

Christian Obedience

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Christian Obedience Is Relational

This may seem obvious, but obedience requires two parties: the one obeying, and the one obeyed. The *Christian* obeys *God*. Christian obedience is not some sort of purity detached from relationship to God. We do not pursue a self-contained morality, as if virtue in itself meant something. “Getting better” at obedience (a.k.a. *sanctification*) is becoming submissive to God. Either we are righteous for God’s sake, or righteous for the sake of self (self-righteous, which is to say unrighteous).

Christian Obedience Is Covenantal

The Christian obeys God for reasons stipulated by God. The Ten Commandments are prefaced with these words: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” This creates the atmosphere in which obedience takes place. The Christian obeys God *because* God has shown favor to him—not so that God will show favor to him. In Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Covenant sacrificed himself to save his people from their sin and to redeem them for righteousness. This is the ultimate motivator to Christian obedience.

Christian Obedience Is Glad-Hearted

Good works drawn from a reluctant heart do not constitute God-honoring obedience. In fact, this is lip service, performed for some reason other than a joyful response to grace—which is the same as disobedience in God’s eyes. Only the heart made healthy and glad with salvation can be truly obedient. “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” If you truly love your Savior God, then he cannot ask too much of your allegiance.

Christian Obedience Is Legal

legal: *adj.* of, based on, or concerned with the law. Christian obedience takes the form of law keeping. What’s that you say? Obedience has more to do with love than with law? What are the greatest precepts of the Law of God? “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength... [and] you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” That’s right, *love is a commandment*, the fulfillment of the Law. If you’re a Christian, you do what God tells you to do, which he has told you by way of the moral Law.

Christian Obedience Is Supernatural

Only Christians can obey God rightly. Therefore, the merest potential for obedience comes from *outside nature*, since just being a Christian is supernatural. Not only that, but we obey the will of God by being filled with the Spirit, by walking in the Spirit. How, then, could the origin or empowerment of our obedience be anything but supernatural—unless you would reduce the Holy Spirit of God to the level of nature?

Christian Obedience Is Necessary

For the Christian to obey God is normal. It is no extraordinary thing to do what your Lord commands—even to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus... daily. But obedience is more than to-be-expected: it is *inevitable*. Someone who is saved by grace through living faith in Jesus Christ will certainly obey God. In fact, disobedience points to the absence of true and saving faith. So, although obedience is not a prerequisite for salvation, it is a necessary fruit of salvation.

Christian Obedience Is Beautiful

True Christian obedience is haunting, jolting the minds of our opponents. It is compelling, winning worshipers to our God. We convey godliness through our good works, pleasing the One who calls us to holiness. The Word of God is more desirable than gold, and sweeter than honey. This Word produces obedience in the lives of God’s people by their faith. Surely that fruit is beautiful.