



## LIFE WITH GOD: Obedience

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READ Acts 5:17-32.

Think about what it means to be “true.” You might think of aiming a weapon, like a bow and arrow. If it is true then it will shoot straight—accurately and consistently. We also think of being true to ourselves, which often means not trying to fit in, but being who you naturally are. There’s no right or wrong way to do that, just be you!

Of course there can be problems with both of these examples. How do we know what true is? We need to measure it against something. Consider lumber for building a house. If you’ve ever used a 2x4, then you might have noticed that it’s not actually 2 inches by 4 inches—it’s smaller! Over the years, for many reasons, the boards have changed. They aren’t true 2x4s, they are nominal 2x4s. We know this because we can measure them.

### 1. What does being “true” mean to you?

God is our standard. The word for aligning ourselves to his standard is: obedience.

Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must **obey** God rather than human beings!” (Acts 5:29), then he also said, “We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who **obey** him” (Acts 5:32). Notice the word “obey” in those statements.

Most of us don’t like the word obey very much. We don’t like being told what to do. In fact, when we are told what to do, sometimes it makes us want to do it more! Anyone relate to that?

Think about how it works in relationships. Obedience is a good starting point, but if people do just the minimum it doesn’t feel very good. If a husband just did the minimum that his wife asked that’s not as good as doing things out of love for each other. As a parent we like it when our children obey, but we’d rather them do things out of love because they know we want the best for them.

### 2. How does it feel when someone just does the bare minimum in a relationship?

When we come to Jesus, we invite him to be our Lord and Savior. He becomes our King. That means that we are his servants, and we desire to obey him. It may sound harsh, but you can’t make Jesus Lord of your life and keep doing everything that you want to do! When we turn to follow Jesus, we leave our ways behind.

If you are trying to follow Jesus, but having trouble with obedience there are two main issues. First, God knows what’s best. He created us and he really knows what is best for us. Our ways will

often get us in trouble or keep us from experiencing the best life that God created us for. The issue on the flip side of this is that it shows that we don't really trust God. We still think that we know what's best. Perhaps we are afraid to obey God because we aren't sure how things will turn out.

One of the main roadblock's to obedience is the fear of man. It's another way of saying "people pleasing." Remember that Peter said they had to obey God and not men. Even he could feel the pressure between what people wanted him to do verses God.

Proverbs 29:25 says, "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe" (Proverbs 29:25). In other words, our obedience reveals who we are trusting in! If we obey the Lord, it shows that we are trusting in the Lord.

**3. What was a time when other people's opinions have affected your decisions? How did it turn out?**

Here's another verse that might be helpful from Mark 8:15, "'Be careful,' Jesus warned them. 'Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.'" What is the yeast of Herod? People pleasing! Herod represents the political spirit- the power that comes from persuading people and doing what is popular. We see this when Pilate allowed Jesus to be crucified even though he said "I find no fault in him" (Luke 23:4). Pilate was doing what men wanted rather than God. Jesus said watch out for this. Stay away! Don't just do what is popular.

**4. What were some other times in the Bible when following the crowd wasn't a good idea?**

When we are kids, rules to obey are important. It helps us stay safe and learn before we can understand why the rules are there. As we grow in our obedience we learn to not just obey because of the rules, but we obey because of love. Think about this statement: "Mature obedience is less about God telling you everything to do and more about aligning your life to your new identity in Jesus."

God doesn't tell us everything we need to do in a day. Instead, he wants us to grow in him and understand his ways. He has given us a new identity. Obeying God is acting like our true selves in Jesus! Aligning ourselves with him and what he says about us!

To know what he says, we must look at Scripture first of all. The Bible is our guidebook to understanding the ways of God. Then, we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us interpret what the Bible says and how to apply it to our lives. Finally, we follow peace. God will help us discern what to do and when we need to adjust course.

In the end, obedience is a heart position. It's a position of submitting ourselves to God and continually attempting to follow his leading in our lives. Then, like the Apostles, God can use us to do mighty things as he blesses the world through our obedience to him.

**5. How can you grow in your obedience to God? What are your roadblocks?**