

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE

Obeying the commands of Jesus is what marks a person as a disciple of Jesus. Many people do not understand the transforming power of the gospel. Jesus gives both eternal life to come and new life now in His kingdom. It is a common belief that someone can have Jesus as savior, but not follow Him as Lord. However, the New Testament shows that true saving faith produces a life of surrender and obedience. To obey Jesus is to lovingly and joyfully conform to the will of God as He has revealed it. Obedience gives abundant joy and life to the believer. It's important to understand that we do not obey God in order to earn His love, but we obey God because we have His love in Jesus.

Read 1 John 2:3-6.

Discuss: How do we know that a person has truly come to know God?

Read John 14:15.

Discuss: What will we do if we love Jesus?

Motivation of obedience

The undeserved love and grace of God is the basis for obedience. We become motivated to obey Jesus as we see how much He has done to save us and deliver us from sin. (2 Corinthians 5:14) (1 John 4:19) (Romans 6:14)

Read Titus 2:11.

Discuss: What instructs us to live right and obey?

Religion says, "I obey, therefore I'm accepted," The gospel says, "I'm accepted by grace through Jesus, therefore I obey." - Tim Keller

Grace motivates our obedience to God

Joy of obedience

When we respond to the gospel by repentance and faith, we enter into a covenant relationship with Jesus. Because of our love relationship, it brings us freedom and joy when we obey His will. (1 John 5:3) (Psalm 40:8)

Read Matthew 11:28-30.

Discuss: What does Jesus say about His yoke and teachings?

Read Ps. 119:1-24.

Discuss: Describe how the psalmist speaks about how God's commands give him life and joy.

Obeying Jesus is a delight rather than a duty.

Fruit of obedience

As we abide in Jesus, His spirit produces in us the ability to obey. The nature of the gospel is that Jesus lives His life through us,

so the strength to follow His commands comes from Him. (John 15:5) (Galatians 2:20)

Read Ezekiel 36:25-27.

Discuss: What does God say He will do in the heart of those who believe in Jesus?

The power to obey is given to us as we rely on Jesus.

Personal application

Do you usually begin with grace in obeying Jesus?
How do we begin experiencing joy in obeying the commands of Jesus?

Explain the difference between the gospel and religion when it comes to obedience.

Why is obedience an evidence of a love relationship with Jesus?