

**1 John 5:1-5**  
**Abide Through Obedience**

**I. Intro**

**Do you like to obey?**

Well it depends what you are being commanded to do doesn't it?

"I command you to get a massage". No problem. "I command you to go out to dinner and order steak". So, do you like to obey, I like to obey the things I want to obey!

And when it comes to our walk with God...

Is it the same answer? Don't we often times say... well it depends.

I mean some things are tough, like the commands to forgive others, to not hold a grudge, to not just love your neighbor but to love your enemy, to give not just 10% - but sacrificially and do it cheerfully. And all of a sudden we start to question obedience. We start to question God.

In today's passage John makes two bold statements about obedience.

**1 John 5:3....** if we love God we will obey His commands.

And then He says, those commands are not burdensome.

And now the plot gets thicker.... Is that your experience? Do you find that obeying the commands of God are not burdensome? Or do you find yourself picking some and ignoring others, well because some of them are just too hard?

And let's take that one step deeper, if our experience is that God's commands are burdensome, does that mean God is a liar?

What if there was a way to view obedience that would enable us to declare to the world... the world that says it's irrational to obey and follow God.... what if there was a way to say... I know you think I'm crazy but obeying God gives me a rest for my soul that I have found no where else. And so my testimony is that it's easy to obey God.

Here's what we are going to discover today... **when it comes to obedience, you get what you pay for.**

And we'll unpack this idea by

Defining obedience.

Differentiating between obedience to God and obedience to the world.

Cultivating obedience.

**1. The Definition of Obedience**

**Obedience is a willingness to have your will crossed.**

Let's talk about this from a perspective we understand.

Let's unpack the definition obedience using physical things.

When you wake up in the morning, what do you feel? That it is absolutely right to stay in bed. What you will, what you want, is to stay in bed. Many of you felt that way when you woke up this morning.

You don't feel like you want to get up to workout, you don't feel like you need to get ready for work.

But what did everyone do this morning? You crossed your will and said, I'll get up. I will exercise, I will go to church, I will go to work. What are you doing? Crossing your will.

Let's look at this another way... in front of you is a box of Krispy Kreme doughnuts. And everything about what you are feeling is, this is right for me to eat. Doughnuts are a gift from God! I want to eat them! But, what do we do... We cross our will and say, NO! I will only eat salad and kale!

What are you doing? There are things that feel right but you know it leads to the wrong place. And you are obeying some command. Maybe it is from your doctor to eat healthy, maybe you have a personal trainer, whatever it is, maybe it's your own pride, but there is some command that you are obeying to cross your will. Some of us even pay people to give us these commands.

Why? Because to obey is to have your will crossed. And even in the physical world, I will find freedom by following the right restrictions.

**Freedom is not the lack of restrictions, it is in setting the right boundaries.**

Saying no to yourself at particular times will give you freedom in the physical area.

Listen... We all obey something or someone. Every single one of us.

The question becomes whom or what do we obey?

And John suggests there are only two choices.

## **2. Obedience to God vs. Obedience to the World**

### **I John 5:4-5**

You will choose to obey that which is of ultimate value to you.

If you believe that God is the ultimate value, you will obey Him.

John is saying basically anything else... if anything else is your central value, then you are obeying the world, and all of those things are finite, verses the infinite God. Let me explain.

To obey God, is the willingness to let God cross your will.

It's looking at life and saying, I know this feels right, but God you say it's wrong, God - I will let you cross my will. I don't feel like it is wrong, but you say so and therefore you can cross my will. That's obedience to God.

To obey the world, is the willingness to let the world cross your will.

So if money is the most important thing to me. If it brings me security and love. I might see someone in need and instead of helping them I'll cross my will, because I need money to be secure. But here's the problem with giving something finite ultimate value... it won't last. It never lasts.

**Thomas Oden says 'If the thing I'm living for is money or if the thing I'm living for is my children or if the thing I'm living for is the Republican party or the Democratic party, I'm always going to be experiencing anxiety because those finite values cannot last, and so I will always feel threatened.'**

I need you guys to get this, because if you can grasp this it will lead to a radical change in your heart in regard to obedience.

The world says... obey me... and I might give you rest for a moment, I might give you pleasure for a moment, but it can never last. You will have to be on a constant pursuit of it. And what happens when we are on a constant pursuit, we are going to live in constant anxiety.

Or.. God says... come make me the most important value of your life, come follow me... and listen this is what Jesus says:

**Matt 11:28-30.** Did you hear that? Jesus says... you will have rest for your souls. Rest for your souls.

### **Listen, when it comes to obedience, you get what you pay for.**

You can choose to obey the world... and frankly, many of us are choosing that right now... and I bet your life is full of anxiety and guilt. You are on a constant pursuit and repetition of experiences that don't last. We have the what Pat Riley, the basketball coach, calls the **disease of Me**. We live the logic of an addict: I know the last time I did this it didn't fully give me what I wanted, but maybe if I do it one more time, maybe if I obey it one more time it will give me freedom.

Or you can choose to obey God, and the promise of God is I know you so well, I know what's best for you, I love you... and obeying me, will give you rest for your souls.

When it comes to obedience, you get what you pay for. You can buy into the world and get anxiety, the treadmill of life, the disease of me, or you can follow God and get rest for your souls.

Can I ask you? What are you paying into right now? Are you buying into the world's ways, or are you buying into God's?

So how do you know? How do you know if you are obeying the world or obeying God? It comes back to verse 3 – you have to ask where is the burden. If it is a burden to let God cross your will, there is probably something in the world that is more valuable to you than God. So you will pick and choose his commands. But Brian you say... some of God's commands are tough....

**Theologian M. Eaton says “The will of God seems agonizingly difficult ahead of our obedience to it, but when we actually get to doing His will it turns out to be light after all! He carries the load.”**

That last part is the key! He carries the load. How can we discover burdenless, or rather joyful obedience to God? Here's how we cultivate obedience...

### **3. Cultivating Obedience**

#### **I John 5:1-2**

How do we cultivate obedience... we do it because those who believe 'have been born of God'.

Listen... there are two utterly different approaches of obedience to God. Do you know what they are?

Obey and you will be saved or you are saved you now obey. Two approaches:

**I'm adopted because I obey, or I obey because I'm adopted.**

**I'm accepted by God because I obey, or I obey because I'm accepted.**

Friends, this right here is the key! If you say I'm accepted because I obey then following God will be a burden. You will always feel the weight of having to live up to something you don't want to do.

But, if you say, I obey because I'm loved it leads to transformation. Love is the greatest motivator. It's how God designed us. And God says, you don't have to prove yourself to be loved. In the depth of your disobedience, I'll send you son for you, He'll take your place. That's how much I love you.

That's what it means to be adopted. That's why Jesus can promise rest! There's no proving there's no working, there's fixing... Friends, whatever is bugging you, whatever is bothering you, whatever is draining you, whatever is making you unbelievably tired in your soul today is because you're obeying something besides Jesus, *period*.

And friends, when that love sinks in... allowing Him to cross your will is not a burden... it's a joy. It may not always be easy but crossing my will it isn't easy. But remember, I get what I pay for...

I would encourage you this week to engage with you community group and how we cultivate burdenless obedience. But let me add one thought...

### **Cultivate obedience Privately.**

Spending time with God is paramount to obedience.

Jay, in preaching co-hort was telling us about how when he was training his dog they did this exercise where the trainer was in the middle with the dog. Another trainer was on one side with a treat and Jay was on the other side with nothing. And they were trying to train the dog to believe that Jay's voice was better than the treat.

Isn't that a picture of our lives? We choose the treat so fast! But the treat offers no love. But when as we learn to listen to the voice of God... we don't just find love, we find that we have been loved to the greatest depth we could ever be loved. So this week, can I invite you to take 5 minutes a day to pray. To invite God to remind you of His love. To remind you you're his child. And then I want to invite you to pray this transformational prayer with me... **'Help me God, to allow You to cross my will.'**

### **III. Conclusion**

Do you like to obey? The invitation today is to cultivate a life where we allow God to cross our will because it's in our relationship with God we find what we all desperate want... love and rest for our souls.

Let's pray.... can I invite you to be honest with God here for a moment... God knows where you are at... Maybe today you feel victory because you obeyed this week in response to God's love. Thank God for that.

Maybe today you feel a pull. A pull towards something else. You are not sure what it is, but you feel a tension in obeying God. Hear Him say over you today... come to me, come to me and find rest.

Or maybe today, right now you are broken. For the last 30 minutes you couldn't stop thinking about that thing you are doing that you know is defying God. Can you hear this invitation? Come to me... my burden is light. There's rest here, it might not feel like it at first, but there's rest here.... Come and find rest.

### **IV. Communion**

I want to invite you to come join us at the Lord's table. We celebrate this table because this is the table that reminds us how deeply loved we are. That you don't need to bring anything to this table. In fact, we find at this table that when we put our faith in Christ... the principle becomes you get what has been paid for! Jesus paid it all... so you could have rest for your souls. When you are ready, take the cracker which represents Jesus' perfect obedient life, and dip it in the juice which represents Jesus' sacrificial death and find rest my friends. Find rest.

### **V. Benediction**

When you live, obey in strength and humility from the Lord.

When you rest, rest in the sovereign grace of God, our Father.

And when you celebrate, celebrate as a people with the greatest reason for love, joy, and celebration.

Now, let us go in the love and rest of our Savior, in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.