

Obedience-Faith Connection



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The attitude we have had from the very beginning is opposed to obeying God, but the Scriptures teach that obedience and faith are *always* connected. God requires His children to walk in obedience and faith because *He* supplies the power by His Spirit within. When we decide that *God's* will is going to be *our* will, His Holy Spirit is given to enable obedience. James 1:22 *"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."*

As this attitude of submission to the will of God is maintained, we will be glad to obey every command of His Word. *God* gives the ability—we just make the choice. Opposition to God's Word comes from people who are unwilling to have God's Son be their Lord. Obedience to God by faith is for those who want their faith perfected. Abraham obeyed the will of God without hesitating or questioning God and James 2:22 *"by his actions his faith was perfected."*

Obedience under the New Covenant is just as necessary as obedience under the old law. The commands of God are *not* a matter of merit, but a matter of *faith* and eliminating *self's* control so we can live by the *Spirit's* control. Every Word of the New Testament was written to save us from the flames—nothing of God's Truth can be rejected without fatal results. If we obey God in most things but are rebellious in one James 2:10, it is the same as disobeying God in everything.

Jesus said to Matthew 5:44-45 *"Love your enemies, bless those cursing you, do good to those*

hating you, and pray for those accusing you falsely [spitefully use], and persecuting you, that ye may be [true] sons of your Father in the heavens." He told us Matthew 6:19-21 *"Do not lay up stores of wealth for yourselves on earth, but amass wealth for yourselves in Heaven."* Our salvation hinges on whether we love God enough to obey Him in faith without compromise.

Deuteronomy 4:2 *"Do not add to or subtract from these commands I am giving you from the LORD your God. Just obey [keep] them."* King Saul did not *keep* the command of God. The devil suggested to him that it was okay to compromise in an emergency. That was the beginning of his fall from grace. Satan took possession of him, and God's Spirit left him—that was the serious result of disobeying God's command, not repenting, and not getting back in God's will.

The king had no peace from that moment, met with one trouble after another, and finally committed suicide—heading straight for the flames. All of that resulted because of two acts of disobedience. One was refusing to obey God's command to destroy the Amalekites, and the second was offering the sacrifice himself instead of the prophet. With the Amalekites, the king obeyed part of the command, but not all of it—like obeying God's Word on healing, but not on finances. It was fear that caused King Saul to be rebellious toward God and disobedient to His Word.

The Philistines were about to attack and the prophet had not yet arrived, so the king compromised and offered the sacrifice—something he was *not* authorized to do. God had earlier caused the Philistines to panic when Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering 1 Samuel 7:10, but this time King Saul was *terrified* of the enemy

and decided to offer the sacrifice himself when the prophet was delayed.

As soon as he disobeyed God's command, the prophet arrived. 1 Samuel 13:13 *"You acted foolishly,"* Samuel said. *"You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you."* Millions of people have made that *same* mistake, and used that *same* excuse—'We had to worship somewhere'—is the excuse—so they support a church that does not teach God's truth, or they disobey God on some other issue. God's Word says to not have close fellowship with unbelievers—even though they may profess to be Christians.

God's Word is clear 2 Corinthians 6:14 *"Do not be [unequally-unevenly] yoked together [close association] with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?"* Spiritual *light* is obedience to God's Word, and spiritual *darkness* is disobedience to the Word. The apostle added 2 Corinthians 6:16-17 *"Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."*

Obedience to the Word and faith in God are always connected—James 1:22 *"Prove yourselves obedient to the Message, and do not be mere hearers of it, imposing a delusion upon yourselves,"* because Matthew 7:21 *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."*

Stealing is a serious crime as well as a sin, but holding resentment is also a serious sin and would keep anyone out of heaven. Matthew 6:15 *"If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father*

will not forgive your sins.” If we do not truly love people and forgive everyone from the heart, we will land in the flames—make no mistake about that.

Matthew 18:35 *“In the same way my Heavenly Father will deal with [do to] you, if you do not all of you forgive one another from your hearts.”* It is God’s responsibility is to bring justice. Romans 12:19 *“Avenge not yourselves...Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”* Disobeying God by resenting wrongs shows that self is still in control.

Jesus said that whoever heard His teaching, and put it *into practice*, they would be like one whose faith is like a rock. Trials, temptations, and tests would not cause it to collapse. Matthew 7:26-27 *“But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice [is not doing them] is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

The believer’s response to insults, injustices, or loss is to *not* retaliate, *not* reply, and *not* seek vengeance, but to place the matter before God in prayer. We are to obey God’s Word and *not* have money laid aside on earth. Any material possession we could depend on is to be placed in heaven, because Matthew 19:21, *“If you want to be perfect [in faith and obedience], go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

Obedience and faith is giving to those who ask, or want to borrow from us. Jesus said Luke 6:35 *“Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.”* These instructions were written for our believing and obey-

ing—by faith. It is not about works, but all about *love* for God, *faith* in Christ, and *trusting* in His atonement blood for salvation by the Spirit’s power. These are real-life issues for real live people.

1 Peter 1:13-16 *“Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”*

The believer acts entirely different from the world—those who do not trust God for anything. We are given an entirely new attitude that *wants* to trust God for healing, finances, peace, protection, provisions, and everything else. We gladly obey His instructions because it is all part of trusting Him in faith. Hebrews 12:14 *“Persistently strive for peace with all men, and for that growth in holiness apart from which no one will see the Lord.”*

The old life is over and a new life begins. The apostle’s focus was on the cross Galatians 6:14 *“through which [by whom] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”* He did not live in disobedience to God’s will and Word anymore. Outward things meant nothing 15 *“what counts is a new creation”* or new attitude that willingly obeys God’s Word concerning every life issue.

This huge *change* in our heart is the huge *difference* between spiritual light and spiritual darkness. 1 Peter 1:15 *“As He who did call you is holy, ye also, become holy in all behaviour,”* by a willingness to obey His Word by the power of His Spirit. We are to be obedient to the New Testament faith—it is required to *“be holy in all your conduct.”*

We have been saved from eternal suffering by the shed blood of Christ. Our obedience to the Word just gives evidence that our faith is in the atonement sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross. It just shows that we truly believe that His blood forgives us and cleanses us from sin 1 John 1:7.

1 John 2:4 *“The man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do [is not keeping] what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”* The person who is not willing to obey God’s Word in faith on one issue, is being as disobedient as someone who lies, steals, commits adultery, takes medicine, resents a wrong, or depends on laid-up money.

The Bible is written so plainly that any Spirit-filled believer can understand it, and can apply its principles of truth. No one will have to explain it to us, because God supplies the ability to walk in the light of it—by His Spirit within. The only question we must settle once and for all is—whether God’s Word really *means* what it says.

When God speaks plainly, we are to obey without question—like Abraham and Noah did. It does not matter if the entire world disobeyed God’s Word, and every church member who ever belonged to a congregation disobeyed, *we* as an individual are to *believe* God, *accept* the atonement sacrifice of His Son as the value price paid for our sins, and *walk* in obedience to the Word. Obedience and faith are forever linked!



www.fcgchurch.org

First Century Gospel Church

PO Box 24283

PHILA PA 19120-5283

info@fcgchurch.org