

Celebrate God with Your Obedience, Part 4 | the best power

I. Acknowledge your need.

- The first step that must be taken before a person will get help is that they have to acknowledge that they need help. Alcoholics need to acknowledge they have a problem. Drug addicts need to realize they're not in control of the situation. And humans need to realize that they are *completely incapable* of obeying. Therefore, we must acknowledge our need for God . . . in absolutely everything.
- Romans 3:23; Isaiah 64:6; Proverbs 21:4, 12:10; Romans 8:6-8
- True obedience always matches with the glory of God. Therefore, true obedience is always a God-thing because we all fall short of God's glory.
- Left to ourselves, our best goodness — our highest form of fleshly obedience — is nothing better than clothes polluted with menstrual fluid. And before you think I'm being unnecessarily hyperbolic with that description, that's exactly to what the Hebrew word is referring.
- The fleshly mind is an enemy of God.
- We can't obey the way God commands because we're all born His enemies. But He has a plan for that. Knowing that we couldn't save ourselves, the Father sent His Son. But know this — just because you may be born again doesn't mean you have the personal power to obey God. No, that's not biblical either. Thankfully, knowing that we couldn't obey in our own strength even after being saved, He sent His Spirit.

II. Recognize that God wants to help you in your inability.

- I John 1, 4:13-15; Romans 8:9-11; Philippians 2:12-13
- We cannot live righteously (which is the outcome of obedience) if we don't have a relationship with God — if we're not His followers.
- Those who have a relationship with God have the Holy Spirit. That is the answer to our obedience problem. Whether it's our inability to know and understand what's right, whether it's our sinful deficiencies that make it impossible for us to do anything the right way, or whether it's our blind incompetence when it comes to having the right motivations, the Holy Spirit is here to help us do what we otherwise would be incapable of doing.
- **Therefore, obedience is doing the right thing in the right way for the right reason and in the right power.**
 - We all need to humbly come to the end of ourselves and realize that we cannot glorify God without His help, and we need to do so as soon as possible. Then we need to submit to Christ as the head of our lives. We need to follow Him and be born again.
 - And for those of you who are genuinely born again, when it comes to disobedience, please remember that any right thing that's not done in the right way for the right reasons and in the right power actually attacks the character of God! (Genesis 39:9)
- How do you obey in the right power if the power is not of you? (Ephesians 5:1-21)
 - We need to imitate God and live as Christ lived, and we're disobeying when we do the things God forbids.
 - God expects us to live in the light as He is in the light. This is goodness and righteousness and truth that truly pleases the Lord. We could say, this is obedience.
 - And we're supposed to be so intentional and conscious about our submission to righteousness and rejection unrighteousness that we consciously expose the works of darkness. That will not happen accidentally.

- Wisdom is intentional. It's knowing and understanding God's expectations and then trusting Him by doing as God says.
- As we consciously know, understand, and submit to God's will for His glory, we will be filled with the Spirit in a similar way that a person who is drunk is controlled by the alcohol.
- Alcohol removes our control of our physical functions. In a very different, but metaphorically similar way, submission to the Holy Spirit results in Him completing us. He comes in and does what we could not do in our own power. He amply supplies us. He helps us accomplish that which we were impotent to accomplish.

III. Learn from God's Word.

- Psalm 119:9-16; Ephesians 5:19; Romans 8:1-17
- You can't know what the right thing is outside of the Word. You can't know how to obey outside of the Scriptures. And you can't understand the only Christ-honoring motivation for your obedience outside of the Bible.
- We should know the Word of God so well that it flows from us in conversation and song, causing us to be thankful, and motivating our obedience in the fear of God.
- But remember, we're not marionettes. Sanctification is the cooperation between the Spirit and the Saint. We need to purposefully submit to God and draw near to Him before He will draw near to us. We will only have perfect peace as we train our minds on the Lord. Things in our life will only work together for our greatest good as we intentionally love God and work according to His revealed purposes.
- As we do this, in the moment we do this, we're being empowered to do it by the Spirit. It's not a prerequisite for Holy Spirit filling, it's a wonderful, mysterious chicken and the egg. Which comes first, the empowerment or the obedience?
- They're simultaneous. It's a miracle, and we praise God that He loves us enough to participate in it.
- Know the Word, study it, and submit to it. And as you consciously and intentionally and carefully and wisely apply God's Word to your every belief, thought, desire, feeling, word, and action, you will receive the power necessary to truly glorify God in each of those areas