

e-devotional

A monthly devotional on the spiritual formation of Christian workers of the Central Pacific District C&MA
February 04

Mandatory Disciplines: Obedience

Scripture: John 14:21; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:9,11

Main idea: Lack of spiritual growth is directly traceable to disobedience; spiritual formation is directly proportionate to our walk in full obedience

Task: Memorize the above verses.

A command is an imperative—something that requires action, obedience. It isn't a suggestion.

Command	Level of My Obedience	How I Can Improve
<p>Matthew 28:19-20 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."</p>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
<p>Romans 12:1-2 "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."</p>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
<p>Hebrews 13:7 "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."</p>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 [Please note, pastors, this not only applies to your congregation but also to us in ministry who are under authority.]	
<p>Ephesians 5:15-20 "Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."</p>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	This is quite a list. Pick out one you need to work on the most. How about " <u>always</u> giving thanks to God the Father for [most] all things"?
<p>Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..."</p>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	What does this look like? We can't take the sins of our wives as Christ took ours, so how do we love them as Christ loved the church? Remember, this passage is not primarily about marriage but about the church of which marriage is a metaphor.
<p>Ephesians 5:22 "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord."</p>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Guys, this is NOT written to you to bring your wife into submission!

Command	Level of My Obedience	How I Can Improve
<p>Colossians 3:1-14 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ [why], [what] set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. [Another why] For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.</p> <p>[Another what] Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. [A third why] Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. [Clarification of the what] But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.</p> <p>Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p>James 1:2-8 "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	<p>In light of these verses, how can we justify all the bellyaching we pastors are guilty of?</p>
<p>James 4:10 "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God.... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	<p>[Pride is the first and most insidious of the seven sins]</p>
<p>1 John 2:3-6 "We know we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him. Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did."</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	<p>This issue here is whether I am confirming or denying my relationship with God through behavior that obeys or disobeys God's Word. What about right behavior that comes from a wrong spirit or attitude?</p>

The Believer's Secret of Obedience

Andrew Murray

Bethany House Publishing, 1982

Andrew Murray was born in South Africa in 1828. After receiving his education in Scotland and Holland he returned to that land and spent many years there as both pastor and missionary. He was a staunch advocate of biblical Christianity. He is best known for his many devotional books.

"In the study of a Bible word, or of a truth of the Christian life, it helps to examine the place it takes in Scripture. As we see where, how often, and in what connection it is found, its relative importance maybe understood as well as its relevance to the whole of revelation. To prepare the way for the study of what obedience is, let me show you where to go in God's Word to find the mind of God concerning it.

"First, take scripture as a whole. We begin with Paradise. In Gen. 2:16, we read: '*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying.*' And later (3:11), '*Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*' Note how obedience to the command is the one virtue of Paradise, the one condition of man's abiding there, the one thing his Creator asks of him. Nothing is said of faith or humility or love: obedience includes all. Just as supreme as the claim and authority of God, is the demand for obedience—the one thing that is to decide man's destiny. To obey is the one thing required of man.

"Turn now from the beginning to the close of the Bible. In its last chapter you read (Rev. 22:14), '*Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life.*' Or, in the Revised version, we have the same thought as we read about the seed of the woman (12:17), '*that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus*'; and of the patience of the saints (14:12), '*they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*' From beginning to end, from Paradise lost to Paradise regained, the law is unchangeable—it is only obedience that gives access to the tree of life and the favor of God (13-14)....

"When shall we learn how unspeakably pleasing obedience is in God's sight, and how unspeakable is the reward He bestows upon it? The way to be a blessing to the world is to be men of obedience, known by God and the world by this one mark—a will completely yielded to God's will. Let all who profess to walk in Abraham's footsteps walk thus (15).

In writing about Saul's failure to completely obey God and Samuel's word to him that "to obey is better than sacrifice," Murray state: "May God reveal to us whether we are indeed doing all He asks, seeking utterly to destroy all and spare nothing that is not in perfect harmony with His will. It is wholehearted obedience, down to the minutest details, that can alone satisfy God. Let nothing less satisfy you" (17).