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# The Motivation of Obedience

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

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**AT** the very first display of sin, we discover resistance and rebellion to authority. It is the usurpation of power that is not ours. It is a self-consciousness that is foreign to the design of our Creator. All creation is under God's authority. Satan uses only one method to undermine it. He is a perfect demonstration when declaring his five positions of rebellion against the designed position for him by God. His display of self-consciousness culminated with the personal declaration, "I will be like the most high" (Isaiah 14:13, 14).

In the Garden of Eden, Satan communicates this self-consciousness. Eve was attracted to that which was forbidden by God. The motives of God were challenged by Satan. She was being denied by God that which would elevate her to a higher position. "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5).

How could she sin before a holy God? How could Adam go along with it? How can you and I do the exact opposite of the plain teaching of the Bible? There must be a deteriorating process. It is easily detected. Once we become self-conscious, we are easily misled. In fact, we will eventually believe an outright lie. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4).

Remember, sin itself was not brought into question; it was the outcome of it. The moment retribution is no longer a certainty, it becomes easier to listen and entertain false premises. The lies of Satan continue to be communicated to us regularly. It is still the center of all temptation in our day.

Do we really believe God's plain declaration as to the consequence of disobedience? "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Only God knows the terrible toll such rebellion takes upon the lives of the disobedient. This is true of Christians also. What a shock if we were to know the unanswered prayers, the heartbreak of erring children and physical problems all related to refusing obedience to the declared Word of God, revealed in the Bible.

The other day, within a mile of where I live, a bumper sticker was seen with the words, "FORGET HELL." The consequence of such action leads to a conclusion that we survive disobedience without suffering. Can anybody go against the known and established authority of God independent of His judgment? The solution to this dilemma is rationalization that God will not bring certain judgment, despite His sure promise to do so. This lie is as old as Adam and Eve. The same person is still perpetrating it. Both

judgment and blessing are in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him SHOULD NOT PERISH, but HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE."

## Obedience and Love Are Inseparable

"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and TO LOVE HIM, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS of the Lord, and his statutes, WHICH I COMMAND THIS DAY FOR THY GOOD" (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13).

Here is demanded on our part a total commitment of our total being. Did you take note of the outcome of love and obedience? Always being under the absolute control of God means goodness. This is the promise of Romans 8:28. (Look it up!) Obedience and love are inseparable in God's Word. They are never independent one of the other. "And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS" (Daniel 9:4). This same verse is stated in Nehemiah 1:5).

This same truth is in the New Testament: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:23, 24). (Try to apply the psychological term "unconditional love" to this portion of Scripture.) Hear Christ's plain statement as to our action when loving Him: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Love is a consuming priority. We are to have an all consuming love for God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We know love's behavior as it is plainly laid out in I Corinthians 13. (Read and study it!) Love for God demands a wild abandonment from all other relationships and loyalties. Where is this commitment in our day among His professing Christians? One glance at the local church reveals how few are under His authority when it comes to obedience to His Word, the Bible. If we know the Word, we know this Book of instructions. Remember, our love is from the very center of our heart, soul, and mind. How does the love of God get into the center of our being? *We all have God's love for He is love.* Not so. Never will we possess the love of God until God places it within our hearts. Think this is possible for an unregenerate person who has never repented of his sin? Will God forgive such an one? "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit will communicate the eternal benefit of God's love in and through Christ only. Sinners will meet the love of God in Christ.

God only loves the sinner in and through His Son. His love is of no consequence or benefit to one outside of Christ. He is not under God's love! The sinner is under God's wrath. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the son shall not see life; but

THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM (present tense in the Greek)" (John 3:36). This is the reason we preach the gospel. God's love is in and through God's Son. Christ died for sinners, was buried, and rose again. This is the gospel according to 1Corinthians 15. The sinner has the benefit of a loving Father *only* when he repents of his sin and trusts in the work of Christ in his undeserving behalf. O how wonderful is the grace and love of God!

Where are the authoritative words of Christ being heard today? Every pulpit in the land should illuminate our hearts and minds with Divine direction. Could it be that few want to hear it? Will it affect the attendance and personal image of the pastor to declare the counsel of God that must be reckoned with in the here and now? The words of Christ rejected NOW will be the same words we will face at the judgment. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: THE WORD THAT I HAVE SPOKEN, THE SAME shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

God pity those who refuse to acknowledge the headship of Christ in relation of the church. May God have mercy on the teachers who attempt to relegate the commandments of Christ to some other dispensation.

### **Submission**

Why would the Holy Spirit reveal the plans and purposes of God in the Scriptures to a person who refuses to be in subjection to them? He won't! One of Satan's biggest lies is that submission to the will of God will bring us a forfeiture of good things. Submission does not produce a slavish fear. To serve the Lord is the greatest privilege of mortal man. The bond slave by the name of Paul demonstrates it in introducing himself in Romans 1:1: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."

Obedience is the consequence of love, moving us into the position of being glad to accomplish God's plan and purpose. Obedience is not a galling yoke or bondage. It is freedom to do the will of Him who loves us and has provided us with GOOD things now and in eternity if we are in His family. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7:11)

We obey Him gladly, willingly, and wholeheartedly because He loves us. We enjoy doing those things for the one we love. Are you under the authority of the Word of God? It says, FEAR NOT! Are you fearful? The Bible says, LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED. Do you have heart trouble? What is it that has you in dismay this moment? The commands of Christ to pray are still in the Book. Do you have a daily prayer schedule? How much time have you spent this week praying for missions? How much of your money have you invested this week in world evangelism?

### **We Can Do It**

We are without an excuse. His commandments are not grievous. God has given all of His children power and strength to DO them. "I can do ALL things through Christ, which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

God has commanded sinners to repent. He has also commanded you to believe in Him. He will give you power to do both. Now is a good time for you to start toward His direction. Find a place of prayer. Cry out to God, naming your sins. Ask and believe Him to forgive and cleanse your unclean heart and mind. Trust Him to give you His Spirit within in regenerating power, making you a new creature in Christ. It is not a matter of inability; it is a willingness to be honest about your sin. Then it becomes much easier to trust in the honesty of Christ, to do according to His promise.

Friend of mine, if you desire to fall in love with God, then read and meditate upon His love letter.

My Christian friend, in humble submission, resign yourself to His absolute authority. Present the members of your body for His possession and control (Romans 12:1, 2). Without hesitation or hypocrisy, let's join together in song:

MY JESUS, I LOVE THEE,  
I KNOW THOU THE FOLLIES  
OF SIN I RESIGN!  
MY GRACIOUS REDEEMER,  
MY SAVIOUR ART THOU,  
IF EVER I LOVED THEE,  
MY JESUS 'TIS NOW!

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