THE IDENTIFYING MARKS OF A CHRISTIAN

Part 4 - OBEDIENCE

I. What Is Obedience?

A. Submission to the will of another

B. Prerequisites for obedience

1. Acknowledge the rights of the authority
2. Learn the requirements of the authority
3. Embrace the desires of the authority

C. Authority includes both:

1. Restraint - what not to do
2. Command - what to do

"To obey is better than sacrifice." - 1 Samuel 15:22

II. Obedience and Spiritual Maturity

A. Our relationship with authority changes as we mature

1. Teen years - pushing against limits
2. Early adulthood - experiencing freedom
3. Adulthood - learning to willingly embrace proper authority

B. Spiritual maturity means recognizing that God has our best interests at heart

C. God is a loving Father who can be trusted

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." - 1 John 5:3

III. Obedience to the Word(s) of God

A. The clear teachings of Scripture

1. Commands of God
2. Prohibitions of God
3. Teachings of Jesus
4. Biblical apostolic teachings

B. The Old Testament

1. Moral Law
2. Civil Law
3. Ceremonial Law

C. The New Testament

1. Teachings of Jesus
2. Model of Jesus

3. Writings of His followers

D. We are not saved by keeping the Law

E. We are saved by faith in Christ, who fulfilled the Law on our behalf

F. Grace does not make obedience irrelevant

G. God is not looking for legalistic obedience, but obedience flowing from a loving relationship with Jesus

IV. Personal Obedience to the “Word” from God

A. Active submission to Jesus

1. Hearing His voice
2. Surrendering to His will
3. Acting to accomplish His will

B. Hearing - relational and spiritual

1. Motivated by love and gratitude
2. Requires humility
3. Begins with a genuine relationship with God through Christ

C. Surrender - recognizing His rightful authority as Lord

1. Forsaking our personal agenda
2. Willingly doing His will

D. Response - Lordship in every moment and circumstance

1. Every decision reflects our relationship with Him
2. Partial obedience is disobedience
3. Delayed obedience is disobedience
4. Obedience requires immediate and complete compliance

V. Obedience: An Identifying Mark

A. Submit to the will of God

B. Embrace the heart of God

C. Examine our own lives:

1. Am I doing something I know is contrary to God's will?
2. Am I failing to do something God has told me to do?
3. Have I settled that following God is ultimately in my best interest?
4. What worldly things am I choosing over God's desires for my life?

"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" - Luke 6:46