

The Value Of Obedience

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Often we in the church of Christ are accused of being too strict in trying to follow God's Word. We are accused of being dogmatic, too traditional, or the favorite word is "legalistic".

So to defend our faith, let's look at the value of obedience. We will see that there is real value in following God's Word as closely as we possibly can. We will find that obedience is not legalism, but in fact shows all the things of the heart that we are supposedly lacking.

First of all, we see that obedience is humility. When we humble ourselves in obedience to God's Word, we are following the example of Jesus Christ Himself. Phil. 2:8, "*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" Notice, Jesus humbled himself and became obedient. What a great example that is for us to follow. Verse 5, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*". Obedience is humility, not legalism.

Obedience is one of the ways we praise God. We praise God in many ways, such as in song, in prayer, in proclaiming His Word to the world. We also praise God by obeying Him. Psa. 148:7-8, "*Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:*". How did these things in nature praise God? By fulfilling His word. Again, a great example for us to follow in Psalms 112:1, "*Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*" Obedience is a form of praise, not mere tradition.

Obedience is a result of faith. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, the great chapter on faith, every example given shows the person obeying God through their faith. Not one disobeyed by faith. Not one did "nothing" by faith. They did what God wanted them to do by faith. Let's read verses 7-8, "*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*" By faith Noah prepared, by faith Abraham obeyed. And where does faith come from? Rom. 10:17, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Not by changing His Word. We are not being dogmatic by obeying; we are being faithful.

Obedience is the only path to peace. Eph. 4:3, "*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" How can we do that? By listening to and obeying the Spirit. Rev. 3:22, "*He that hath an ear, let him*

hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” The Spirit inspired the apostles, (Acts 1:2), who wrote down the Lord’s commands for us, (2 Pet. 3:1-2). Obedience to the apostles’ words is the path to peace. 2 Pet. 1:2, “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,”.

Finally, obedience is how we show God we love Him. 2 John 6, *“And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.”* John 15:9-10, *“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”* And Jesus said very plainly in John 14:15, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”*

So obedience is not evidence of a lack of the sincere, zealous things of the heart. Obedience is humility, praise, faith and peace. Obedience is not legalism. Obedience is love.

Rom. 6:17, *“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”*

In Jesus Name,
Terry Warford

