerdmans's Bible Dictionary says, "*True hearing*," or obedience, and 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."

In the Old Testament "*sama*" conveys the meaning of both "*to hear*" and "*to obey*".

Israel must hear Yahweh's voice and act in obedient response.

Abraham was blessed because he heard and obeyed the Lord's Voice

Genesis 22:18 (NASB), "*In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.*"

Disobedience is when there is hearing that is not attentive and this too is the story of Israel.

Psalms 115:6 (NASB), "*They have ears, but they cannot hear;*"

Another way of looking at it would also be to see that Obedience is the **byproduct** or result of a **relationship** built on **Love & Trust!**

So at this point I could ask you for a show of hands How many of us here today Love God?

I would hope that we all would be able to raise our hands, but to take it a little further I would ask how many here today are Obedient to God?

I would imagine there would be fewer hands raised this time.

However we need to understand

John 14:15, where Jesus said, *“If you love me you will keep my commandments.”*

The only difference when you look up the verse in the Amplified Bible it says, *“If you (**Really**) loved me, you will keep my commandments.”*

So the question or challenge that we face is not do we love God or love Jesus but how do we demonstrate that?

Is our Obedience **reflecting** Gods love in every area of our life, are we being the salt of the earth, the light shining into dark places or are we just surviving.

I know I asked this questions a month or two ago but it is still very relevant the question is: Are we enjoying our Christianity or just enduring it?

One of the areas that will definitely help us enjoy it is by understanding our need to be Obedient to God! **It is foundational!**

Remember as we said earlier Obedience is nothing more than a **byproduct** or result of a relationship built on love and trust.

Another way of looking at it, is if I get a good night’s sleep the byproduct of that would be to wake up ready to start the day with energy, rather than dragging around for the first few hours of the day.

If you spend a lifetime of eating right and working out a byproduct of that is to have a healthy body

On the other side of things, if you happen to spend 30 years in the Marine Corps jumping out of helicopters, and carrying around a heavy pack, the byproduct of that would be fused vertebrae, Titanium plates and screws in your neck, nerve damage, bad back knees, feet etc., you get the point.

Getting back to the point, **Obedience** is a **byproduct** of or result of a relationship built on Love and Trust.

In Jesus Christ we find the **perfect model** of obedience.

As his disciples, we follow Christ's example as well as his commands. Our motivation for obedience is love:

Remember the same verse we used earlier, but needs to be repeated...

John 14:15, *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”*

Three motives for obedience exist:

- ✓ We can obey because we **have to**;
- ✓ We can obey because we **need to**; or
- ✓ We can obey because we **want to**.

Have to, Need to, Want to, that's the question...

- ✓ A slave obeys because he has to.
- ✓ An employee obeys because he needs to.
- ✓ But a believer obeys God's word because he wants to for the relationship between him and God is one of love.

Obedience is a **central theme** throughout Scripture. From the story of creation to the end of Revelation, it's difficult to turn a page that doesn't deal directly or indirectly with God's call for obedience.

In our time, however, obeying God's commands often is ignored, dismissed, or glossed over.

Why? Because obedience slaps us in the face.

It confronts our sin.

It challenges our lives.

The New Testament spoke of Christ Obedience here are just three examples of this obedience

- ✓ Through the Obedience of the **one man** the many will be made righteous

Romans 5:19 (NASB), *“For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”*

- ✓ He humbled himself and because **obedient to death**

Philippians 2:8 (NASB), *“Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”*

- ✓ And he **learned** obedience from what he suffered

Hebrews 5:8-9 (NASB), ⁸ *“Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. ⁹ And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.”*

This morning we will continue to deal with the Challenge of Obedience by looking at the following...

- ✓ The Subject of Obedience
- ✓ The Strength for Obedience
- ✓ The Stumbling blocks of Obedience

1. The Subject of Obedience

1 John 2: 1 –6 (NIV)

“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father-Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. ³We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.”

Although we love Jesus, every time we commit sin we love something or someone else more than Jesus.

- ✓ If we love Jesus more than anything else we will keep ourselves free from sin for Jesus.
- ✓ If we love Jesus we will strive to give ourselves totally to him.

- ✓ When we sin we are giving ourselves to something other than Jesus or to somebody other than Jesus.

And when we love Jesus with all our heart, soul, mind and strength we will not want to put anything, no matter how small, before Jesus.

a. Obedience proves our Salvation

1 John 2:3, *“We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.”*

John is saying, here's how you know that you know God...

- ✓ It is manifested in the way you live.
- ✓ It's manifested in your obedience."
- ✓ In other words, we know that we know God because we keep his commandments.

John is **NOT** teaching that **salvation** is **conditional** on obedience.

John is teaching that **salvation** is **evidenced** by **obedience**.

And, in turn, that **obedience** contributes to our **assurance** of salvation.

Obedience is a sign that we know God, recognizing that God expects his people to live a certain way, his way.

How do we know that we know God? The test is whether...

- ✓ Do we keep his commandments?
- ✓ Do you obey God's Word?
- ✓ Is the Bible your final rule for faith and practice?

Be careful how you answer for many people place a greater emphasis on traditions than on the teachings of the Bible.

b. Obedience transforms our lives

1 John 2:4, *“Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.”*

His point is: If you claim to know God but your life is not changed by knowing him, then that is a certain sign that you really don't know God.

He is saying that the person who does not keep God's commands does not have the truth at all. Why? Because the truth of God turns our lives upside down.

- ✓ It Sets us free from the bondage of slavery
- ✓ It changes us from the inside
- ✓ It transforms us from the old nature to a new creation

Once you have the truth it fills you with a fire in your belly and a love for the living God; it changes everything.

God's truth always leads to **love**; it always leads to **obedience**; it always leads to a **transformed life**.

c. Obedience springs from our love

1 John 2:5, *“But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him:”*

John seems to be saying that our love for God is a **reflection** of God's love for us and a **response** to it, so that our keeping of God's word could be a sign that God's love had done its full work in us.

We keep the commandments because of our love for God, not because we have to but because we want to.

When we comprehend what Jesus did for us by sacrificing himself on the cross, our response is to love him and to obey him.

d. Obedience characterizes our walk

1 John 2:5-6, ⁵ *“But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.”*

It implies a living relationship of the deepest and closest sorts with God through Jesus Christ.

Here's the question for you: Would people know that you are a believer by the way you live? Do you walk as Jesus walked?

Are you living in Christ? If you're resting in Jesus Christ, if you've found him to be the source of every spiritual blessing, you're trusting in him for salvation; you're fellowshiping with him in grace; then your whole life will have been changed.

You see, everyone who is united with Christ expresses that union with Christ by living like Christ, by walking as he walked.

2. The Strength for Obedience

Jesus prepared his followers for his physical absence by telling them that they would experience his presence more fully and intimately because the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, would take up residence in them.

Among the resources that the Spirit brings to our lives will be:

- ✓ An awareness of God's love
- ✓ A sense of guidance and purpose in life
- ✓ The power to obey Jesus
- ✓ The realization that we are united in relationship with God; and
- ✓ A recognition and understanding of truth.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB), *“Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”*

The verse above says “perfecting holiness” so you need to understand that you do not learn holiness overnight, it is a lifelong process, that we pursue by making it a daily decision to become or hopefully remain Obedient to God and his word!

Psalm 119:1-8 (NASB)

¹ “How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. ² How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart. ³ They also do no unrighteousness; they walk in His ways. ⁴ You have ordained your precepts that we should keep them diligently. ⁵ Oh that my ways may be established to keep your statutes! ⁶ Then I shall not be ashamed when I look [upon all your commandments. ⁷ I shall give thanks to you with uprightness of heart, when I learn your righteous judgments. ⁸ I shall keep your statutes; do not forsake me utterly!”

James 1:5 (NASB), “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

James 1:22 (NASB), “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”

3. The Stumbling blocks of Obedience

Decisions and problems emerge many times during the course of a single day how these challenges are dealt with depends on one’s own attitude

It is extremely unnecessary to allow such challenges to cause worry or anxiety all that is required is to take them to the Lord. If we trust in his mercy and depend upon his love to guide us, how can we fail?

Everyone has problems in the world, due to our sinful flesh, because our flesh, we experience conflict in our lives, not just with others but also within ourselves.

Our flesh is in constant conflict with our spirit.

Galatians 5:17-18 (ESV),¹⁷ *“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”*

1 Peter 2:11 (NASB), *“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”*

Love and obedience must be yoked together for obedience **confirms** love and love **validates** obedience.

Obedience which does not proceed from genuine love to Christ has no reality in it; it is not the genuine offspring of the heart, the real act of the soul.

It lacks the essential motive and inspiration of all Christian deeds. It is formal, mechanical, legal, and empty.

Obedience not arising from love is forced, burdensome, and even painful to the man himself and to others.

To illustrate that point you can sign your name with your right hand (if you're right handed) and it flows it is effortless, you don't have to give it much thought it is just natural. However we know that if we go slow and steady we can learn to sign our name with our left hand, it is a little harder to do it takes a lot more concentration, it does not flow it is not natural etc. saints it is the same with Obedience

Obedience which springs from fear, selfishness, self-praise, or from mere custom, is insipid and wearisome; while the obedience of love is easy, natural, and pleasant.

There is no spiritual value in unloving obedience.

It may be acceptable with men, and pass as a genuine coin in human markets, but it is a counterfeit in the spiritual and Divine.

Romans 5:19 (NIV), *“For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”*

1 Corinthians 15:22 (NKJV), *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”*

Loving Jesus therefore is not just something emotional;

Loving Jesus means changing our lives, reforming our lives, working on our personalities and characters, overcoming sinful habits, stretching ourselves to love as Jesus loved.

Loving Jesus means thinking about ourselves and others as Jesus thinks. Where does your information about yourself and others and the world come from? If it comes only from TV and a materialistic western culture which does not understand the difference between freedom to sin and the freedom to do what is right our minds may be contaminated by false images of ourselves, others and the world.

But if we truly want to love Jesus we will fill our minds with his thoughts and his way of looking at the world.

We can fill our minds with Jesus’ thoughts by reading the Bible, reading spiritual books and praying as much as possible every day.

If we fill our minds with the filth of the world how can we love Jesus?

It would be impossible and it would be impossible to keep his commandments. Let us fill our minds with the thoughts of Jesus so that we may love him and keep his commandments.

Again the words of Jesus are, “If you love me you will keep my commandments.”

We cannot have both a pure love of Jesus and sin in our lives at the same time. As Jesus said in Matt 6:24, we cannot be the slave of two masters.

- ✓ Truly loving Jesus leads us to give up whatever in our lives that draws us away from Jesus.

- ✓ Truly loving Jesus leads us to making changes in the way we live and think and act.
- ✓ Sinning is putting Jesus in second place but when we love Jesus we put Jesus in first place and so we will keep his commandments.

How do we know if we love Jesus? Look at the way we live our lives.

Do we live as Jesus asks?

Do we live as Jesus asks us through the Word and what it is teaching?

If we do, then we know that we love Jesus.

But if we say we love Jesus and yet continue to think or act in a way that is the opposite of Jesus then we see that we do not put Jesus in first place, we do not truly love Jesus because we do not keep his commandments

Saints it is only through Obedience that we are able to experience the blessings of Holy Living

Let us Pray!