

# OBEDIENCE AND TRUST

*“And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ... Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them.” —1 JOHN 3:23-24*

Faith in God enables Him to work in us and through us, but what is needed on our part to constitute faith so that His working becomes experiential in our lives? There are two vital ingredients we need to have in place: obedience to what God says and trust in who He is.

These two ingredients must be understood separately, yet never detached from one another. Obedience to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ without a corresponding trust in Him as our source of strength and ability, which the commands require, will only lead to frustration and temptation to hypocrisy. If we take the teaching and commands of Jesus seriously without an understanding of His role in their fulfillment, we can only become discouraged and disillusioned. His commands are humanly impossible. This is why Christendom is such a fertile field for hypocrisy and pretense, because people try desperately to obey the commands, but without drawing on the resources of Christ's enabling to fulfill them.

On the other hand, to be trusting Christ without a willing and active obedience will lead us into a realm of mysticism that has been known since the 17th century as 'quietism'. Quietism, as the name suggests, is a quiet, passive, wholly subjective resting in God, doing only what one feels constrained and moved by the Holy Spirit to do.

The Christian life is not a passive life, but involves active participation in God's agenda whereby we become the means of bringing benefit and blessing to others.

Both positions are unhealthy and fall short of what it means to live by faith. Obedience is an issue at the basis of all genuine Christian experience. The Christian life begins with surrender to and the acknowledgment of the authority of Christ as Lord over our lives. The initial surrender must be followed by active obedience to the general instruction of Scripture and the particular direction of God over our personal lives.

God's power is available only for God's purposes, and our experience of the power and sufficiency of God in our lives will only be in the context of obedience and trust. Like two wings on an aircraft, one will not function without the other. The foundation of a life of faith is obedience. Move outside of that and we move outside of the resources of God.

***PRAYER: Dear Father, I want to experience more of You, and pray for a deeper work of your Spirit in me. Help me in the obedience areas, Lord, and to become more dependent on your enabling. Thank You, Lord.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Does my faith reflect obedience to Christ and trust in who He is?***