

# Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the Mission Field Worldwide.

## SEVEN TIMES

After a long and arduous journey of forty years wandering in the wilderness after leaving Egypt, the Israelites finally reached the Promised Land. The former slaves crossed the Jordan River to enter their new home. Their faith and obedience had been repeatedly tested, shaping their reliance on God. They had experienced many hardships and struggled with doubts and unbelief, but by God’s grace, they had finally arrived in the land that flowed with milk and honey. However, this beautiful land which they had longed to see for so many years also had walled cities and giants.

The Israelites came to the strong, fortified city of Jericho. Although it seemed impossible to conquer such a city, God did not leave them to their own abilities and devices. God told Joshua, “I have given into thine hand Jericho” (Joshua 6:2). God gave Joshua specific instructions: march around the city once a day for six days—on the seventh day, march around the city seven times. On the seventh time around the city, the priests will blow their trumpets, the people will shout with a great shout, and the walls of the city will fall flat.

The Israelites obeyed God’s command and marched silently day after day. Their silence was more than compliance; it was an act of worshipful trust in God’s plan. The sixth day seemed no different than the first, as nothing happened, and the repetitive actions seemed fruitless. Their persistence culminated on

the seventh day, at which time their faith and obedience bore fruit. As the trumpets resounded and the people shouted, the impossible happened—the walls fell. The city was conquered, and they experienced a great success. Although God’s instructions were not textbook military strategy, the Israelites trusted in God. Their unwavering faith and obedience to God brought about victory.

The concept of obedience resonates throughout the Scripture. God calls on His people to exercise faith and to be obedient to His divine plan. Many times God’s instructions do not align with human logic, and yet when people submit to God, they will ultimately find God’s purpose, timing, and power to be perfect. Even when nothing happens after six days, six months, or six years, remain steadfast in obedience. God’s silence is not His absence. It is often in the waiting, in the repetitive acts of obedience, that our faith is refined, and God’s purposes are revealed. The seventh day will come.

The number seven in the Bible symbolizes completion and divine perfection. When God’s instructions challenge our understanding and go against our preferences, let us stay faithful and obedient and follow through to the seventh time—until God’s purpose is accomplished. Just as the Israelites obeyed God’s instructions at Jericho, another story of obedience comes from the life of Naaman.

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“It is often in the waiting, in the repetitive action of obedience, that our faith is refined, and God’s purposes are revealed.”

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# WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

## **Word of God**

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

## **Relationship of Love**

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

## **Repentance**

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

## **New Birth**

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;  
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

## **Freedom From Sin**

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

## **Infilling of the Holy Spirit**

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

## **Holiness**

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;  
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

## **Kingdom of God**

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

## **The Church**

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

## **Unity**

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

## **Ordinances**

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;  
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

## **Divine Healing**

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

## **Sanctity of Marriage**

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;  
1 Cor. 7:10-11

## **Outward Appearance**

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

## **End of Time**

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;  
Matt 25:31-46

## **Pacifism**

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

## **Worship**

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

## **Great Commission**

Mark 16:15

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Naaman, a great and mighty captain of the Syrians, was afflicted with leprosy. Upon his request for healing, the prophet Elisha sent instructions for him to dip in the Jordan River seven times. 2 Kings 5:10-14 relates how Naaman was very angry because to dip in a muddy river was such a mundane act. He was looking for a more spectacular outpouring of power to receive such a miracle. Urged by his servants, Naaman humbled himself and did as he was instructed. After dipping in the Jordan seven times, his skin was restored, and he was made clean.

God's ways often defy human expectations. Obedience is crucial even when it feels unnecessary or when we just do not want to obey. When Naaman humbled himself, he found healing from God—not from the water itself but from his willingness to trust and act according to God's word.

Another instance with Elijah illustrates this lesson. After a long drought, Elijah prayed in faith for rain to come. He sent his servant to look toward the sea for a sign of rain. Each time, the servant returned saying, "There is nothing" (1 Kings 18:43-44). Elijah persisted in prayer and after checking six times, the servant's report was unchanged—clear skies.

Elijah, with unwavering faith, continued praying. He sent the servant to look toward the sea a seventh time and the report came back: "There is a little cloud the size of a man's hand." Elijah sent a message to King Ahab telling him to prepare for the rain that would soon come. The sky became "black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain" (1 Kings 18:45). What if Elijah had stopped praying after six times? God does not work on our timetable, but He wants us to keep praying.

The fall of Jericho, Naaman's healing, and the rain all came after seven times. While the number itself is symbolic, it also represents God's perfect time. God's power was revealed when obedience and faith were exercised. Even in times of exhaustion, discouragement, or doubt, we must trust God's purposes and obey Him fully, beyond what we can feel or see. As we face challenges in our own lives, may we persist in faith, trusting God's promises. Let us not stop at 'six times'—whether in prayer, trust, or obedience—but press on, knowing that God's seventh time is always right. No matter how long the wait or how difficult the journey, trust that God's plan is perfect. His purpose will be fulfilled when we remain faithful and obedient. ■

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# Editorial



*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. —John 15:10*

The key to abiding in a loving relationship is looking beyond our selfish desires and being considerate and respectful of the needs and wishes of the other person. Jesus taught us concerning the will of the Father for our lives and said that if we keep His commandments, we will abide in His love. There is no more secure place than in the love of God.

People want that refuge, peace, and hope that comes from God, but few fulfill their part of the relationship. If we truly want to experience the love of God and all the promises that come with it, we must keep His commandments.

The theme of this quarter is “Obedience.” We need to say “no” to self and “yes” to God. When we want to follow our own thinking and preferences, we need to stop and ask for God’s will. God is seeking people who will be obedient in every area of life. We will not please God if we pick and choose areas of obedience. It is easy to justify one’s disobedience in one area by pointing to their obedience in another. We need to obey the whole truth.

What the Bible teaches is absolute and non-negotiable, but obedience is our choice. It is one thing to look at sinners and see their lives of disobedience. It is another to look at ourselves personally and at our congregations. Are we living in total obedience to God? Are we speaking, acting, living, dressing, and conducting ourselves according to all the truth we know and understand? Let us ask, “Lord, what do you want me to do?”

Obedience goes beyond the written Word of God. The Spirit of the Lord leads and guides us in truth. He convicts and gives direction. How are we responding to the Spirit? Are we quickly submitting to the small checks of the Spirit? If not, our conscience will be seared, and we will grow more callous and even indifferent to the work of the Spirit in our lives.

If we stop being quick to obey, it becomes harder and harder to return to a place of careful and complete obedience in our walk with God. Disobedience in one area of life quickly bleeds over into other areas of life. Places where we once had victory with God will begin to suffer because of a seemingly unassociated area of disobedience.

Let us stay sensitive to the Spirit and be quick to obey God’s dealings in our lives.

Michael W. Smith

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Serving the Lord is about simple obedience:

going where God wants us to go,  
doing what He wants us to do,  
speaking like He wants us to speak.





# Bible Study Guide

## Subject: Obedience

**Scripture Reading:** *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* —John 14:15

**Definition:** *Obedience* is the quality or state of being obedient. It involves compliance with an order, request, law, or submission to another's authority. (*Oxford Languages*).

**Summary:** There is a vital connection between love for God and obedience to His Word. Obeying God's Word and following the leading of the Spirit are essential to living a godly life. Obedience brings blessings and ultimately eternal life, whereas disobedience results in loss and eternal separation from God.

### I. Call to Obedience

- A. Deuteronomy 11:1 Keep God's statutes always.
- B. John 14:15 Keep my commandments.

### II. Motivation for Obedience

- A. John 14:23 If a man love me.
- B. John 14:24 He that loveth me not.

### III. Teachings of Jesus

- A. Matthew 7:24-27 Wise and foolish man.
- B. Luke 6:46 Why call me Lord, yet disobey?
- C. Matthew 21:28-31 Parable of the two sons.

### IV. Submission and Trust in God

- A. James 4:7 Submit yourselves to God.
- B. Luke 22:41-42 Not my will, but thine.
- C. Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord.

### V. Blessings of Obedience

- A. Exodus 23:22 God will protect.
- B. Isaiah 1:19 Eat the good of the land.
- C. Acts 5:32 Holy Spirit given to the obedient.
- D. John 8:51 Obedient will have eternal life.

### VI. Examples of Obedience

- A. **Jesus:** Philippians 2:8 Obedient unto death.
- B. **Abraham:** Genesis 22:1-18 Willing to sacrifice.
- C. **Paul:** Acts 26:19 Not disobedient to his call.
- D. **Noah:** Genesis 6:14, 22 Did all God commanded.

### VII. Consequences of Disobedience

- A. Deuteronomy 8:20 Disobedient will perish.
- B. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 Vengeance on them that obey not the gospel.
- C. Ephesians 5:5-6 Will not inherit the kingdom.

### VIII. Examples of Disobedience

- A. **Adam and Eve:** Genesis 3:3-6 First sin of disobedience.
- B. **Saul:** 1 Samuel 15: 3-23 To obey is better than sacrifice (v22).
- C. **Disobedient Prophet:** 1 Kings 13:26 Was slain by a lion.
- D. **Jonah:** Jonah 1:1-3 He ran from God.
- E. **Israelites:** Jeremiah 6:16 We will not walk therein.

### IX. Living as Obedient Children

- A. 1 Peter 1:13-14 Be as obedient children.
- B. 1 John 3:24 He that keeps God's commandments, dwells in Him.
- C. Ephesians 2:2 Children of disobedience.

### X. Teaching and Observing Obedience

- A. Matthew 28:19-20 Teach them to observe all things.
- B. 2 Corinthians 2:9 Be obedient in all things.
- C. Acts 5:29 Obey God rather than men.

### XI. Obedience in Action

- A. Romans 6:16 You are servants to whom you obey.
- B. Psalms 119:59-60 David made haste to obey.
- C. Hebrews 2:1-3 Give heed lest we let God's Word slip.

### Conclusion

*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

—1 John 5:3

# A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE

*Choosing God's way for a life of blessing and eternal reward.*



“Obedience is not about fear or bondage—it is the natural fruit of true love for God.”

What does it mean to live a life of obedience? From the beginning, God created mankind as free-willed moral agents. It is the power of choice that gives humanity the capacity to love. Obedience—choosing God’s way above our own—is the evidence and fruit of true love.

## Necessity of Obedience

If we are to serve God and inherit eternal life, we must live lives of obedience to Him. Most people desire to live after their own selfish desires, which are contrary to God’s Word. God provided a wonderful plan through His Son, Jesus Christ, and through the Scripture. As our Creator, God’s plan and purpose for our lives will bring the greatest peace and fulfillment. However, we must deny ourselves, submit, and fully embrace divine instruction and leadership. Are you living in obedience to God’s will for your life?

## First Act of Disobedience

God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. He told Adam and Eve: “Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). God desires a relationship of love with His creation, and it was that tree that gave Adam and Eve the power to choose how they wanted to live life. Before their disobedience, they enjoyed the richness of life as God intended. Thinking they knew better, they disobeyed, which resulted in spiritual and physical death. In the same way, when we stray from God’s plan in disobedience, we distance ourselves from His presence in this life and in the life to come.

## Obedience Is a Mark of True Love

Just as Adam and Eve were given divine commands, so also were the children of Israel. They were instructed to always keep God’s charge, statutes, judgments, and commandments (Deuteronomy 11:1). Jesus said in John 14:15, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Keeping the commandments and following the leadings of the Spirit are imperative for living a Christian life. Many people profess Christ with their mouths, but their actions belie their verbal testimony. Jesus asked, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

## What Motivates You?

Obedience is not about fear or bondage—it is the natural fruit of true love for God. Jesus taught clearly in John 14:23-24 that if someone loves Him, they will keep His words. Those who do not love Him will not keep His sayings. While seemingly basic, this teaching exposes people’s true experience with God.

## The Wise and Foolish Man

Jesus taught that those who heard His teaching and followed it would be like a wise man who built his house on a firm foundation. He likened those who heard the Word and did not obey it to a foolish man who built his house on the sand. When the storms came, it was the wise man’s house that stood firm. It is our choice whether we will be wise or foolish.

## The Challenge of Surrender

Obedience is defined as compliance with instructions and submission to another’s authority. A true Christian is to be in obedience to God’s will. “Submit yourselves therefore to God” (James 4:7). To obey God requires actively surrendering ourselves and elevating His will above our own. Too many professing Christians have not yielded their lives, dreams, and goals to God. While challenging at times, it is through total obedience that we find the greatest peace.

## Trust Leads to Obedience

Proverbs 3:5-6 provides wonderful instruction and lays a proper foundation for obedience. “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” When we learn to trust in the Lord instead of relying on our own understanding, obedience becomes so much easier.

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## Blessings Will Follow

Obedying the Lord brings the blessings of God both in this life and in the life to come. “Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (Luke 11:28). The prophet Isaiah declared: “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land” (Isaiah 1:19). This is not coerced obedience but voluntary obedience motivated by love. Jesus taught His disciples, “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (John 8:51). He was referencing eternal death. If we obey Christ’s teaching, we will gain eternal life and enjoy the blessings of Heaven.



“If we obey Christ’s teaching, we will gain eternal life and enjoy the blessings of Heaven.”

## Examples of Obedience

The Bible is full of inspiring examples of lives lived in obedience. Abraham left his home without knowing where he was going, obeying the call of God. With instant obedience, he rose early in the morning, willing to sacrifice his son to God (Genesis 22:1-18). Paul, called to minister the gospel, declared, “I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19). Noah, despite scorn and defying human logic, did “according to all God commanded” (Genesis 6:22) when he built the ark. That obedience became his salvation, just as it will be ours. Christ Himself “became obedient unto death” (Philippians 2:8). That obedience came at a great cost. He set an example when He prayed, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). Until we can pray that prayer, we will never find the grace to bear our personal cross and achieve a glorious resurrection.

## Consequences of Disobedience

For those who choose not to obey the Lord in all things, there are also consequences. God told the Israelites, “So shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God” (Deuteronomy 8:20). Paul lists some of the deeds of unrighteousness and offers a serious warning: “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:5-6). Disobedience leads to eternal death. Will it be worth living according to the flesh and following our passions only to end up in hell?

## Obedience Better Than Sacrifice

God’s judgment led King Saul to lose his kingship because of disobedience. 1 Samuel 15:1-23 tells the solemn story of Saul being instructed to destroy all the Amalekites’ animals after battle. Saul spared some and offered them as sacrifices to God. When the prophet Samuel arrived, he asked, “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep?” Samuel told Saul, “To obey is better than sacrifice.” God rejected King Saul, just as He will reject those who disobey Him. All excuses, justifications, and even sacrifices mean nothing when there is disobedience.

## Examples of Disobedience

The Scriptures are full of other examples worthy of study: the disobedient prophet in 1 Kings 13 who deviated from God’s instructions and was slain by a lion; and Jonah, who fled from God and ended up in the belly of a fish. Disobedience is not worth the cost.

## Living in Obedience

The Lord calls us to live “as obedient children” (1 Peter 1:14) and to dwell in Him (1 John 3:24) by keeping His commandments. Jesus sent His disciples out with a commission to “Teach all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). Partial obedience falls short. We are to be “obedient in all things” (2 Corinthians 2:9). When pressures and influences encourage wrongdoing, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

## Self-examination

“Whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are” (Romans 6:16). Who are we obeying? Whose servants are we? Let us say “no” to self and submit ourselves to God. Let us, like David, ponder our ways and turn our feet to God’s testimonies. David “made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments” (Psalm 119:59-60). Are we being obedient in all things? If we love God, let us keep His commandments, for “His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). They are the avenue to blessings, peace, and eternal life. ■



## What does Hebrews 5:8 mean when it says Jesus “learned obedience”?

Hebrews 5:8-9 reads: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”

“Learned obedience” does not imply that Jesus was disobedient or that He lacked understanding of obedience. Jesus Christ was perfect spiritually and morally. However, Jesus took on the seed of Abraham and came to this world in the flesh. He experienced temptation, rejection, sorrow, and pain so that he might be a qualified mediator between man and God.

Jesus, as both God and man, demonstrated obedience in action through His human experience. On earth, Jesus obeyed His earthly parents and His heavenly Father. That obedience was not without



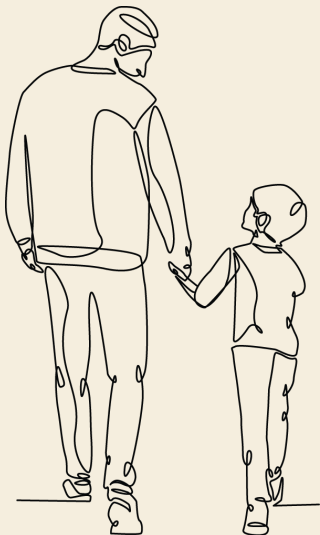
struggle in the flesh. Jesus prayed that if it were possible, the cup of suffering might be removed; yet He submitted as a man in the flesh to the divine will of the Father.

Philippians 2:8 adds to our understanding: “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” It was obedience through experience and practical application.

Jesus submitted Himself to the death of the cross as a perfect sacrifice. His mission as the author of salvation was perfected, or completed, when He died and rose again. In essence, Jesus “learned obedience” by actively living and suffering in the flesh while being perfectly surrendered to God even in death. ■

## Nurturing Godly Obedience

How Obedience to Parents Leads to Obedience to God.



In today’s world, where disobedience and disregard for authority seem pervasive, nurturing godly obedience in children is more crucial than ever. One of the indicators of the last days, as mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:1-2, is children being “disobedient to parents.” This disobedience is often a reflection of broader societal disobedience to God.

Parents play a vital role in shaping their children’s spiritual journey. Ephesians 6:4 urges parents to bring their children up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” This nurturing begins at a young age, teaching children the importance of the word “NO.” When children learn to respect and obey their parents, they develop a foundation for honoring and obeying God.

Honor and obedience must be instilled in the home. A child who learns to respect parental authority finds it easier to honor other authorities, including God. Teaching and discipline should be carried out

with love and consistency, aiming to reinforce right behavior and values.

When a two-year-old disobeys without correction, this behavior can become normalized. Without intervention, the child may continue to disrespect authority figures as they grow older. This defiance can extend to teachers, leaders, law enforcement, and ultimately God Himself.

As parents, it is essential to set clear boundaries and consistently enforce them. Discipline should not be ignored or left to chance. Being consistent, faithful, and loving in expectations and enforcement helps children understand the importance of obedience. Obedience to parents lays the groundwork for a lifetime of honoring God’s authority.

By nurturing obedience from a young age, parents fulfill their divine responsibility, guiding their children toward a life of faith and godly reverence.



## PREACH THE WORD

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HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD



*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. —2 Timothy 4:2*

Paul the apostle charged his spiritual son, Timothy, to preach the Word with courage, conviction, and patience. Why was such an exhortation necessary? What else is there to preach? One can preach opinion, personal conviction, church dogmas, traditions of men, fables, false doctrine, etc. Paul's charge to Timothy resonates with urgency for ministers today. Preach the life-giving Word so that souls can be delivered from the power of sin and live righteous, godly lives. The philosophies of men and legislated doctrines of religion will not bring peace to the soul and will not prepare people for eternity. The wisdom of the world will not answer the deepest needs of the soul.



It is by the foolishness of preaching; it is the preaching of the cross and Christ crucified that will show the path to sincere seekers. If you do not preach the Word, who will? Many share their brand of religion, but few preach the narrow way that frees from bondage and leads to life everlasting.

Paul warned Timothy that a time would come when people would not want to hear sound doctrine and truth. They would seek teachers to preach what is pleasant to the ears and easy on the flesh. They would turn away from truth and label it as a fable. We live in such a time.

There is pressure from within and without to preach what meets personal sensibilities. Some want an easy doctrine preached that requires no self-denial. Some want to hear that one can be accepted by God and yet continue in sin. Some people want to live worldly lives after the flesh and yet have their preacher tell them on Sunday that all is well with their souls. To my fellow gospel workers: "Preach the Word."

While some want to take away from the Word, there are others who want to add to it. Some want to set their personal standards to the level of doctrine. They want to teach for doctrine the commandments of men. They seek to establish their own brand of truth by a spirit of spiritual superiority. To my fellow gospel workers: "Preach the Word."

"Our Father which art in Heaven, would you please divinely empower the ministry with wisdom and discernment. Would you help us stay hidden behind the cross of Christ and preach the pure Word of God without adding to or taking away from it. Grant us grace and strength to remain steadfast and resist the pressures around us. Please help us to be good stewards of the gospel in this dispensation. May we fulfill Paul's charge and faithfully preach the Word, in season and out of season. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen." ■