

**July 31, 2010**  
**GOD'S WILL: NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS, NOTHING ELSE**

Given the lawlessness that has permeated man-pleasing westernized Christendom, one of the most despised four-letter words in religious circles today is "**obey**." If love-motivated obedience to our God's Word were the hallmark of everyone who calls themselves "Christian", the Kingdom of God would encompass the earth. If you are intentionally seeking to know God's commands and out of love for Him put them into practice, your encounters with those who are disobedient hurt your heart. That's the pain the two of us feel...

Over the years we've encountered so many who once belonged to God but crossed the line into tolerating ongoing sin through their disobedience. Take a close look at these passages and allow them to penetrate your spirit: Hebrews 3:6; 6:4-6; 10: 26,27; 2 Peter 2:20,21; Romans 8:13. If you habitually tolerate sin around you because you fear being rejected particularly by your relatives, consider Matthew 10:34-38, Luke 14:26, 21:26. Know that habitually giving way *yourself* to the sin of disobedience to God's commands can result in you breaking Covenant with God!

Why has a *trusting faith that leads to putting God's Word into practice* been so impossible for countless thousands? Why *isn't* the Kingdom of God and the righteous life that personifies it the first thing most Christians seek (Matthew 6:33)? Several factors have been evident to us over our years of ministry.

**1. Failure to perceive the connection between God's grace and trust-based obedience.**

As Scripture makes wonderfully clear, God's grace is His unearned and unmerited favor and loving kindness toward us. It's *His grace* that first enables us to embrace the true Gospel, for no one comes to Jesus as Lord of their life without the Father first drawing him or her (John 6:44). By *His grace* the indwelling Spirit in those who have been born from above changes and molds us into ever-increasing Christ-likeness (2Corinthians 3:18). And, it's *His grace* that empowers us to follow through after we've made the choice to obey His commands (2Thessalonians 1:11).

*Grace and trust-based obedient action* go hand-in-hand (see 2Corinthians 9:8-13 as an example). Our trust in our Father to mold us to be more like His Son Jesus and to be able to carry out the purposes which He's prepared in advance for us (Ephesians 2:10) is a key part of His grace toward His children.

And as we see throughout Scripture, He warns us of consequences when we willfully refuse to obey Him:

Our failure to obey His commands and to fulfill the good purposes He wants to do through us reveals that we *don't love Him*. Therefore we do not belong to Him. Why? Because we're *refusing the grace* He would give us to do His will (2Corinthians 5:21-6:2). When you refuse His grace to obey, you renounce the Person Who gives it!

This truth was clearly understood by the first followers of Jesus: Our Father wants to empower you to both become like Jesus *and* through obedience that leads to action serve Him as one of His ambassadors(**2Corinthians 5:17-20**). If you're nullifying His grace along the narrow pathway by refusing to live out both **Bible truth and His revealed specific *rhema* (the do-it-now word from the Spirit)**, you're demonstrating that your "faith" is dead (James 2:20-24). And a dead faith means that you will not receive salvation at the Judgment Throne.

Although grace is unseen, its presence is evidenced by the love-based actions it produces (James 2:26).

## **2. Failure to perceive the generational consequences of disobedience.**

An ongoing lifestyle of disobedience is tolerated among many Christians because they don't see immediate consequences of their habitual sin. For example, decades of research studies of unmarried women have found that the primary reason many fall into fornication is a weak or nonexistent relationship with their father at an early age. The sin of the father is his failure to be the godly influence the Bible commands. The consequence of his disobedience, however, shows up years later through his daughter's fornicating. Many other consequences to disobedience show up as well years later in the lives of the next generation(s). [Next weeks we'll discuss the effect of fornication before marriage in regard to subsequent struggles in marriage years later.]

A reminder: *Sin* is an attitude or action that's in direct rebellion against God's commands. It's carried out in any number of ways. For instance, sin can be a one-time act or inner attitude which is stopped through repentance. Or, it can become a habitual pattern when a person refuses to confess it and turn from it. Once sin becomes habitual, it turns into what the Bible calls "iniquity," and a door for demonic strongholds is opened that is passed along for generations.

***"I the LORD thy God am a jealous God,  
visiting the INIQUITY of the fathers upon the children  
unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me"***  
(Exodus 20:5)

Through the habitual sin of disobedience to apply God's commands out of loving trust in Him, one generation develops a pattern of ***iniquity*** that the next generation becomes entrapped in. Iniquity is a moral weakness, a *predisposition* toward something contrary to God that is passed along from generation to generation within a family. Iniquity inherently results in demonic strongholds and their respective symptoms influencing and ruling the soul—the mind, will and emotions—and being picked up by the children for several generations.

Remember how this process takes place from our workbook, ***Demolishing Strongholds?***

The Process of Stronghold Development:

1) Satanic-inspired THOUGHTS are introduced into your mind.

- 2) Entertaining these thoughts brings on EMOTIONS.
- 3) Giving in to emotions eventually leads to taking some sort of ACTION.
- 4) Continual participation in this behavior causes you to develop a HABIT.
- 5) Once a habit is developed, a STRONGHOLD is built by that spirit.

[For further discussion of the issue of iniquity and sin, see Lifebyte 40. *Do You Confront For Jesus? Or, Placate For Satan?* at our website.]

We can assure you from our experience of many years of ministry:

- **If** conversations with others close to you in the faith don't frequently contain topics of biblical obedience for each or all of you to put into practice (Hebrews 10:24);
- **If** there isn't a sense of loving responsibility to render account both to our Lord and to the others that you've followed through in obedient trust (Hebrews 13:17);
- **Then** you and/or they have "pet sins" you want to keep, areas of disobedience that you're excusing or rationalizing. In your conversations, you'll avoid ALL forms of mutual accountability to live according to God's commands and ways because you're preferring this area of darkness to His light.

On the other hand:

- **If** you and those close to you in the faith have an earnest heart to love God and to love others as yourself, you'll purpose to know and put into practice all of His commands without any concern or reservation about what it will cost you (1John 3:21-24);
- **If** out of love you are committed to both God and to your faith family to be accountable to take action on what you know to be His will (1John 5:2,3);
- **Then** you will experience His grace to both conform you into the character of Jesus and to empower you to do His will.

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If you're motivated by a loving commitment to obey God's commands but are unfamiliar with His method of *applying the Bible* to your life, prayerfully consider this excerpt from our book, *Christian Halakhahs—Loving Jesus Through the Way You Apply His Word*.

A *halakhah* is a Biblical application that guides your life and brings about a response according to our Father's will. The word comes from the Hebrew *halak*, to *walk out* God's will in a specific way.

### ***Steps in Establishing Halakhahs***

Follow this process when you are facing an issue or decision in which you're seeking God's guidance and perspective.

**1 Prayer.** To establish a *halakhah* for your particular issue, pray. Ask for a spirit of wisdom and revelation (see Ephesians 1:17), entreating our Father to convey His will regarding your issue or concern.

**2 Bible passages.** Next, ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any verses or passages that would apply to your situation. Don't try to apply anything until you're sure that you have compiled all possible biblical references. [A concordance can be invaluable here!] Some verses will be more pertinent than others. That is, you'll recognize one or more to be more foundational to the matter at hand. Other verses will add understanding of God's perspective. When you've invested the extra effort to pursue all the biblical leads prompted by the Holy Spirit, a sense of peace will rest on you and anyone who's sharing this investigation with you.

**3 Biblical application.** Armed with the appropriate verses and passages, you can now address your problem. Be careful not to rationalize, that is, using "if—then" reasoning as you apply the Word to your situation. An example of rationalizing: What will this decision cost you? How will it affect others? What changes will you need to go through if you decide to live by this new conviction?

No matter how strong the urge is to weigh the personal cost of your decision — don't! First determine in your heart that you *do* have the correct biblical application for your situation. Then the Holy Spirit will give you peace if this solution is what God wants for you.

**4 Action to take.** When you're convinced in your heart that you've correctly applied God's Word to your situation, it's time to take the next step, *applying grace*. Grace is the *power and desire to uphold God's truth* in your life no matter what it costs you. Remember, you're applying *halakhahs* to your life because of your love for Jesus as your Lord! God's grace will enable you to keep your new conviction because of your desire to lovingly obey Him. Continue to pray for grace. And confess you've been ignorant of the new truths He's shown you and have not lived by them before now.

A Final Note. The goal for discerning God's ways and living by them is *not* right behavior for its own sake. If you're trying to earn God's favor by adhering to His commands in your own power, you'll become proud—an attitude God opposes (James 4:6)! You may even disdain others who don't live or think the way you do and thus violate the second greatest command: to love others as yourself (Luke 10:27).

Our hearts are stirred by the same motive that compelled Paul: ***"We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ"*** (Colossians 1:28).

**Mike & Sue**