

## Celebrate God with Your Obedience, Part 3 | the best reason

**III. Obedience is doing the right thing in the right way . . . for the right reason.**

- **Wrong Reasons for Doing Right**
  - Mark 7:6; I Samuel 15; Philippians 1:15-18; James 4:1-3
  - Regardless if we're doing the right things in the right ways because it brings us selfish pleasure or it hurts those we want to hurt or it manipulates or any other bad reason we have to obey . . . it all boils down to the fact that we are doing what we want for our own glory.
  - That is spiritual adultery. It's idolatry. It's self-worship. That is the ultimate and most basic bad reason we do the right things in the right way.
- **Right Reasons for Doing Right**
  - Matthew 22:37-40; I John 4:19; Ecclesiastes 5:1; Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:12; Mark 12:33; Proverbs 21:3; Isaiah 1:11-17; Micah 6:6-8; John 5:30, 14:21; Hebrews 13:17; Jeremiah 17:9
  - If self-worship is at the root of all bad motivations, then God-worship is at the root of all good motivations.
  - Our obedience must be motivated by humble submission to God and His will. That is the only obedience that truly pleases Him.
  - There are also good secondary reasons to obey. We are to love each other. We should delight in the good of others. We should want to serve people. But any of that can be idolatrous if the intentional worship of God isn't present.
- **Unconscious Reasons for Doing Right**
  - Matthew 7:21-24; Acts 8
  - Our hearts are *deceptive*. Your heart is deceptive. It deceives you before it ever deceives anyone else. Because of this, we can often think that we have pure motives when we actually don't.
  - We need to ask ourselves, "If I can think I'm obeying because I want to please the Lord, but actually be obeying for selfish reasons, how can I *know* what my true motivations are?"
  - The point is to obey for the right reasons, so if it's possible that you may be deceiving yourself, you need to be able to figure that out so you can change your motivation
- **Uncovering Unconscious Reasons for Doing Right**
  - **Start by recognizing that it's possible to deceive yourself.**
    - It's truly a gracious gift of God to know that why we do what we do is more important than what we do and how we do it. It's also a blessing to know that there is only one ultimate good reason to obey God. And it's so incredibly valuable to recognize that we can think our motivation is God-focused when it's all about me.
    - Thank that Lord that you know those three truths.
  - **Assume the chances are very good that you're deceiving yourself.**
    - "Be easy on others and hard on yourself." Considering that you are the chiefest of sinners that you know, it's very important for us to deal with the tree swinging out of our own eye before handling the splinter in another's eye.
    - Here's the point, it is so incredibly valuable to walk into any situation recognizing that you could be wrong.
    - Humility recognizes our spiritual destitution and our need for God's help. God draws near to the humble. Humility honestly looks at one's self and doesn't give themselves the benefit of the doubt that they're always right.

- **Believe that God's standard for obedience is perfect.**
  - We mustn't doubt God's plan. We mustn't lean on our own understanding. We have to acknowledge Him in all things if we want to have our ways please Him.
  - But God isn't going to teach us to intentionally worship Him in all things via dreams and cloud formations.
- **Study the Word**
  - Hebrews 4:12
  - Only in God's absolute truth can we understand what to do, how to do it, and why to do it.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you.**
  - Psalm 119:18
  - Don't arrogantly believe you have it all figured out or will learn it perfectly the first time through. Throw yourself on the providential grace of God and ask the Holy Spirit to help you truly know, understand, and live His Word.
- **Ask God to show you your sinful motivations.**
  - Psalm 26:2, 139:23-24; Job 13:23
  - Remember, we're too often blind to our self-worshipping motivations.
  - Without the work of the Holy Spirit convicting us of sin, righteousness, and judgement, we're blind to our sin. We literally cannot see it without His help.
- **Compare your thoughts and words to the perfect standard of the Bible.**
  - Jesus taught that a man's words come from his heart. What we think and say (when we're being honest) is the best revealer of the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. I lean heavily on this in counseling all the time. Unless the person is such a perfect liar that they always say just the right things, they will slip, and that slip will reveal what they truly believe.
- **Changing Unconscious Reasons for Doing Right**
  - **Know God's Word.** It's always going to start here. You can't believe what you don't know, and you can't have the right reasons until you know what they are and how to have them.
  - **Understand God's Word.** It's just as wrong to pridefully assume that all of your motivations are Christ-honoring as it is to believe you have this all figured out after one podcast episode.
  - **Admit your inability.**
    - I Corinthians 5:7
    - We absolutely cannot do anything right or in the right way or for the right reasons without God's empowering. But just because we're born again doesn't mean that we become marionettes completely incapable of doing wrong.
  - **Humbly ask for help.** Trusting what God says about the importance of our motivation and the deceptiveness of our own minds should lead us to believe that we are incapable of doing this on our own, and we desperately need His help.
  - **Consciously strive to obey for the right reasons.**
    - Ephesians 5:15-17
    - Feelings don't require thought. They're physical experiences; that's all they are. We need to actually, cognitively think about what and how and why we're doing what we're doing.
  - **Intentionally trust God and verify yourself.**
    - I Chronicles 16:8-11; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 7:7-8; Isaiah 55:6-7 This idea of seeking — found all throughout the Scriptures — is not passive, it's not feelings-oriented, and it's not merely reading the Scriptures. The multiple times we're commanded to seek God show that it's a conscious, intentional, God-focus motivated by worship and love.