



LESSON 8

OBEDIENCE

True Christian obedience is not a set of “do’s” and “don’ts”. It’s a lifestyle marked by continual focus on Jesus and the cross. Our obedience to God flows from what God has done for us. Ephesians 2:1-10 is a good reminder of what God has done. These verses state who we once were; we were dead in our trespasses and sins (v. 1). The good news is that God loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses (vv. 4b, 5). For it is by grace we were saved (v. 8). Finally, we see that we are His workmanship created for all good works (v. 10).

Furthermore, obedience is rooted in God’s love. Romans 5:8 declares, *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* We can love God by being obedient to Him, because He first loved us. No longer are we slaves to sin, but servants to Christ. Scripture is clear that believers are to be obedient to God. One such passage is Matthew 16:24, *“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’”* (This same verse is repeated in Mark 8:34 and Luke 9:23)

Undoubtedly, the word “cross” would have conjured up thoughts in the disciples minds of a violent, degrading death. In this verse Christ is demanding willful commitment from His disciples even unto death. The greater context of this verse comes from Matthew 16:21 where we learn that Jesus told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and also be killed and raised from the dead three days later. Jesus suffered, died, and rose from the dead for our sake. It is for this reason only that we can even bear the cross, even unto death. Death has lost its sting and we can now joyfully pick up our cross and follow Jesus!

Study Questions

1. Read Matthew 16:21-26. How was Peter, a disciple of Jesus, setting his mind on man’s interest instead of God’s interest? _____

2. How did Jesus correct him? Has Jesus ever corrected you in a similar way? Explain. _____

3. What is our motivation for picking up our cross? _____

Warnings against not picking up our cross: (Law Statement)

- Luke 14:27 *“Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”* (Same verse repeated in Matthew 10:38).



Other Scriptural references: (The following verses illustrate what it means to pick up our cross and follow Jesus. Basically, following Jesus means doing the will of God, i.e. presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, and acceptable to God. Also it means abstaining from sexual immorality. In addition, it means loving God and people!)

- Romans 12:1-2 *“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

4. What are some ways in which we conform to the world? _____

5. Why is Christian obedience important? _____

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.”*

6. How do we know if we have done enough to please God? _____

7. If God has called us to live holy lives, how do we do that? _____

Matthew 22:36-39 *“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

Galatians 5:13-14 *“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

8. What does God command us to do in these verses? _____

9. Why is there no list of things we must do in this discussion of the greatest commandment? _____

10. What are some ways in which we can show love to our neighbors? _____



Disciples of Jesus Christ obey God out of a heart of thankfulness for what Jesus Christ has done for us. The motivation comes from knowing the Gospel. When somebody obeys God because they feel they *have to*, their obedience may feel similar to that of a slave. This is motivation by the Law. Ask yourself: “Why do I obey God?”

Assignments to help you prepare for Lesson # 9

- 1) Continue reading the Bible and praying every day.
- 2) Complete the lesson on *Temptation* before your next appointment.
- 3) Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13.
- 4) As you intentionally obey the words of Christ this week, remember who God is and what He has done for you.
- 5) Take notes during the pastor’s sermon.

NOTES: