

Obedience

BTH - 101

International College of Bible Theology

ARE YOU BORN AGAIN?

Knowing in your heart that you are born-again, and followed by a statement of faith are the two prerequisites to studying and getting the most out of your ICBT materials. We at ICBT have developed this material to educate each Believer in the principles of God. Our goal is to provide each Believer with an avenue to enrich their personal lives and bring them closer to God.

Is Jesus your Lord and Savior? If you have not accepted Him as such, you must be aware of what Romans 3:23 tells you.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:

How do you go about it? **You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.**

I John 5:13 gives an example in which to base your faith.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

What if you are just not sure? **Romans 10:9-10 gives you the Scriptural mandate for becoming born-again.**

⁹That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto Salvation.

Take some time to consider this very carefully. Ask Jesus to come into your heart so that you will know the power of His Salvation and make your statement of faith today.

Once you become born-again, it is your responsibility to renew your mind with the Word of God. Romans 12:1-2 tells us that transformation of the mind can only take place in this temporal world by the Word of God.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The Apostle Paul, giving instructions to his “son” Timothy states in 2 Timothy 2:15:

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

What happens if we do these things? Ephesians 4:12-13 gives us the answer to this question.

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

By studying the Word of God, you will be equipped for service in the Kingdom of God and you will also be ready to take the position in the Body of Christ to which God has appointed you. You will be able to walk in unity with other Believers and you will be a vessel of honor to God that can rightly divide the word of truth.

If you are not saved and you do not know what to say, consider this simple prayer.

Lord, I know that I have need of a savior. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and the God raised Him from the dead three days later. I ask to be forgiven and for Jesus to come into my heart and be the Lord of my life. I believe now by faith that God has heard my prayer and I am born- again.

If you have prayed this prayer, you must accept by faith that your sins have been forgiven. It is important that you tell someone of your decision to accept the Lord. Also, it is our recommendation that you should attach yourself to a local church and undergo water baptism.

For those who have prayed this prayer with sincerity of heart, we welcome to eternal life in the Kingdom of God. May the blessings of God overtake you.

May God grant you wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in all of His ways.

ICBT Directors and Staff

THE VISION

As we have been commissioned by the prophet of old, we now set our hand to write the vision of International College of Bible Theology, so that: **"He that runs may read it, the vision having been clearly written and made plain" Habakkuk 2:2.**

- 1) **UNITY** - To build up the Body of Christ by networking with all churches, as well as with local and international ministries. This networking is to provide seasoned leadership ministries to the small local church, to encourage unity and fellowship among Pastors, church leadership and para-church groups through active service.
- 2) **GOSPEL** - To go with the lifeline of the Gospel, to educate with love, integrity, and without compromise.
- 3) **ONE CROSS FOR ALL** - To cross the cultural, racial, and denominational lines for unity, fellowship, networking, and progress. To have an open door through I.C.B.T to all who desire to join with us in a common goal and for the highest good. To proclaim one cross for all cultures, races, denominations, and peoples.
- 4) **GO YE** - To go wherever there is a need, to rich or poor, to majorities or minorities, to large or small churches, to free or bound: to go where many fail to go and to meet the needs before us.
- 5) **THE CALLED** - To make available opportunities to those called to minister and to expand their horizons through new associations and experiences. To aid new and/or younger ministers fulfilling God's call on their lives.
- 6) **EDUCATION** - God has charged us with propagating the Gospel through education to whosoever will. This education is through foundational schools that teach the basics of Christianity as well as correspondence schooling for those seeking more in-depth levels in Christian teachings.
- 7) **APPLICATION** - To bring opportunity to students by making available to them teachings and information for practical application and beyond traditional confines.
- 8) **DREAM A DREAM** - To cause each person we associate with to catch a vision, to dream yet another dream, and to keep their eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith.
- 9) **THE CALL** - To encourage each person to move out of their comfort zone, to be all they can be for Christ and to fulfill that call upon their life, to encourage each one to pursue his purpose, live up to his potential, and produce the fruit of the Spirit.

International College of Bible Theology

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth"
II Timothy 2:15

Administrative & Curriculum Office
P.O. Box 339
Norris City, Illinois 62869
Phone: 618-378-3821 - Fax: 618-378-2101

Obedience

THERE ARE:

73 pages of Commentary
6 Homework assignments
6 Quiz assignments
1 Midterm
1 Final Exam
30 pages of Answer Keys for school sites only (Answer keys are not included in the student's copy of material).

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the Commentary.

Do Homework I, which covers pages 8 - 16 in the Commentary.
Do Quiz 1, which covers Homework I.
Do Homework II, which covers pages 16-26 in the Commentary
Do Quiz 2, which covers Homework II.
Do Homework III, which covers pages 26-34 in the Commentary.
Do Quiz 3, which covers Homework III.
Take Midterm Exam, which covers Homework I-III.
Do Homework IV, which covers pages 34-48 in the Commentary.
Do Quiz 4, which covers Homework IV
Do Homework V, which covers pages 48-52 in the Commentary.
Do Quiz 5, which covers Homework V
Do Homework VI, which covers pages 53-73 in the Commentary.
Do Quiz 6, which covers Homework VI
Take Final Exam, which covers Homework IV - VI.

13 weeks in a Trimester: 11 weeks of teaching and 2 weeks of testing. You will need to cover 6.5 pages per teaching session.

18 weeks in a Semester: 16 weeks of teaching and 2 weeks of testing. You will need to cover 4.4 pages per teaching session.

NOTE: The Instructor is encouraged to add his/her personality to the teaching sessions and to add knowledge to the Commentaries. The Instructor had some latitude if they desire to give some outside homework or essays. Before doing so, please check with the administrator of the school.

ALL TERM PAPERS MUST BE COMPLETED AND TURNED IN TO THE INSTRUCTOR BEFORE THE FINAL EXAM. NO GRADES WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE COURSE WITHOUT THE COMPLETION OF THE TERM PAPER.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	PREFACE & INTRODUCTION	8
II.	ORIGINAL OBEDIENCE	11
III.	THE LINEAGE OF OBEDIENCE	13
IV.	OLD TESTAMENT MEN/WOMEN OF OBEDIENCE	16
V.	CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE	26
VI.	SAUL, A DISOBEDIENT KING	34
VII.	LOVING OBEDIENCE	36
VIII.	A DETAILED LOOK AT OBEDIENCE	42
IX.	A CLOSER LOOK AT DISOBEDIENCE	46
X.	THE STORY OF JONAH	48
XI.	ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND	52
XII.	BROKENNESS	53
XIII.	OBEDIENCE IN CONCLUSION	65

PREFACE...OBEDIENCE

There is much to consider when one thinks about obedience. Obey, obedient, and obedience go against the nature of man. It is not natural for man to live a life for someone else. Obedience is a subject in today's world that is not very popular, but is required of the Believer in order to function in the nature of God.

It seems that people can talk about anything as long as it does not involve following a set of laws, rules, and regulations. In the past, obedience was almost always, "Don't do this!" and "Don't do that!" Many times a set of rules or regulations are not necessarily in line with the Word of God, but may have to do with the "do's" and "don'ts" of tradition. Obedience is the underlying theme of the entire Bible. Is this subject important to the body of Christ today? Yes! Salvation is not possible without obedience.

As far back as the Garden and before obedience was required by God. Obedience goes even further than carrying out orders, commands, or wishes of another person. In order for obedience to be of value in God's Kingdom, a person's obedience must be accompanied by a willing heart and a "proper attitude."

Many times children or adults obey commands, orders, or wishes of another person, but do so with a poor attitude or grudging spirit. Not only do people react grudgingly toward other people, but also toward God.

In the book of Exodus, God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness. Moses obeyed "willingly". God also told Moses that the children of Israel should contribute to the building of the tabernacle. The condition for contributing is found in Exodus 35, especially verses 5, 10, 21-23, 25-26, and 29.

The following Scriptures speak of willingness, which should be considered when one decides to obey God.

1 Chronicles 28:9

Psalms 110:3

Matthew 26:41, 42

1 Timothy 6:18

1 Chronicles 29:19

Isaiah 1:19

2 Corinthians 8:12

2 Peter 3:9

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: (Is.1: 19).

In this verse, it requires consent of the person to eat of the good of the land. It means to be of one mind, to agree. An agreement of the mind is required to what is proposed or stated. A yielding of the mind or will to that which is purposed. The same word is used in 1 Corinthians 7: 5 which has to do with agreement, to be of one accord of mind, unity of opinion. In the verb form, it literally means to think with another. In Acts chapter 8 we see this as Saul was consenting unto Stephen's death (Ac.8: 1).

A prime example of disobedience is King Saul, I Samuel 15. Notice what Samuel tells Saul in verses 16-29. Pay close attention to verses 19, 22, and 23. Notice Saul's reply in verses 20 and 21.

We as Believers need to realize that God allows us to make choices and decisions. A decision to obey without a spiritual decision to humbly surrender one's will is worthless.

Obedience is better than any outside acts of worship. There are not enough acts, works, services that we could perform that could take the place of obedience.

Believers are to be a pure channel for God's authority on the earth. The authority will not flow unless the vessel is willing and obedient. Read carefully the words of the prophet Isaiah (Is.1:17-19).

"Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Deuteronomy 28: 1, the chapter which contains all the blessings the Covenant people could expect if they did as God said, says they have to be willing or to act willingly. This engages the heart with the free will of man. It means to be without reluctance, cheerfully.

Consider your decisions. Your decisions have power and they have an outcome, whether it be for good or for evil. Shape your destiny for eternity today. Make a willing decision to surrender totally to Jesus Christ.

I. Introduction

From the very beginning of God's desired relationship with His beloved man, He has anchored that relationship on the fragile and powerful act of obedience. Life and death are determined through one's obedience.

Obedience is a subject in today's world that is not very popular, maybe because in the past, "obedience" carried a negative connotation. And in that context, obedience was used more often than not to indicate an adherence to a set of rules and regulations. When you actually begin to study the subject, obedience is the whole underlying principle of the Word of God. How pertinent this subject is to The Church today!

You cannot receive Salvation without obedience. You have to obey God and come in line with His Word in order to accept Christ as your Savior.

In Genesis we see obedience and disobedience through God's perspective as Adam's sons came to worship God. Abel conformed to God's laws and brought the proper animal sacrifice as he was supposed to according to God's instructions. But Cain wanted to come to God in his own way. He wanted to be recognized and approved by God, only he wanted to bring the sacrifice his way, not God's way, and yet still receive the blessings of God!

So Cain, being a farmer, brought the work of his own hands, the fruits of the ground, and offered them on the altar. God refused his sacrifice. Why? Because God had, from the beginning, told man how to please Him and thereby to receive from Him. So Cain's own disobedience made receiving from God absolutely impossible.

You will notice in the Old Testament, no one ever got into trouble until they disobeyed the laws of God. The same was true in the New Testament. And today, we do not get into trouble unless we disobey the Word of God. Of course you realize that God's Word is His Law. Therefore, simply stated, the underlying theme of the Word of God is obedience without negotiations.

Many people have trouble with this. They say, for example, that they cannot keep the Ten Commandments. But really we do not have to worry about the Ten Commandments if we will just remember one commandment: "Obey what God says!"

God is the Creator of all things. He is the only one who can set into motion the laws of His Word, and we have no right or authority to negotiate with Him when it comes to those laws. God is the final authority.

Usually people who are having difficulty lining up with God's Word are those who did not really want to obey God in the first place. They wanted to find a compromise, a loophole, in the Word of God. But God is not a God of compromise with respect to His own Word. With God it is "yea and amen."

God has been specific in His Word so that we would have a clear-cut path or highway to follow; one in which there would be no confusion. The road signs in God's Word are not confusing, but straightforward. Furthermore, they will always lead us to victory, and eventually to heaven. Simply put, those road signs state, "Obey God, obey His Word!"

Obedience, lining up with God in His Word, is not a popular subject in this day and age, but is vital to the Body of Christ. Therefore, it is something we need to look at more carefully.

As a Scriptural setting, turn to 1 Samuel 15:1, "Samuel also said unto Saul, the Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel; so therefore HEARKEN thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord." Samuel is telling Saul to listen carefully to what God is saying and then be sure to do it! That is what hearken means.

The very life, death, and resurrection of Jesus were all about His obedience to the Heavenly Father. Obedience precedes everything man does. Obedience is involved in every decision about who we want to influence our life.

The dictionary states clearly that obedience is the due and willing submission to authority or control. It implies an eager, dutiful, attentive and yielding compliance to the desires and commands of God. By viewing the entire Bible, you will realize that every word is God's instruction on this subject. Obedience is of great spiritual importance.

In essence, the time man spends on this earth is short. It is a test of choosing an eternal relationship through obedience to God. God is obedient to His own Word. Life for us becomes very abundant when we too, are obedient to the Word, to the One who became flesh in obedience. Even though God stresses in both the Old and New Testaments the importance of sacrifice in our walk with Him, He himself made the ultimate sacrifice. He tells us in 1 Samuel 15:22 that "obedience is even better than sacrifice."

We trust that this course, in the spiritually vital subject of obedience, will edify and enlarge you in your obedient walk with the Lord. Consider this as you study, disobedience to our God is obedience to His enemy. Further, obedience to God is an absolute requirement to a person becoming anything for God. Enjoy drawing nearer to God through obedience and all the wonderful benefits that follow. Romans 6:16 tells us "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness."

II. ORIGINAL OBEDIENCE

A. Obedience in Creation

With God, obedience precedes all in the creation. Obedience to God is required or a prerequisite to becoming anything for God. God said "Let there be light" and so it happened as an obedient act to the Word by faith. In Genesis 1, notice all that "God said" and "God called". God set the example of obedience in the creation by responding to His own commands, obediently. We must keep in mind that obedience goes against the nature of man. Obedience is required of the Believer in order to function in the nature of God. Acts 4: 17-20 tells us that we are to obey God rather than man, and this would include ourselves. A man-pleaser will always find it difficult to obey God. Often in society there is a threat to

the Believer as to whom they will obey. When we are threatened, who will we obey?

B. Willing Obedience

God created man in His image to have a loving relationship with Himself; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God placed a key to willing partnership in the act of obedience to the Word of God. Both parties, God and man, must be true to the Word for the relationship to blossom. God is obedient to His Word (Ge.2:15-17). Through obedience God provides a loving and willing commitment. Either party is free to disobey. He is eternally obedient to what He has already said. Man chooses to disobey and cuts himself away from the beautiful relationship. God chooses to remain true to what the Word says and He does not change.

Thus, when man chooses to walk away, there is a separation and Satan enters man's life as a deadly alternative or option. John 14: 15 says, "If" you love me, keep my commandments. Our obedience is then a test of whether we love Him or not.

In order for obedience to be of value in God's Kingdom, a person's obedience must be accompanied by a willing heart and an appropriate attitude.

C. Togetherness in Obedience

The Old Testament is filled with God's desire for and beckoning to man to repent. God wants fellowship with man, desiring for man to turn back into the warmth and comfort of a relationship in God's Word. The spoken destiny and purpose for every man is a relationship with the Father in a spirit of obedient love.

We know that God draws man back into togetherness in obedience to Him. Christ, the last Adam, came to re-establish an obedient relationship and He did so in perfection. As He was perfectly obedient, even the winds and seas obeyed Him (Mt.8:27).

D. Birth of Disobedience

The birth of disobedience came before the creation of Adam, in Lucifer (Ezk.28:13-16). Notice especially verse 17, where it says that Lucifer's heart was proud and lifted up because of his "beauty" and it caused a corruption of his wisdom. Though sin had already come about, original obedience preceded the original sin of Adam. First came God's perfection in all things, and then came the enemy with deception, imperfection, perversion, and counterfeiting; all intended to destroy obedience to God's Word.

Even disobedience is used by God to provide the platform of choice of spiritual relationship. God lovingly allows His children to choose His company and all it brings to life. Believers need to realize that God allows us to make choices and decisions.

A decision to obey without a spiritual decision is worthless. Satan's counterpart to obedience is disobedience. Disobedience is as bad, as obedience is good. In fact disobedience and rebellion have the same source, Satan. The end result of disobedience is spiritual death.

Let us look at the example of Cain and Abel. Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam. When they came to worship God, Abel conformed to God's laws, though Cain did not. God refused Cain's sacrifice, it being from the fruit of the ground rather than an animal sacrifice. God told man from the beginning how to please Him! When we please God we receive from God. When we refuse to obey God in what He tells us to do, we do not please Him (no faith being present), and so we cannot receive from Him.

Cain's sacrifice was rejected. He developed anger which is an attitude over doing wrong. He was in the wrong, but did not like it to be called on the disobedience. Correction came from God, but Cain did not receive it. There was no repentance.

We are not to try to negotiate with Him when it comes to His laws. It seems that people always want to find a compromise, a loop hole in the Word of God. God is specific in His Word. If we follow His Word, it is straight forward and without confusion. It will lead us to victory.

III. THE LINEAGE OF OBEDIENCE

A. Lucifer's Challenge

Ezekiel 28:12-19 describes Satan as the ruler of Tyre (also Tyrus in some Bibles), and as the god of this world. He is described as having been a visitor to the Garden of Eden and is referred to as a blameless creature in all his ways until wickedness was found in him. Because of his sinful pride, Satan was driven out from the mount of God

B. Adam's Obedience

Adam before falling away in disobedience enjoyed a wonderful, eternal existence in the garden with God, naked and void of all shame (Ge.2:18-25). Original sin is rebelliousness toward the rules. Sin is disobedience, not the result of disobedience. Adam's sin was choosing to disobey, not the following act of eating of the forbidden tree. Sin and disobedience are synonymous. (See the

consequence of disobedience in Genesis 3:8-24). Through his disobedience, Adam paid a price in being removed from the Garden of Eden. Disobedience followed him through life and Adam paid an even higher price when Cain slew his brother, Abel (Ge.4:1-8).

To walk in obedience to God is to follow the Lord whole-heartedly (Jo.4: 14). What Caleb wanted as his inheritance is what he received because of obedience.

Adam was not spiritually arrogant or boastful about his relationship with God before his disobedience. Adam did not hold to what God had described as the key and vital aspect of their close relationship (Ge.2:17). Adam did not see the result of rebellion against God. We have, and are yet disobedient.

God created a hierarchy of angels to serve and worship Him. But, even the angels chose to disobey. One-third of them chose Lucifer's rebellion and are damned with him to the lake of fire by God. An obedient heart can be found in every generation from the beginning. Adam started out in obedience.

C. Abel's Obedience

Abel's obedience and pleasure with God is attacked by disobedience which continues its evil work in the generations of man. Abel obeyed in his giving and worship.

God pictures sin as a tempting force or power that is like a wild beast, ready to attack and devour us. God gives human beings the capacity to overcome and resist sin by submitting to His Word through grace. It is our choice whether we yield to sin or not.

D. Generations of Obedience

Obedience to the voice of the Lord passed from Adam to the following generations (Ge.4:25-26). Adam and Eve had another son, Seth, who was obedient and the second generation. On the other hand, Cain continued to live in disobedience. Thus, two fundamentally different family groups were developing on earth - the godly and the ungodly.

E. Enoch's Walk

Enoch undoubtedly walked with God, following His instruction and His Word. He lived by faith in God, trusted in His Word and promises and made every effort to live a holy life. He embraced God's ways (even as a Gentile), while standing firm against his generation's ungodliness (Jude 14-15). Enoch's obedient relationship with God earned him translation (Ge.5:19-24).

F. Noah Obeys

Amidst the widespread wickedness and evil, God found in Noah a man who still sought communion with Him. Noah was found to be righteous in God's eyes. Noah was a righteous, God-fearing man, set against popular opinion and conduct. Because of Noah's obedience, God established a covenant with him. God promised to save him and his family when judgments would be poured out over the earth.

Noah heard and was strictly obedient in his heart to God's directions (Ge.6:8-8:22). Notice the fruit of obedience to God (Ge.chp.9).

G. The Tower

The sin of the people in the land of Shinar was the desire to dominate the world. They were declaring their own destiny, apart from God, through man-centered organizational unity and power. Their purpose was based on pride and rebellion against God. God destroyed this effort by multiplying languages so that some could no longer communicate with others. As mankind falls further into disobedience, they fall further from God and His blessings.

Satan manipulates mankind into the worldly tower of sin, disobedience, and rebellion toward the Word of God. God deals directly with disobedience as He is bound to do by His own Word (Ge.11:1-9).

H. Today's Believer

Obedience lives by and proclaims the Word of God to the entire world through the Believer today. Christ made Satan obey His authority and passed that authority to the children of obedience. Thus, the lineage of obedience has passed from the Garden of Eden through all generations to the One who was sent by God to complete the law of obedience of Moses by fulfilling that law and inscribed the law of love and obedience upon the hearts of Believers. The Spirit of God now lives in the Believer anointing and empowering the working of the Word of God through an obedient heart (Ge.3:14-15; Mt.28:18-19).

IV. OLD TESTAMENT MEN/WOMEN OF OBEDIENCE

A. Abraham

Abram was initiated into faith directly by God. Abram responded by faith, in obedience. Obedience does not work without faith (cannot be applied by law). Obedience proceeds from faith. Abraham obeyed God's promises. We are the

heirs of those promises (Ge.12:1-5). Verse 4 says it all, "so Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken..." Abraham received instruction from God and he obeyed.

Genesis 22:18 tells us that because of Abraham's sincere, heartfelt obedience, demonstrated by his willingness to sacrifice his son, Abraham was told that God would continue His covenant promise with him. Abraham's offspring would be blessed because of his obedience to God. Abraham's greatness as the earthly father of a great people and of their faith was a product of his obedience to God.

B. Isaac

Isaac was born out of obedience to what God said, in spite of the appearance of overwhelming impossibility. Disobedience had caused the birth of Ishmael, but God called Abraham back to an obedient relationship. Abraham was an example of obedience to his seed, Genesis 21:4. Unity of obedience and faith are tested in the father, Abraham, and his son (Ge.26:1-12).

Obedience brings joy, peace, rest, contentment and a knowing that you are in the center of God's will for your life. Sarah and Abraham experienced this joy when they received Isaac from God.

We have a choice. We can either give birth to obedience or we can give birth to disobedience. Which one do you think is easier? Consider the trust that was related to Isaac's obedience to his father. God continued to bless Isaac, through Abraham's obedience, which brought favor upon Isaac.

Isaac, like his father, had learned to live by God's promises and was obedient. However, it was his father's obedience that caused his blessings from God. As parents, we can have an effect on our children's blessing. In Genesis we see that Isaac's blessings were a direct result of Abraham's obedience (Ge.26:1-6). The Lord had told him to stay in the land in spite of the famine. He did and God took care of him. So we can do, when we are in a place where it does not look good. God knows how to turn it around and make it good.

Isaac trusted his father and trusted in God. Trust has to be present in order for obedience to come forth. Isaac trusted his father with his life. Trust includes faith and belief. Isaac trusted Abraham and Abraham trusted God.

We can see from Abraham and Isaac's example that obedience will be tested often, just like our faithfulness.

C. Jacob

God's prophecy to Jacob's mother and their obedience to that word continued the lineage of obedience to what God said. Isaac and Rebekah had prayed about their lack of children. The Lord promised Isaac's prayer would be fulfilled and Rebekah became pregnant. God gave them a double portion, as she was pregnant with twins.

She went to the Lord in prayer because the babies jostled each other within the womb. The Lord revealed to her the cause of the jostling and what it meant (Ge.25:20-23). Even today, these two nations, the Edomites and the Israelites, are at war with each other.

Jacob was on his way to Haran when he stopped for the evening to get some rest. He had a dream and God promised to bless Jacob and his descendants and multiply them. Jacob obeyed Isaac and left the land where his brother lived to find a wife (Ge.28:1-4). God reaffirmed the promise He made to Abraham that his seed would be blessed because of his obedience (Ge.28:12-15).

God shows Jacob the promise that will come to pass through obedience, (Ge.28:13-22). Notice verse seven, Jacob built an altar as a sign of his intended obedience (Ge.28:18-22). Jacob wrestled with obedience and was victorious (Ge.32:6-32). Sometimes we have to wrestle with obedience to do what is right. The enemy will try to lead you astray down the path of death and destruction.

D. Joseph

Joseph was the first seed of Abraham through his father, Jacob and his mother, Rachel (Ge.35:24). Joseph's obedience was tested often. He was obedient to the dream from God in spite of tremendous family pressure and attacks of disobedience to the dream (Ge.chp.37). This section of Scripture also highlights Joseph's loyalty toward God and the many ways by which God protected him.

Joseph was obedient to the law despite Potiphar's wife's attempt to cause him to disobey (Ge.chp.39). This was loyalty to his master and obedience to the charge of taking care of the household. Joseph's obedience was an example of the one to come in perfect obedience (a picture of Christ) and the chief jailer (Satan) (Ge.39:21-23).

Joseph was steadfast in his ways and beliefs. He was used of God, in spite of his brothers' jealousy and hatred. God was able to use Joseph beyond the natural circumstances. God honored Joseph for his obedience.

In Genesis chapter 50 we can see that Joseph had the right attitude when he revealed himself to his brothers. Now that their father was gone, there was considerable worry among his brothers about whether Joseph would now vent what he could have previously, unforgiveness. Though they had harmed him greatly, he did not take it out on them (Ge.50: 19-20). It was of the Lord that he go to Egypt, but it just was not pleasant how he got there and how he was treated while there up to the time of being set on Egypt's throne. Joseph suffered much discouragement in life, but he did not allow it to hinder his obedience. The path to God's best is often lined with hard places that will test our resolve to be obedient.

We are to obey the Lord at all times. God wants us to do well in life. In fact, He promises to give us what we ask for if we are obedient to Him. When God gives us a dream or a vision, He wants us to be faithful and obedient to that calling. It is up to us to be alert to God's calling, allowing man's calling to fall by the wayside.

E. Moses

This was a man chosen by God to receive God's written standard or code of conduct. The Ten Commandments were guidelines by which man could measure his obedient relationship to God and his relationship to his fellow man. A nation of people was to be in yielded obedience to God, the Deliverer. The Israelites were miraculously led out of 400 years of physical, social, mental, and spiritual imprisonment (Ex.20:1-17; Ex.14:13-31).

Moses' obedience is steadfast and coupled with great faith even in the midst of a multitude of rebellious and stiff necked attitudes (Ex.14:9-12). For forty years Moses clung obediently to the promises of God, leading two million spiritually dull, wavering, and disobedient people toward the Promised Land, as shown in Exodus, chapters 16 through 40.

Moses' obedient life even caused the Lord to repent of a plan to deal with the intentions of the people who continued in wayward disobedience (Ex.32:11-14). The forty years were the fruit of not obeying God. Joshua, chapters 5 and 6, tell us: "...they did not listen..." It takes an obedient leader and an obedient people to possess a land. Disobedience to what God has promised brings failure.

F. Joshua

What a picture of beautiful obedience to a loving Father is this servant of the Lord. Unquestionably obedient as an understudy to Moses, Joshua was obedient to his appointment to lead the people out of their stagnation into the abundant life God had waiting across the river, Joshua 1. If we do not see our

role in this earth as a place of service, we will not consistently obey. Joshua saw his place of service and took it up immediately.

Colossians 3: 17 pictures the way Joshua did things. He took up the plan of God as if it was to be done in His name. It takes focus and meditation to do all in the name of the Lord. The key is to keep our confession correct. We will have to do and say things with excellence. We will have to do and say with our focus on the Lord. I

Notice that Joshua did not hesitate in verse 10 after receiving a list of instructions from the Lord. Notice also, that God did not have to lecture Joshua on the fruits of obedience to God's plan. God only mentioned courage and strength (Jos.1:7,9,18). Joshua and the people obeyed and they were victorious at Jericho (Jos.24:24).

The people later allowed disobedience to God's covenant to creep in and the whole land of Canaan did not become theirs. Though they inhabited the land they did not possess it. They failed to drive out the customs and practices of living that were an abomination to God. It requires discipline to refuse disobedience to control us. There has to be discipline day and night if we are going to function under self-control (Ga.5: 22-23). Without it, not putting a stop to what was going on around them they failed to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan. Some of the failures of the people of Israel to obey are described in Judges 1. Notice that disobedience to God's Word becomes failure instead of blessing. God even speaks directly to the people about their disobedience (Jg.2:1-5). They ignored God (Jg.2:17). We cannot be just a hearer, but a doer of the Word (Ja.1: 22). It will require pressing on to lay hold of God's purpose. We will have to reach forward and press toward the goal God has for us (Ph.3: 12-14).

G. Deborah

Deborah was an obedient judge, a prophetess who had a close relationship with God (Jg.4:1-16). Israel had been oppressed for twenty years. The people cried out and God heard their cry. Deborah's relationship with God had gained her influence among her people. Barak was disobedient by not taking the position God had for him, so Deborah went with him. Deborah was actually forced into action. It was not for her to do, but by Barak's disobedience to take the position, God required her to do it. God prepared the way for Deborah by going on before her. We, as Christians, must earnestly seek to be open to God's continual leading in our lives.

The song of Deborah and Barak is a song of praise to God for His mercy and righteous acts on behalf of Israel. Throughout the Old Testament, heartfelt

singing to the Lord by His people was an important part of expressing gratitude to God for His redeeming power. God considers praise a holy sacrifice.

Today a lot of born-again Believers want something for nothing. We do not want to move out of our comfort zone. We are so comfortable where we are that we will not move. This will limit our sensitivity to Holy Spirit. If we have no desire to go beyond our comfort zone, we will not move. This can lead to lukewarmness. We want to be blessed, but do not want to do anything to receive blessing. We act like God owes us, when in fact we owe God!

Matthew chapter 25 speaks of responsibility of the believer to be ready and obey his call in use of what he has given us (Mt.25: 14-30). There are commendations to those who applied themselves to what the Master had said. The commendation was "Well done . . . good and faithful servant (v.21). "Well" describes the excellence or quality of something done. "Done" means it is brought to pass, fulfilled, or finished. "Good" here is that which is valuable, virtuous for appearance or use, honest, worthy. The word "faithful" means that the one being commended was trustworthy, firm in adherence to the truth and duty, loyal, true to allegiance, constant in performance, not fickle, faithful to the letter and spirit of the one in authority. These are attributes that were inward and displayed outwardly. All of this came out of being obedient.

By contrast, the servant who buried the talent got a terrible reprimand and penalty for his failure to obey. He was called lazy, which is to be slothful, tardy, slow to respond, neglectful. It shows the lack of effort. The lack of effort outwardly was a reflection of the lack of effort inwardly. The other two servants knew the Masters will, while the one simply neglected to put any effort into finding out what he will was. Effort is an investment toward success. In this case, it took obedience connected with effort to receive the Master's commendation.

H. Samuel

Hannah, Samuel's mother, desired to have a child. Prayerfully and purposefully she presented her child before the Lord, long before Samuel was born. She regarded her son as a gracious gift from God and expressed her intention to fulfill her vow by dedicating Samuel to the Lord.

Samuel was obedient to God's voice even before he recognized it (1Sa.3:1-11). Notice that Samuel was elevated to leadership because the words Samuel lived by were God's Words. Samuel's life was a loving obedience to what God said (1Sa.3:19-21). Even King Saul confessed to Samuel that he was guilty of sin by obeying the voice of the people rather than the Word from God (1Sa.15:24).

The devil tries to copy the voice of God. If we are out of relationship with God we may be fooled by the voice. We are to be obedient only to the Word of God. We may be like Eli, who had not heard from God and had no control over his household. Or we can be like Samuel whose life was dedicated to the work of God and who was a willing vessel to hear.

Obedience to God's word is a necessity in our lives. As Believers, obedience to God includes: Repentance, faith in God, and recognizing disobedience. True obedience to God is found in the heart of a servant. If we want to be leaders we must learn to follow our leaders and submit to their authority and be obedient.

I. David

True obedience to God is found deep in the heart of a servant. The will to serve others first in obedience to God will become the path to exaltation and authority. David was obediently serving his father in keeping his sheep when chosen king. He was not seeking the position (a picture of Christ), I Samuel 16:10-13. David demonstrated his great obedience to his heavenly Father by slaying the giant "in the name of the Lord" (1Sa.17:45-47), rather than his or any other name.

Notice King Saul lost his throne and authority in the name of the Lord out of disobedience (1Sa.15:9-11). David, like Saul, fell from relationship with God in straying from the word of God, but unlike Saul, David repented and returned to close fellowship with God (2Sa.12:13). David understood the price paid in leaving the word of the Lord (2Sa.12:15-25; 2Sa.chp.13).

Repentance is the act of returning to and bringing the restoration of an obedient relationship to God. David's obedient life, one of knowing the beauty and wonder of God's daily presence, was one through which God recorded most of the Psalms. Obedience records the Word. Many of the wonderful consequences and benefits of an obedient communion with God are described by David in his Psalms. This is also in 2 Samuel, chapter 22. It bears repeating, that true loving obedience to the Father is found residing in a man's heart. David was a man after God's own heart.

David's life is a good example of the effects of obedience and disobedience in his life. Disobedience with Bathsheba caused the death of their son. Obedience brought victory and Bathsheba and David conceived Solomon who became a great and wise ruler.

Obedience brings victory and disobedience brings defeat. It is important to know the voice of God. There are many voices in the world, good and bad. We as Christians should ask Holy Spirit to guide us, enabling us to hear only what God speaks to us. Certain voices can lead us astray.

J. Solomon

David passes the scepter of obedience to his son. "...Keep the charge..." is another definition of "Obey the Lord", (1Kg.2:3). Solomon reigned in wisdom, in obedience to the understanding which God gave him (1Kg.4:20-34).

K. Job

Be forewarned and prepared. An obedient child of God is like a beacon before Satan. What he lost in his angelic relationship with God he wants no man to have (Job.1:1-5). Job was exceedingly blessed in all aspects of his life, a direct result of loving obedience to the Father's Word.

God allowed the testing of Job's obedience and faith in God's provision. Job's faith was found to be lacking but his obedience to God was steadfast (Job.1:8-22, 2:1-10). Notice Satan continued his attack spiritually after all of Job's worldly goods had been taken, striking through his friends, Job, chapters 4 through 36.

Job gets help from God, Job 40. Finally, Job, repents from justifying himself rather than God for his situation, asks for understanding and receives it (Job.32:2; 40:3-5). He then exercises his faith in prayer and is restored. All this was done in obedience to the desires of the Father for him, Job 42. Finally, Job exercised his faith and prayed. He was restored to an over-abundance, of all that he lost (verse 10).

Job prayed and exercised his faith. When he released faith, his trust was renewed in God. Job repented and then prayed believing, and putting his trust in God.

Trust walks side by side with obedience. We cannot always trust man, but we can always trust God. In the parable related in Matthew, three servants were each trusted with a different amount of money (Mt.25:14-30). The first two servants invested their money and doubled the amounts of their trusts. The third servant buried his portion, in the ground, and paid his master the amount trusted to him without interest. The lazy servant's attitude toward the talent reflected what was in his heart. The other two servants did not seem to have a problem with what to do. We can either be faithful servants or we can choose to be lazy and unfaithful to God in the responsibilities that He has given us.

In this parable, the master saw the abilities of each servant that he trusted money to. Only two servants were faithful with the money entrusted to them. Faithfulness works hand in hand with other spiritual qualities as well as by itself. Proverbs 3:5 tells us that we are to "trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean

not onto thine own understanding." Verse 6 goes on and says "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Faithfulness trusts those in authority over us, such as Jesus our Lord and Savior. We trust and believe that He cares about everything that touches our lives in any way at any time. He cares about the sparrows as well as knowing how many hairs are on our heads. Therefore, faithfulness works with trust. If we trust our Heavenly Father, He is faithful to us.

Psalm 37:3 tells us to trust in the Lord and to be kind and good to others so that we may live safely and prosper here, in this land! God cares so much about whether we are faithful and trusting in Him, that He has already made provision for us. We must exercise our rights to our inheritance.

Galatians 5:6 strongly tells us that faith does not work without love. This reiterates what Psalm 37:3 tells us. Therefore, faith requires love to prosper.

The key to faithfulness and obedience is the willingness to trust in God and to allow Him to be the controlling factor in our lives.

Trust is important in our lives. Distrust keeps us in an emotional turmoil. Trusting is putting our confidence in someone or something else, other than ourselves. The Word of God tells us to abide (abide means to live in or dwell in a place) in Him. Do we understand the depth of this last statement? We are to dwell in God!

As born-again Believers, many of us tend to become over-involved in day-to-day activities. We worry about this and about that, small unimportant details. We need to trust in our Father and allow Him to carry us; we cannot carry the weight of the world on our shoulders. When we try to take on God's responsibility, we are into self, thinking we can do a better job ourselves. As Christians we need to learn to "Let go and let God."

If we cannot be faithful to God, we will not trust Him or obey Him. This is humanly impossible. As Christians, to be obedient we become trusting and faithful to God, our Father. This will bring us victory in our home, work, school, church, and every area of our lives. Faithfulness plays an important part in our lives as Believers, on a daily basis, not just two or three times a week. It is up to each one of us to move into faithfulness. It is up to us...

L. Jeremiah

The main theme of all Biblical prophecy is:

1. A call back to relationship with God in obedience to the voice and Word of the Holy God of Israel and the benefits that will bless the Believer.
2. About the promises of great benefit that would result

Certainly, all the prophets of old were in God's lineage, His heritage of obedient ones. Their obedience to God's Word was responsible for our having much of the Testament today. Jeremiah's prophecies are filled with exhortations of obedience in returning to God.

Jeremiah is called by God before birth to be God's prophet (Je.1:5). God prophesies to Jeremiah about his own life (Je.1:6-10). God proceeds to give the first sign of prophecy to Jeremiah (Je.1:11-16). He exhorts him to respond, obey, and do the Father's will and God assures His presence in Jeremiah's work (Je.1:17-19).

Jeremiah's obedience was wonderfully imbedded in the depth of his heart. Jeremiah wept and lamented over the life work appointed by God in what God was saying through him to His chosen people. His obedience was a labor of love and compassion, a manifestation of the heart of the living God (Je.8:18-9:1-6). Jeremiah's unfaltering obedience to the pronouncing of God's Word and his compassion for the people caused Jeremiah to become an intercessor (Je.14:7-22).

God uses exhortations to and about obeying in the prophecy of Jeremiah. It is good to spend time allowing some of them to have spiritual impact:

Jeremiah 3:13, 25

Jeremiah 7:23, 28

Jeremiah 9:13

Jeremiah 11:3, 4, 7,8

Jeremiah 12:17

Jeremiah 17:23

Jeremiah 18:10

Jeremiah 22:21

Jeremiah 26:13

Jeremiah 32:23

Jeremiah 34:10

Jeremiah 35:18, 19

Jeremiah 38:20

Jeremiah 40:3

Jeremiah 42:6, 13, 21

Jeremiah 43:4, 7

Jeremiah 44:23

God certainly places great focus on the key element of obedience in the fulfilling of God's will toward mankind.

"Come let's talk this over! Says the Lord, no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool. If you will only let me help you, if you will only obey, then I will make you rich! But if you keep on turning your backs and refusing to listen to me, you will be killed by your enemies; I, the Lord have spoken" (Is.1:18-20).

In other words, it takes willingness to be obedient. This is an intentional act on our part. We submit or surrender SELF to our heavenly Father. By submitting self, we are allowing the Holy Spirit to move and work in our lives.

M. Daniel

Daniel is another prophet obedient to God's Word, even in a time and place when obedience to God meant death. His obedience to what God was saying transcended the entire time of the Babylonian captivity. Daniel obeyed under pressure. Daniel was favored in the world by his relationship and obedience to God (Da.1:3-7). Daniel decided to hold to God's instruction and to obey God (Da.1:8). Daniel's (as well as Joseph's) obedience caused them to find favor with God and man. Daniel's attitude is shown in chapter 2, verse 30. His discipline is shown in chapter 6, verse 10. His attitude and his discipline took him a long way in his obedience to God.

God always blesses and gives more of His truth and wisdom to those who seek Him (Da.1:17). Daniel's stature with the captors increased because of his heart's attitude. His God-given gifts remained closely dedicated to God (Da.2:12-45). Notice that Daniel did not take credit for his gifts, Daniel 2:30. Daniel's obedience to God promoted him (Da.2:46-49). There are specific Scriptures in the Book of Daniel dealing with obedience: (Da.7:27; 9:10-11,14).

V. CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE

Jesus Christ, our example, demonstrated a lifestyle characterized by a spirit of obedience, or, a habitual attitude of obedience. His whole reason for coming to earth was, "...Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:9). The principle by which He lived His entire life was obedience. We, as His body, fulfill His will upon the earth by living by this same principle.

A. Attitudes

Attitudes have much to do with our obedience. The proper attitude causes us to be unlimited accepting no limitations concerning our abilities, our situation, or our future accomplishments. With the proper attitude, we will find obedience much easier.

We should think of our attitudes in the following light:

1. It is the forerunner of our true selves.
2. Its roots are inward but its fruit is outward.
3. it can be our best friend or our worst enemy.
4. It is more honest and more consistent than our words.
5. It is an outward look based on past experiences.
6. It is a thing which draws people to us or repels them.
7. It is never content until it is expressed.
8. It is the librarian of our past.
9. It is the speaker of our present.
10. It is the prophet of our future.

Bumblebees are unusual insects, in that the scientists cannot figure out how they can fly. Its shape, size, and body weight in relationship to its wingspan places it in a category of impossibility. Aerodynamically, it is impossible for the bumble bee to fly. Yet, the bumblebee, ignorant of scientific theory and knowing its Maker, refuses to be chained to the ground, so it flies so it can make honey.

What we know about ourselves has to be stronger than what people say. What we know about ourselves has to be stronger than our situation. Otherwise, we would be like the bumblebee, yet never with the idea that "I believe I can fly." The attitude, along with effort is all it takes,

Our attitudes are the inner feelings or emotions that are expressed. There are several things that shape our attitudes. Included in these is our personality. Our personality is directly related to our unique makeup. It is how we are wired. By observation we can see that many are wired differently than we are.

Environment helps to shape our attitudes. The environment we were exposed to growing up has impacted our attitude. Whether it was good or not, we were affected by it.

The words of others affected the attitudes we display today. Especially those who were in authority figure positions, such as teachers, preachers, policemen, judges; they all impacted us. What people have said to us that we received and

believed (taking a thought and saying- Mt.6: 31), shaped our opinion of ourselves. Labels that others have spoken to us can be our boundaries and limitations or they can be liberators of our thinking.

Another thing that has shaped our attitude is contained in the thoughts we have allowed to survive in us. Words are expressed thoughts. Until we change the way we think about ourselves we cannot change the picture of ourselves. If we think we are a loser, we will be.

Concerning attitudes, no attitude, whether positive or negative, is strong enough to compensate for a lack of skill. Attitude is not everything, but it is the one thing that can make the difference between success and failure. It can keep us from being obedient to that which we know is right.

A bad attitude will rob us of our peace and joy. A bad attitude, unless changed, will cause us to lose our respect for someone. A bad attitude will keep us from fellowship. We move away from those who our attitude is bad against.

Attitudes determine whether we can receive correction or not, and it affects our learning. We are to have a positive attitude based on the Word. Our attitudes do not stay good automatically. The day of the week it is, the price of gasoline, the weather, how people treat us, all of these can impact us negatively.

Attitudes are transferable. Casey Stengel was the successful manager of the New York Yankees for several years in the 1960's-'70's. He understood the power of negative associations. Billy Martin, when he was a rookie manager remembered the advice that Casey Stengel gave him. Stengel said,

“There will be 15 players on your team that would run through a wall for you, five will hate and five are undecided. When you make out your rooming list, always room your losers together. Never room a good guy with a loser. Those losers who stay together will blame you for everything that goes the way they do not want it to. But it will not spread if you keep them isolated.”

Just so it is for Christians who associate with those of bad attitudes. Those attitudes will eventually rub off if we are not extremely careful in what we take in.

Negative attitudes will cloud our decision making (Ge.4: 4-7). Cain's countenance fell. His demeanor, expression, and mental composure were set off at God's rejection of his sacrifice. The face is an indicator of the mood or expression.

Negative attitudes will magnify the problem. Those same negative attitudes will ignore the potential answer that is right in front of us. Negative attitudes are

always focused on the wrong thing. We can focus on the wrong or we can focus on the right.

Negative attitudes will cause us to dread the future. The negative attitude always remembers the past failures and promptly reacts to them instead of the possibilities of today. Negative attitudes will criticize or ignore positive people. In fact, many times they will say things like, "Well what are you so happy about?" A person with a negative attitude sees positive people as irresponsible, escapist, or uninformed.

B. Obstacles to a Positive Attitude

1. Discouragement or disappointment

That which brings about unmet expectations for our self will bring discouragement. It will affect the way we see our selves, as well as others. It is the situation that leads to a bad attitude. It does not give it to us, we choose to take one.

2. Change

Airplanes flying across the heavens have to constantly make changes in their "attitude." That is, they have to keep the nose up and the flaps trimmed. We have to do the same thing. Abram is a biblical example. He was asked to change his home when he was not even told where it was going to be. It was "good-bye" to his friends and family (at least it was supposed to be). What God asks us to give up is nothing compared to what the obedience will bring.

3. Problems

Problems can keep us from having a positive attitude if we are continually looking at them. This is the reason the ones which never seem to go away tend to wear on us until we give in to them.

4. Fear

Dread, worry, anxiety, whatever we want to call it, has an effect on our attitude if we let it. Worry is meditation on the wrong thing. It is meditating on the enemies words instead of on God's Word. People who worry are seldom wrong. Worry, for some, is a defense that prepares them for the bad news they know (think) is coming.

5. Failure

Failure is never a reason to stay down. Failure is simply a setback on the road to success. But if we allow it to effect us, it will keep us down.

6. Selfishness

Selfishness is the key to misery. In the end times, people will increasingly become more and more self-centered or self-indulgent. One of the root causes of depression is selfishness. Loneliness is not a root problem, but selfishness which causes loneliness. Unless we are givers and serves, we will not find happiness and contentment. To give and serve is the opposite of selfishness.

7. Self-indulgence

Job said, "If I have not used my strength to serve, then may it be removed." It is believed that the sin of Sodom was sexual perversion by many. But truly the root sin was self-indulgence. The pursuit of self-indulgence is the root issue that leads to all forms of perversion.

C. Changing our attitudes

How do we change our attitudes? It is possible, but we will have to work at it. Here are some things that will help us:

1. Take responsibility for the bad attitude.
2. Evaluate those situations that affect the attitude.
3. Develop a desire to change.
4. Change the attitude by changing the thought life. Put self in remembrance of what God has done and can do. Often people want help, but not change.
5. Realize that the negative attitude toward others may reflect the negative attitude we have toward ourselves.
6. Take authority because no one else will.

D. Attitude in Giving

Our attitude in giving is important. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that they were to have the right attitude in their giving (2Co.9: 7). Probably he was referring to the two chests for alms in the Temple. One was for necessary (law required) alms and the other for the free-will offering. Some gave grudgingly what necessity required, while others gave cheerfully, for the love of the Lord and their care for the situation of the poor. Of the first group, nothing is said, but of the second,

those who pitied the poor, God loves them. The benefit of giving alms is lost to the giver when they have a grumbling heart. Since the grumbler does not do the duty in the spirit of duty, even the compliance with the law is an abomination in the sight of God. The attitude destroyed the blessing.

Paul also exhorts the Galatian' Believers to watch their attitudes in giving for the benefit of the Gospel (spoken of here in a general way, Ga.6: 9-10). Christian's can become weary. Opposition to the plan of God is what the enemy brings and that constant pressure can wear us down. At times ingratitude shows up in the ones we are working to benefit, and the giver becomes disheartened. To these Paul says do not give over but persevere in the giving. This attitude of perseverance will, at the Day of Judgment, bring a full reward for the self-denial and charity we have participated in. Too, there will be reaping here for our giving. It seems that Paul's exhortation is for perseverance in good works to the end of life. We must not faint over embarrassments that come our way or stumble at the obstacles. If we withdraw from the giving, we have no true attachment to the cause. We are to enlist to the company of the Kingdom citizens and never withdraw from the course they travel on in doing good and serving the Lord by serving His people.

E. Attitude Characteristics

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Ph.2: 3-8).

Several things about a proper attitude stand out to us in the verses in Philippians above:

1. Do the right things for the right reasons (v.3)
2. Regard others more important than self (v.3)
3. Look out for the interests of others (v.4)
4. Christ understood His Son-ship and was willing to serve others (v.6)
5. Possess the attitude of Christ (v.7)

We are not to be hungry for power. Christ was not, emptying Himself of all His Divinity Authority so as to take on the position of man. He emptied himself of His

glory (contrary to the transformation on the Mountain when Moses and Elijah appeared with Him). He did not divest Himself of His Divine nature and perfections. He actually laid aside the manifestation of His glory (His luster was obscured), so that He could take on another form, the manifestation of a servant in human form. He took the lower position, the position of a servant, taking a deeply humiliated position and performing such acts as only servants would. This attitude is to be ours. Without the proper attitude, He could not have done so and would then have been disobedient to the Heavenly Father's will and plan.

There were opinions against Jesus as He walked and did the Father's will. But He was so surrendered to the cause that He was never swayed in His attitude. We can surrender to the opinions of others or circumstances and have good days and bad days. Or, we can surrender to the cause or purpose laid out before us and bad days will not affect us. Attitude can help drive our purpose forward if we will allow it. With the right attitudes to the purpose and will of God, we will find it easy to be obedient, for we know that the result is going to be good and beneficial for the Kingdom, ourselves, and our fellowman.

F. Jesus, the Man

Luke most vividly describes the attribute of obedience in Jesus, the man. Jesus attitude was always one of obedience. He never undertook to go His own path, but that of the Father (Jn.5: 19).

God sent His Son to be manifested as the perfect man of obedience to God's Word, His will, His destiny, and His purpose of creation. All of the Old Testament demonstrations, exhortations, examples and prophecies about the fruit of an obedient relationship became flesh in Jesus, that we might be partakers of a life victorious in obedient love with God, John 1:1-5. Notice the reference that is made to darkness and light. Light is found in obedience with God.

1. Jesus was born into an obedient house (Lk.1:24-38, especially verses 24 and 38).
2. Jesus was obedient to those in authority in His youth (Lk.2:51-52), His subjection to His parents. Obedience to God came through obedience to the authority of man (Ep.6:5).
3. Obedience to Jesus results in a great catch, a great spiritual work in this life (Lk.5:4-11).
4. Jesus, the perfect obedient man became the King of an obedient nation of Believers. He gave charge to those who would follow in His obedient footsteps (Lk.24:44-48).

G. Jesus, the Son

1. He was obedient from the beginning to the law of God (Lk.2:21, 40-41).
2. Jesus hungered for the food of obedience, the Word of God (Lk.2:46-49).
3. The Father spoke to Jesus about the pleasure that comes to Him through man's willingness to live with Him (Lk.3:22).
4. Jesus was obedient to living and proclaiming the Word (Lk.4:14-15). Notice that the power of the Spirit (of God) was given license to be the influence of obedience, verse 14.
5. Jesus' obedience to His Father's Will was by the Spirit of God speaking, comforting, directing, empowering, and working Christ's way through the daily opposition and difficulty that awaited Him. The working of obedience is only possible through the partnership of the Holy Spirit (Lk.24:49; Jn.14:16; Ac.2:4; Jn.15:26-27). In Christ, obedience was a pleasure spiritually, not carnally (He.12:2).

H. Vivid Descriptions of Obedience

1. Obedience to the love of God cannot be described any more vividly than Jesus' encounter with Matthew (also called Levi) (Lk.5:27-28). Jesus said, "Follow Me," and Matthew immediately turned his life to a new and different course, leaving all behind. He yielded to the sure and true guidance of obedience to the Word.
2. The perfection of Christ's obedience to the works of His Father's Word was finished on the cross as He forgave all for all their transgressions. Perfect obedience took man's disobedience from the Father's sight (Lk.23:34). The most vivid, powerful and poignant example anywhere of obedience in the love of God is the one on the cross.
3. The obedience of Christ to the Father's desires led to the resurrection and the new path to eternity for all who follow Jesus. He became the Door through which obedience to the Father's Word of eternal life passes (Jn.14:16-17; Lk.24:33-34; Mk.16:4; Jn.20:19-23; 1Co.15:4).

I. Jesus Teaches Obedience

1. Jesus shares the understandings of an obedient heart with His followers. His followers are to be multiplied through our life's ministry as extensions of the Word (Lk.6:20-26). There is supernatural power and blessing in the seeking of obedience to the Father. Jesus proclaims the rules in an obedient lifestyle (Lk.6:27-38).
2. Jesus shows how obedience to the instruction of God is designed to multiply Kingdom results (Lk.19:12-27). We are to invest our lives in obedience to the growth of God's Kingdom here on earth.
3. All our needs are provided for as long as we go through Jesus (Lk.22:35-36).
4. Jesus describes the reward of an obedient life before God to the religious authorities (Lk.22:69).

J. Obedience Unrecognized and/or Rejected

1. The religious crowd did not recognize the obedient One (Lk.22:70-71).
2. Obedience is rejected by the very family Jesus knew well (Lk.4:16-30).

VI. SAUL, A DISOBEDIENT KING

A. Samuel's Instruction to Saul (1 Samuel 15:2-3)

As a Scriptural setting, read 1 Samuel 15:1.

Samuel is telling Saul to listen carefully to what God is saying and then to be sure to do it! That's what "hearken" means. Then Samuel went on to tell Saul what the Lord of hosts said to do (1Sa.15:2-3).

But instead of obeying the Lord, we read in the ninth verse of Saul's disobedience.

B. Saul's Response to Samuel's Instructions (1 Samuel 15:9)

To get the full impact of this story, and to understand the real nature of Saul's disobedience, you must realize exactly how Saul sinned. After Saul had gone

out to battle, he had done what the law normally required of him. When Israel won a battle, they were required to bring back sacrifices to offer to God for the victory. This could be called a thanksgiving offering.

At any other time, King Saul would have been acting correctly according to the law's demands. Also, in battles of that day, the victor was entitled to the spoils of war: the cattle, horses, chariots, and gold. The conquering army could rightfully take everything that could be salvaged.

Furthermore, it was customary for the conquering king to take the enemy king alive and parade him in triumph through the streets of the major cities. This was considered one of the greatest tokens of prestige for a conquering king; it gave him great credibility, not just among his own people, but in the sight of other nations as well.

There was only one problem in Saul's case. God had commanded him, "Bring nothing back!" Saul was not to bring back the enemy king, or animals for sacrifice, or any spoils of war!

No disobedience is hidden from the Lord. Saul's disobedience did not go unobserved by God (1Sa.15:10-11).

Why did the Lord regret making Saul the king of Israel? Disobedience! He failed to obey the voice of the Lord! To bring this into perspective, how do you suppose God feels now, when His very own children disobey Him? That is a sobering thought!

First, Saul openly disobeyed the commands of the Lord. Then, when confronted by Samuel, Saul compounded his sin by lying, for he said, " ... Blessed be thou [Samuel] of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (1Sa.15:13).

Notice the next incident, Saul begins to blame the people (1Sa.15:15).

This is a very strange thing for the king of Israel to say. In fact the people were subject to him. Saul needed someone else to take the blame, so he conveniently tried to cover his initial disobedience to God by blaming the people. Saul then lied the second time, strongly affirming to Samuel that he had obeyed the Lord;

C. The Result of Disobedience

Read 1 Samuel 15:17-23. In this Scripture, Samuel was actually saying, "It would have been better for you to obey the voice of the Lord than to sacrifice to God - even in the most precise and correct manner - because your sacrificing

done without obedience to all that God has said, will really ascend up to His nostrils as a stench!"

God delights in sacrifices but He does not delight in them when you haven't obeyed. What God really delights in, above all else, is obedience to His Word.

How does this pertain to us today? There are a lot of people in the church world today who are involved in a similar type of disobedience, and may not realize it. For example, they may be making faith confessions, and trying to say all the "right things," when actually God cannot bless them because they have failed to obey His voice in other areas. What God is really wanting from them is their complete obedience.

God's response was "Because thou has rejected the Word of the Lord, God has rejected you from being king." God really delights in obedience to His Word. God rejected Saul's sacrifice just as He had rejected Cain's sacrifice. Both men offered sacrifices to God, but in disobedience to all that God had said. There is a difference between saying and doing the right thing. To obey is better than sacrifice. To obey is better than confession. To obey is better than fasting. The bottom line is to obey the Word of the Lord.

Such things as dancing, praising, clapping, praying, fasting, or speaking, do not take the place of obedience. Obedience to God will give us peace in the midst of any storm or any circumstance. Disobedience in our lives will nullify our efforts. Disobedience cannot bring blessings from God, but will eventually bring judgment.

It is important to understand the real nature of Saul's disobedience. After the battle at Amaleck, Saul did what the law would normally require of him. Israel won the battle and normally they would have been required to bring back a thanksgiving offering. The Israelites would make this offering to God, thanking Him for the victory. If Saul was acting according to the law, what was the problem? Remember, the spoils of war went to the victor. Conquering armies could rightfully take what could be salvaged. The conquering king would take the enemy king alive and parade him through the streets of the major cities. This gave the conquering king great prestige. Again, let us consider what was the problem? There was only one problem in Saul's case. God had commanded Saul, through Samuel to utterly destroy Amaleck, destroy everything, people and animals. Everything!

God regretted making Saul the King of Israel (1Sa.15:10-11). Saul failed to obey the voice of the Lord.

King Saul openly disobeyed the command of the Lord, and then when Samuel confronted him, he compounded his sin by lying (1Sa.15: 13). Then Saul began to blame the people (1Sa.15:15). Let us consider this: the people were subject to Saul, yet Saul wanted to blame them. He needed someone else to take the blame. He tried to cover his disobedience by blaming the people. Saul lied the second time, insisting to Samuel that he had obeyed God (1Sa.15:20).

VII. LOVING OBEDIENCE

Following are three New Testament examples of loving obedience to Jesus Christ.

A. Stephen

Luke tells us that an assembly was gathered to solve a problem concerning the distribution of food to widows and the poor (Ac.6:2-3). During this assembly seven were chosen, men of a good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, who were to make sure the distribution was fair to all. These leaders came to be called simply "the seven" (Ac.21:8) corresponding to "the twelve." Although these men are often referred to as the first deacons, Acts does not make this inference.

Acts primarily discusses the work of only two of the seven, Stephen and Philip. We are told that these two men were primarily active in preaching and teaching.

Stephen was involved in a debate concerning the new faith with Jews from the Greek-speaking synagogues of Jerusalem. He was one of the first to see that Jesus' message could be a direct challenge to many of the most distinctive characteristics of Judaism that separated it from the Gentile culture. The debates are not recorded in Acts, but the impact of Stephen's arguments can be seen in the charges that were eventually made against him. Stephen evidently argued that the Gospel of Jesus removed the need for the temple and all the sacrifices and other rites commanded by the Mosaic Law. To his opponents who, like Saul, (Paul) of Tarsus, were zealous for the Law, Stephen seemed to speak blasphemous words against Moses and God, (Ac.6:11). His power as a preacher and debater led Stephen's opponents to silence him.

The Jews brought Stephen before a judicial council on the charge of speaking words against the temple and The Law and of saying that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple, and change the customs which Moses delivered to them (Ac.6:13-14). Stephen's opponents saw the very existence of their faith endangered.

Stephen was given the opportunity to answer the charges, but he made no attempt to defend himself by convincing the council that their charges were untrue. Rather, he used the occasion to make a forceful attack on his opponents.

Following an ancient Scriptural tradition, he reviewed the history of his people, highlighting their repeated rebellions against Moses and other prophets sent by God. He challenged the very idea that God should have a fixed temple built for him. Finally, he used the phraseology of the Scriptures to mount a blistering denunciation of his hearers: "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute" (Ac.7:51-52)? This ancient attitude, now realized in the present, Stephen charged, had led to the betrayal and murder of the Righteous One (Ac.7:52).

This speech turned the judicial council into an enraged mob. Stephen, realizing what was about to happen, saw a vision of heaven wherein the "the Son of Man [Jesus] standing at the right hand of God" (Ac.7:56). The crowd rushed at Stephen, took him outside Jerusalem, and stoned him to death. Notice that Jesus was standing. The Bible normally speaks of Jesus seated at the right hand of God (Ac.2:34; Mk.14:62; Lk.22:69; and Co.3:1). Here Jesus stood in order to welcome his first martyr to himself. Stephen had confessed Christ before fellow humans and defended the faith. Now Christ, in honor of His servant, confesses him before His heavenly Father.

The death of Stephen marked the beginning of an onslaught of persecution directed against Believers. Saul, who was a consenting witness to Stephen's execution, led it. With supreme irony, a few years later, God called this same Saul to become an apostle of the faith and bring the work of Stephen to fulfillment.

Stephen would not have been the first martyr if he had not been obedient to Holy Spirit's prompting. At his death, he demonstrated the same forgiveness that Christ had on the cross (Ac.7:59-60). Remember, that Jesus stood to welcome Stephen into the glorious home that He has prepared for us.

B. Peter

Peter was a fisherman, and it was from the boats and the nets that Jesus called him. He was married and lived in Capernaum. It was here that Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law.

Peter was a Galilean. Josephus, a Galilean governor says that "Galileans were fond of innovations, delighted in stirring up discontent or resistance. They were

led to follow a leader and to begin an insurrection." He says that they were notorious for quick tempers, given to quarreling, impulsive, emotional, easily roused by an appeal to adventure, and loyal to the end. Peter was a typical Galilean.

Peter experienced six greats or events during his life.

1. The great rebuke

Peter protested that Jesus' foretold death must never be; and Jesus answered him saying "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Mt.16:22-23; Mk.8:32-33).

2. The great denial

Peter is well known as the one who denied Jesus. Let us not judge Peter, for we do not know what we would have done in that situation (Mk.14:66-72; Mt.26:69-75; Lk.22:54-62; Jn.18:15-27).

3. The great promise

"Thou are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" (Mt.16:18).

Peter became known as the "rock"! He was well known for his leadership and is listed first in the four listings of the twelve apostles in the New Testament.

Jesus gave Simon his new name (Mk.3:16; Lk.6:14). John records the fullest account of the renaming of Simon (Jn.1:42). Jesus called Simon, Cephas. Cephas and Peter are different forms of the same name, one being Hebrew and the other Aramaic.

Within the twelve apostles there emerged an inner circle of three who were especially close to Jesus -- Peter, James, and John. They were with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, in the garden of Gethsemane, and at the raising of Jairus' daughter.

Peter stands out as the spokesman of the twelve apostles. He was not afraid to ask questions, inquiring of the true answers. He was not ashamed to stand up for what he believed. Remember he became indignant at the guard in Gethsemane and cut off his ear!

4. The great discovery

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and art sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Jn.6:66-69).

5. The great restoration after Peter had denied Jesus.

Peter was restored by Jesus to fulfill the call upon his life as an apostle (Jn.21:15-17).

6. The great realization

Tells us that Peter was instrumental in opening the door of the church to the Gentiles (Ac.15:7-11) It was through Peter's action in the case of Cornelius, that The Church experienced the great realization that "God has given to the Gentiles, too, the privilege of turning to Him and receiving eternal life" (Ac.11:18 - LB).

C. The Apostle Paul

1. Saul

Saul had been raised in a strict Jewish home that led him to devote his life to the defense of Mosaic Law against a sect that not only questioned that law and worship in the temple, but also claimed a crucified Galilean teacher was the Messiah.

Saul studied many years under Gamaliel the elder, known as the leading Jewish teacher of the first century B.C. Through this training, Paul said, "I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers" (Ga.1:14). At the same time Saul learned the trade of tent making in order to support himself for his study of The Law.

Saul lived in the city of Jerusalem most of his life before his conversion. Most likely Saul made the synagogue of the Cilicians his home. It was there he began to dispute with Christians such as Stephen. To Saul such people seemed determined to undermine The Law and worship at the holy temple.

Saul first appears in the New Testament as a consenting witness at the execution of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Stephen was brought

before the council to be charged with speaking against the temple and the Law and with arguing that Jesus would destroy the temple and change the customs which Moses delivered to the Jews (Ac.6:13-14). Stephen confirmed the worst fears of people like Saul by attacking his countrymen for always opposing God and for betraying and killing the Messiah. For Saul, these were words of war. Everything that he held dear, The Law, the temple and the traditions of his people, seemed at risk if a sect like Stephen's was allowed to survive. What is more, they were claiming that the Messiah had been hung on a cross.

Saul seems to have been a leader (Ac.8:1-3), of The Church's first widespread persecution. It was intense and severe. Men and women were put in prison (Ac.8:3) and beaten (Ac.22:19), and many were put to death (Ac.22:20; 26:10-11). Yet God used this persecution to start the great missionary work of The Church (Ac.8:4).

2. Paul

Saul earnestly felt that he was doing the right thing, by persecuting those who were blaspheming the Mosaic Law. Believing he was in the right, he used violence to purge Israel from this false religion. However, he was not just persecuting people, he was opposing Christ.

Saul both heard the voice of the Lord Jesus and saw Him. Though there is no explicit statement of Saul's seeing Christ, this is in reference to the light from heaven. It was fundamental to Saul's apostleship that he saw the resurrected Lord (1Co.9:1).

The Lord asked Saul "Why do you persecute me?" The reference seems to be Paul's first glimpse into the great doctrine of Christians being in Christ. Saul answered, "Who are you, Lord?" Here Saul must have recognized that the voice was a supernatural being, which then identified Himself saying; "I am Jesus." At this time the Lord commanded Saul, "Go into the city and you will be told what you must do."

There is a sharp contrast between Saul (Ac.9:1) and Paul (Ac.9:8). One moment he was storming up the road, determined to capture and imprison Christians. Soon thereafter he was led like a child by the hand into Damascus. God's grace is often displayed in great powerful acts.

Paul's background and qualifications suited him for the work to which God had called him:

- a. Paul knew the Jewish culture and language (Ac.21:40; Php.3:5).
- b. Paul's upbringing in Tarsus acquainted him with the Greek culture and its philosophies (Ac.17:22-31; Ti.1:12).
- c. Paul possessed Roman citizenship (Ac.16:37; 22:23-29; 25:10-12).
- d. Paul was trained and skilled in Jewish theology (Ga.1:14).
- e. Paul was skilled in a secular trade and could provide for himself (Ac.18:3).
- f. God gave Paul zeal, leadership qualities, and theological insight.

Paul became lovingly obedient through his conversion experience on the road to Damascus (Ac.9:1-6, 17-20). There is a price to pay when we are doing God's work. However, there are also rewards for obeying God's calling upon our life.

Obedience may bring trials and sufferings to the flesh but also great spiritual rewards in heaven (2Co.11:16-33; and 12:1-10). Notice weakness in chapter 12, verses 5 and 9-10. These verses refer to voluntary submission, which is obedience. There is power in weakness before God.

VIII. A Detailed look at Obedience

A. Obedience is Vital

Obedience is vital to God's responsive provision for His children. It is choosing Him in all things of life. The common thread that we have discovered is faith and all the spiritual aspects that work with faith and allow faith to grow, trust, and work in our lives. The Biblical characters, which we have studied in this course, had a strong desire to follow God and to serve Him only. They were obedient to God in all areas of their lives, even onto death.

B. Results of Obedience

Everything good is the result of an original act of obedience. God is fully obedient to His own Word. We must be obedient for the Word to produce fruit in us.

The Holy Spirit gives power to the Word through obedience and faithfulness. Obedience is the initial spiritual substance through which all other fruit of our relationship with God comes.

This Scripture sums up obedience (He.10:20-24). It is up to us to take action. To receive from God we must be willing to receive. God is willing to give us our needs and wants, but we must be obedient to Him and His Word, in order to receive.

C. Obedience Clings to God's Word

Obedience is the pathway to exaltation and authority. Again, we need to become obedient servants, rather than seek positions. If we are obedient, God will not take away His promises of power and authority. Obedience is a labor of love and compassion, which is a manifestation of the heart of a living God. Obedience brings:

1. Pleasure to God.
2. Proof of our love for God.
3. Commitment to God.
4. Heavenly provision for us.
5. Goodness to our lives.

D. Spiritual Fruit Grows from Obedience

All spiritual fruit grows out of the soil of obedience. Faith relies on trusting in and obeying God. Unfaltering obedience to the pronouncing of God's Word and compassion for the people will cause us to become intercessors.

E. Salvation Comes in Obedience

Obedience is the certification of entering into an eternal relationship with God. God places great emphasis on obedience in the fulfilling of God's Will. Our obedience should be perfected in Jesus, in His Word, truth, and lifestyle. The best example of obedience in mankind is Jesus Christ. Jesus fulfilled the law obediently by the spirit.

F. Obedience Develops Maturity

An obedient heart develops in maturity. The fuel to an obedient heart is the quantity and spiritual quality of the Word of God. It must be recognized to be followed. Jesus is the name of obedience. He was always hungry for the Word and spent time with His Father in prayer. He was willing to obey His Father, even unto death.

G. Obedience is First Priority

A loving, obedient heart is the first priority in developing a relationship with God. The depth of our relationship with God depends on our obedience. Obedience works together with faithfulness and trust. These three qualities are found in each of the biblical characters we have studied in this course. They knew in whom they believed and they did not doubt where they stood regarding their trust in the Lord. They totally and completely trusted Jehovah.

H. Obedience, the Substance of Our Fruit

Obedience is the initial spiritual substance through which all other fruit of relationship with God comes. Obedience to God's Word connects us to Him that we might receive (Ro.1:5).

I. No Substitute for Obedience

Obedience of the heart has no substitute. There is no other way to God (Ga.2:16; Ro.3:27-28). It is one thing to believe and receive Salvation by faith of the Lord unto eternity. It is another thing to become fulfilled and live above misery in this life. Obedience to the spirit of God's Law by faith will take us over God's determined pathway overcoming all adversity. Obedience is running directly toward God. Disobedience is running directly away from God. Obedience is the foundation upon which rests relationship with the living God through Jesus Christ. God never let man's disobedience change His attitude about His children (Je.31:20).

J. More Obedience

1. Abraham's obedience

Genesis tells us that because of Abraham's obedience his seed/offspring would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth (Ge.22:18).

2. Keeping covenant

Moses explains that if we obey and keep our part of the covenant, that He will make us a nation of nations (Ex.19:5).

3. God protects us

God told us in Exodus that if we are obedient, He will be an enemy to our enemies (Ex.23:22). Now that's protection!

4. Blessing or cursing

Deuteronomy tells us that we are blessed if we obey God's Commandments and cursed if we do not (De.11:27-28).

5. The price of disobedience

Joshua reminds us that there is a price to pay for disobedience (Jos.5:6).

6. Mind controlled

Paul reminds us that our spiritual armor will capture the minds and hearts of the disobedient (2Co.10:5).

7. Death or life, our choice

The Book of Romans plainly tells us that we can choose disobedience (death) or obedience (acquittal) (Ro.6:16). Whichever we choose will become our master and we its slave. We must understand that we have a common enemy and it is of most importance to work as a team to defeat our enemy.

We Believers need to unite with other churches and Believers to be an example to the world. The world is quick to point out the disunity among the churches. If we are to be a witness of Christ Jesus, we need to look at some of our attitudes. We must stop the disunity we cause with our fellow brethren. For example, how do we feel about a black family moving in next door, or the Christian couple down the street who are getting a divorce? What about the Pastor's daughter who got pregnant out of wedlock? Can we get past our personal feelings and be obedient to the Word of God, and love our brethren and minister unto their needs? God teaches us to love one another. Do we?

If we, as Christians could unite, the world would be a better place to live. We are told that one can put a thousand to flight but two can put ten thousand to flight! Praise God, help us to unite, and work together for the glory of God!

IX. A CLOSER LOOK AT DISOBEDIENCE

A. Companions of Disobedience are Selfishness, Rebelliousness, and Darkness

Disobedience, with its companions, brings:

1. Spiritual paralysis and bondage from Satan (Mic.3:5-8).
2. A fruitless life that comes from disobedience.

A fruitless life is full of uncertainty; a life that only acts and does not live. (See Sadducees and Pharisees and Paul before his conversion in Acts).

3. We chose life or death.

Disobedience is a builder of the path to eternal death (Ro.5:19).

4. Satan is the prince of the power of the air (Ep.2:2).
5. God's wrath and His endless love is shown in Colossians and Hosea (Co.3:6; Ho.3:1).
6. We see a just compensation (payment) of reward in Hebrews (He.2:2-3).
7. Pharaoh lived an ungodly lifestyle (Ex.5:2).
8. II Corinthians tells us that disobedience will be turned against us, (2Co.10:6).

B. Disobedience Concealed

Usually, when the word disobedience is mentioned, everyone immediately thinks about the obvious overt sins such as lying, and stealing. But the Body of Christ needs to recognize some other areas, which God also sees as disobedience.

Not obeying God in the principles of His Word is disobedience. In other words, when you get up grumbling in the morning, instead of praising God, that's disobedience. God said through David, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; I will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps.118:24). We really disobey the Lord in ways that we do not think of as sin, and then we complain when we cannot seem to come into all of the bountiful blessings of God.

Suppose someone gives you a job to do, and you are not as qualified as you feel you should be. Complaining that you are not qualified is disobedience. Why? Because the Bible says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me" (Php.4:13). Notice that it says all things, not just spiritual things, but all things.

Another area that Christians may fail to recognize as disobedience is the area of doubt. In the Old Testament, when the people doubted and refused to believe God to take them into Canaan, God called that an evil report. They could not enter their promised land with an evil report, and neither can you!

C. Result of Disobedience

Disobedience allows the devil to bring things against our lives, and it is not God's fault. A lot of people would like to blame God for some of their troubles, when actually it was their own disobedience that gave the devil an entrance into their lives in the first place.

Saul played the fool by not obeying God. His life ended by his own sword. Did it have to be that way? Was that God's plan for Saul when He anointed him to be king? Emphatically no! God meant for this young man, the first King of Israel, to lead the whole nation of Israel to great heights. Yet because of disobedience, Saul lost his entire inheritance and never fulfilled the exciting things God had destined for his life.

Samuel gives us the result of Saul's disobedience (1Sa.15:17-23). In this Scripture, Samuel was actually telling Saul, "It would have been better for you to obey the voice of the Lord than to sacrifice to God, even in the most precise and correct manner, because your sacrificing done without obedience to all that God has said, will really ascend up to His nostrils as a stench!"

God delights in sacrifices but He does not delight in them when you have not obeyed. What God really delights in, above all else, is obedience to His Word.

How does this pertain to us today? There are a lot of people in the church world today who are involved in a similar type of disobedience, and may not realize it. For example, they may be making faith confessions, and trying to say all the right things, when actually God cannot bless them because they have failed to obey

His voice in other areas. What God is really wanting from them is their complete obedience.

There are a lot of Christians putting their faith out to believe God for finances, for example. But, on the other hand, they are actually robbing God, and are therefore in no position to receive God's blessing at all! How are they robbing God? They do not pay their tithes! And remember the principle, "To obey is better than sacrifice." It is also better than to "confess," or "fast," or whatever. If we are in disobedience to God's Word, how can we confess the Word? How can we pray much? How can we fast? The full promise of God cannot come to us when we are disobedient. We may receive a little return from all our confessing and believing. But until we start to obey God's Word, the full blessing cannot be ours!

We can pray and sing all we want, but if God has told us to do something, and we are refusing to do it, there is no way God can bless and honor us. Our own disobedience has made receiving from God absolutely impossible!

Obedience to God's Word is what will give us peace on the inside in the midst of the storm. When we obey God to the fullest, He will take care of us. Whether it is in the spiritual realm or in the natural realm, obedience to God is the thing that will see us through. Obedience will always bring us to victory. Obedience to God will allow us to lie down and sleep at night without any worry. When we have fully obeyed God, why should we fret? Why should we worry? Why should we lose sleep? Because when we know we have obeyed, then we know God is in control!

Maybe this is why some people still wring their hands after they have prayed and have trouble sleeping at night. It may be that they know there is an area where they have not completely yielded to God and obeyed Him. And because they have not completely obeyed, God's promises cannot fully be theirs. So they have a reason to worry. They have a reason to be upset. The only condition to remaining in the blessings of God is to remain in obedience to God!

X. THE STORY OF JONAH

A. The Ninevites

These people were Gentile heathens, unlike the chosen people of God. They had not been born into knowledge and understanding of God and His desire for obedient fellowship. They were ignorant of what a life responding to God could be like. Nineveh was a large city with a circumference eight miles around, sixty miles around including the suburbs outside the main city wall. It had a huge population (Jo.4:11). Nineveh was located several hundred miles east of the

Northern Kingdom of Israel. The Ninevites were considered to be a low class, a lost people by the Israelites and certainly Jonah. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, a country that became the enemy and capturer of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Jo.1:2). God came for the lost, the heathen, and the Gentile (Jo.1:2b). God's compassion knew their wickedness.

B. Jonah

The name Jonah means dove. Names had spiritual significance in the Old Testament days. Jonah was obviously an experienced prophet of God prophesying to his own people. He had no problem recognizing the voice of God because he immediately responded (Jo.1:1-2). His response, however, was one of absolute disobedience. Instead of going west, he went to the east. He made a quick decision, probably due to some cultural doctrine within him and moved in the opposite direction toward the west. Jonah's response to the Word of God was in perfect disobedience (Jo.1:3). Disobedience is clearly running from God. Jonah's spiritual makeup, his theology, was threatened when what God said disagreed.

C. The Call to Return

God always calls those who know Him and turn from Him. He is obvious in His effort to point out the error and prick man's heart to return home. Adam disobeyed and spoke a question when given an opportunity for repentance (Ge.3:9). With King David, God sent the prophet Nathan to point out to David his sin and disobedience to God's plan. David repented (2Sa.12:1-14). Jonah was called back to God and repentance by a great storm (Jo.1:4,5b).

D. The Fruits of Disobedience

The crew of the ship suffered as a result of Jonah's disobedience (Jo.1:10-11, 14). The fruit of Jonah's disobedience was used by God to minister to the ship's crew even though it was taking Jonah further down and away from communion with God (Jo.1:16). Jonah was buried in a sea tomb (a great fish), in a miserable place. There is a picture here of Jesus entombed for three days, as a part of the Salvation process. It speaks of dying to self and becoming united with God (Jo.1:17). A fruit of disobedience can be death and destruction, separation from God's hand, or a return to God's providing relationship. Jonah seized the opportunity to repent (Jo.2:1-10).

Bondage comes when there is disobedience. That is when the heaviness, fear, and guilt come. These things come with disobedience. Remember Adam in the garden? He ate of the fruit and immediately felt shame; he knew he was naked.

When we are disobedient, there is a price to pay. However, obedience does not bring fear, guilt or shame, but joy, liberty, and happiness.

An individual who is obedient in some areas, for example, may be disobedient in other areas. The enemy is sure to play on our imperfections, how do we keep him from causing us more heartache? The Lord spoke through Jeremiah; "Return, thou backsliding Israel ... for I am merciful ... Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God ... and ye have not obeyed my voice ... Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord ..." (Je.3:12-14)

This was written to Israel. We can apply it to our lives today. We need to recognize our shortcomings and admit, first to ourselves, then to God, those areas in which we have failed. This means that we will become more aware of what God calls sin and become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prodding of what God calls sin. Then we can confess wholeheartedly.

When we confess our shortcomings to God, we need to be sincere and not lax. We need to be aware of confessions that we make with our head and not our heart. A confession from the head is insincere and the enemy can use this as a stronghold.

God does not tolerate disobedience! Disobedience always carries a penalty in the Scriptures. Sooner or later the disobedient are dealt with. In every situation, they had to start over in obedience to God and His laws before they could go on with Him.

Every time you find obedience, you will find repentance. These two go hand in hand. As Christians, if we could learn to correct and judge ourselves, God would not have to. But if we do not obey, God is bound by duty to correct us. Actually, we bring it on ourselves by our own disobedience.

We can avoid the judgment of God if we would learn to judge ourselves honestly by the Scriptures. But we find ourselves time and time again in disobedience. The cause of this problem is due to our lack of personal devotion time. Personal time with God is our safeguard against the enemy and falling into the same areas of disobedience.

Disobedience to our first call is found in self rather than the Word of God. It is running away from God!

E. The God of the Second Chance

Contrast God's second call and Jonah's response to the first one (Jo.3:1-4). Notice how obedience to God's direction is now followed. The people of a very

large city were immediately struck by God's Word through the prophecy of a humble man (Jo.3:4-10). A people repented, God repented, and they were saved from destruction. Also, notice God took Jonah right back to where Jonah had left off.

F. The Missing Pleasure and Joy of Obedience in Jonah

Jonah, rather than knowing God's pleasure and joy at the saving of the people of Nineveh, allowed his former attitude to return. This repentance of the Ninevites overpowered his contentment at having been obedient. Satan continues to try to steal, kill, and destroy even after a good work of God is complete (Jn.10:10; Jo.4:1-3). Our God, who never gives up on the Father and child relationship, rebuked and instructed Jonah. He reasoned with him that compassion for a plant should be manifested on a people, any people, (Jo.4:4-11).

A lot of people call obedience bondage. No! Obedience sets us free; it liberates us. It gives us an arena in which to operate where there is nothing to hinder us. There is no wondering what will happen to us because we are surrounded by the power of God. God takes up the petition of the obedient one!

When we are obedient, we have confidence that God will do for us what we are asking (Jn.15:7; 1Jn.3:20-22; Jn.8:31-32). According to His Word, He cannot help us until we come into line with His Word. Without obedience, we do not have boldness or liberty.

G. Lesson

Jonah's disobedience delayed God's message, and was certainly tough on Jonah. Consider all of the terrible consequences of wars, famines, floods, fears and hatred wrought upon mankind because of the disobedience of the one who was in the garden. The lack of an obedient association with the Father God has great impact on all with whom disobedience touches. On the other hand, consider the consequence of obeying the Word of the Lord. The abundant life designed by God is the result. Obedience to God has survived from the beginning all the way to today. Obedience brings all the provision of Jesus Christ: deliverance, healing, victory, and all of the wonderful life filling fruit of the Spirit of God. In Jonah we learn that it is impossible to escape from God's love and goodness.

Complete obedience to God requires two things:

1. Real prayer, listening to God and allowing Him to strengthen us.

2. Surrendering our lives completely to Him, worshipping and praising Him every day.

XI. ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND

A. Hindrances to Entering the Promised Land

At first glance, receiving God's best just by being obedient sounds so simple and easy. But upon consideration, we sometimes think that it cannot possibly be that easy. So we go into a long drawn-out discourse, with seventeen steps on how to receive from God and twenty-five more steps on how to obtain the highest kind of faith. But the highest kind of faith simply comes with one step; complete obedience to all that God has said. If God said it, believe it! That is all there is to it. That is real faith, and obedience is how we get it!

Some Believers think it is burdensome and difficult to live a good Christian life and that obedience is a hard taskmaster. Actually, the opposite is true! Disobedience is the hard taskmaster, and all of our difficulties arise from *not* obeying God.

Some of us try to live obediently to God on a wide scope, on the basis of a whole lifetime, instead of just one day at a time. The thought of such a huge span of time lived in complete obedience so overwhelms us that we become discouraged and feel that it is a feat too great to ever attain. We give up before we ever get started!

Now, of course, our entire life should be dedicated to God. We should be dedicated to the fact that we are going to serve God as long as we live. However, in order to bring obedience down to a practical realm so we can relate to it, we need to think of obedience in terms of living each moment for God. In reality, we cannot live the future today anyway. We can only live one moment at a time, this very moment.

If we would just concentrate on living today in obedience to God, then we would not have to worry about living tomorrow for God. Tomorrow has not come yet. And if in living today for God, we would just live every moment for Him, and then we would not have to be concerned about the whole day. The moment-by-moment living in obedience would take care of the whole day!

This is such an important concept to realize. We can only live in the present, in the now, one moment at a time. If we would just live moment-to-moment in obedience, we would find that we would always be living in the now of obedience!

B. How to Enter the Promised Land

The Body of Christ must realize that if we are going to fulfill every promise of God in our own lives, and come into our promised land, then we will have to learn how to completely obey God.

The land of promise for the Christian is what God has promised to us in His Word. The Bible tells us about every good thing that already belongs to us. These promises are our "Canaan," or Promised Land. We enter into the richness of our promised land in just the same way that the children of Israel were supposed to enter into theirs, through obedience.

What made Abraham the great man of faith he was? What enabled Abraham to receive the promises of God for his life, against all odds, even old age, and to receive his promised land?

We find the answer in his complete obedience to the commands of God. Without even knowing where he was going, Abraham left everything to obey God (He.11:8).

It took complete, utter obedience and leaning on what God had said for Abraham to enter the land of promise. However, Abraham obeyed, being fully persuaded that what God had said, He was also able to perform (Ro.4:21)).

It is so simple, but we have made obedience seem so difficult. Any time we do not receive from God, we need to find out if there is any area in which we have failed to obey God. There is never any problem with the source; so the problem has to be with the receiver, us. Most of the time, when we fail to receive from God, there is some disobedience standing in the way, though it may be ever so subtle.

The promises of God have already been given to us. They contain all the good things that are ours by inheritance. But we will have to believe them, and completely obey God, in order to receive them. We will have to go back to where we missed it, and get back in line with God and His Word before we will qualify as willing and obedient (Is.1:19).

If we really believe what God said, then we will obey Him. And we will receive from Him whatever we need!

XII. BROKENNESS

Perhaps the best understanding of brokenness is to see a person who has been

subdued totally, or we might say they have been humbled. While this is not normally done as a process by humans to humans, we can see the parallel of what God does with us by what humans do with a horse.

Horse training methods are as varied as their handlers that train them. Some trainers use what could be called strong arm or even brutal tactics to get the horse to do what they want. On the opposite end of the scale, there are trainers who are gentle, humane and respectful to the horse and yet are able to train it. This process, “breaking the horse,” is done so that it will obey its owner/rider in the process and purpose for the horse. Some techniques are such as snubbing a horse to a post so that he cannot move even his head until he obeys the trainer. Another technique is to run a horse in mindless circles until it is totally exhausted and ready to submit to the trainer.

God brings man to breaking points for His plan and purpose, but He never uses any tactic that overrides the man’s submission. If the man will not submit, God does not force the submission. It may be that the man will come into positions where he wishes he had submitted, but the obedience is never forced. God always uses the “kinder, gentler” approach to bring us to obedience.

The gentle approach to horse training is said to make lasting impressions on the horse by giving to the animal. One man calls it bonding. His taking the time to love on the horse pays big rewards and it does not take hours before the horse responds eagerly by giving back in performing and engaging with the human. While it has been said that it is “magical,” men could learn from God in His training of humans to do what He has called them to do. Certainly man is higher than a horse, but the parallel is unmistakable.

Horses are herd animals and instinctually want a leader to show them how things are and what to do. Man, while not a herd animal, is socially active and tends to want to be with other humans. Man however, leans to the independent rather than a herd mentality and that is part of the reason Eve paid attention to Satan when approached in the Garden with the offer to be independent of God.

Horses are trained to accept being ridden and performing other chores, which is parallel to God flowing through us for His uses. The horse that responds well removes the need for whips or crops to punish and encourage the horse to obey. With us, God does not use a “whip” though we may be punished as He has to allow the enemy to attack us for our disobedience. Obedience is always the best path, but if we are not broken we often find ourselves wanting to go independent of the Lord.

A. Humility

Early in this course the statement was made that “Man is not born obedient.” That being true, it is true also that man is not born humble, a precursor to understanding and functioning in obedience.

Pride is the opposite of humility and is a conceited sense of one's superiority. That is what Satan appealed to in Eve. While it had been hidden previously, when faced with a temptation, it reared its ugly head. God is in direct opposition to the proud (Ja.4: 6). A proud man feels that he is in need of nothing outside of himself, while humility is the realization that we are dependent on others, especially God.

To be humble is for the mind to be reduced in arrogance and self-dependency. It is to have an attitude of dependency, especially when the object of our dependence is God. The person in pride has lost all humility. The person in humility has lost all pride.

To be humble is to be usable and teachable. That person will be willing to pray, exhibiting the action underlying the attitude of being dependent. The humble person is the person that God can use, for they will obey and they will not take the glory for anything that is done to themselves.

Moses was called the meekest (humblest) man alive (Nu.12: 3). To be meek is to be gentle, kind, humble. Moses developed this humility or meekness, but where? In Pharaoh's palace, every earthly desire was met. In the wilderness, there is a lack of that which meets the earthly desire. Moses became a meek man in the wilderness. It is hard for people who have everything to realize just how desperate they really are.

Paul wrote to Timothy that it would be hard for people in the end times to be anything but self-centered. He said that they would be ". . . lovers of self . . . self-centered . . . proud and arrogant . . ." among many other things (2Ti.3: 2, AMP). They will prove that some will not die to self or walk in humility. There is a dying-to-self process that has to take place. We may not have told God we will not do it, but we may have said we did not want to. The attitude was still there and we might as well have said we would do it. The property of "self-indulgence" is rampant in the above Scripture. To be self-indulgent is to yield to the wishes or desires, not opposing or restraining self from anything. That is a primary evil in society today, at least in America.

B. Principle of Brokenness

Jesus established the principle of brokenness in John 12: 23-26.

"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his

life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour” (Jn.12: 23-26).

In this principle of brokenness, we can see that when something is broken, something is released. This is the purpose of brokenness, as far as the Lord is concerned, that our brokenness would bear much fruit. If we are not broken, we cannot release the fruit of the seed that is in us. That incorruptible seed we were born again by is to bear fruit, but it has to be broken within to produce without.

As believers we are to go through the process of brokenness, and this will take a life time of submission and yielding to the Word of God. We notice that no plant produces immediately upon being planted. In fact, with a seed, it has to die to break open and begin the process. Dying is involved with this brokenness that will eventually bring about our obedience.

Some may wonder what they will receive by going through this process of breaking. It is not near as important as to what we get as it is what we will become. This brokenness will make us usable and our lives available to Him for His grand purposes. That is what is important. God has put great things in us, both by the creating of us as well as by His incorruptible seed we were born again with (1Pe.1: 23). So how do we get out of us what God has put in us?

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Ep.3: 16).

Jesus knew the problem with man was in the outer man (soul realm). Our spirit man was recreated and is perfect and strong and connected to God. But our soul man is still programmed by the world system which we came out of and it requires many things to be molded and transformed to the thinking and resulting actions in the image of God. Which ever we feed becomes the strongest. If we feed our flesh (old nature, soulish things), it becomes strong. If we feed our spirit, it becomes strong. Nothing outside of us can separate us from God. Lack of obedience (sin) breaks that fellowship. So many times we exchange a need for an inward change with the outward change. This happens as we change churches, relationships, etc. We avoid confrontation, with ourselves and others, so we do not have to change. Yet that is the very thing God wants to happen in us.

Many times it is not our circumstances of people that are our greatest hindrance, but us. The blame should not be placed on the external, but the internal. Denial or justification of our wrong is our attempt to manipulate our way out of God’s request for brokenness, or put another way, dying to self. When we shift the blame or minimize any wrong, we have not succeeded or won anything, but have

failed. When we reject or refuse a call to humility, we hinder God's maturing process which also keeps us from being productive in the fruit bearing He wants.

C. Jesus' Brokenness

Jesus was broken for us so that He could touch more than those He met physically. He blessed all He met while walking the earth, but He could only touch those. His ultimate purpose was to fulfill all that was written about Him and He could not complete that in a human body, bound by natural law. First and foremost, He was to die. It was the reason He came. What He did in life was nothing compared to what He is accomplishing through His death and resurrection, which reaches to us. When He died, the full power and glory of God was released. Because He died, mankind could come to life. Remember the principle? When something is broken, something is released. That release at Jesus death was multi-faceted, but the greatest thing was the release from sin for humanity.

There are examples besides Jesus being broken in the Scriptures.

1. Clay pitchers

In Judges 7: 16, Gideon placed pitchers in the hands of his 300 men, each with a lamp inside the pitcher. As the earthen vessel was broken, light came forth, causing the enemy to be blinded and giving light to the warriors. We are the clay pitchers of the Lord, to be broken so that light can come into the world, just as Jesus was broken at the cross to bring light into the world through us. Paul wrote that we have ". . . this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2Co.4: 7). It is His light, the surpassing greatness of His power and not of ourselves. He had to be broken and the Light placed inside of us (through salvation) for the Light to shine where He wanted (Mt.5: 14).

Light represents several things, while darkness represents at least 2 things in the Word.

a. Light represents the Word of God.

Psalms 119: 105 says "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Hosea 4: 6 says "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge . . . " Darkness here represents ignorance. Paul prayed for the ". . . eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Ep.1: 17). The Word brings light, understanding and wisdom. It is the Word that brings understanding and deliverance to self and others.

b. Light exposes sin.

Sin is in us and the generation we live in. But in John 1: 4-5, it says that the light is in Him and that light shines into the darkness and the darkness does not comprehend it ([put it out, absorb it or appropriate it, and is unreceptive to it], v.5, AMP). According to Ephesians 5: 11, we are not to participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but to expose them. According to Romans 13: 12, we should lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. The darkness of sin is conquered by the light of the Word.

c. Light is the witness of the believer.

Jesus tells us in Matthew that we are the “light of the world.” Truthfully, we are not the light source, for He is that Light. But, we are the reflective light that is lighting up the world today. That is part of the reason He was broken, so that we could receive the light and become as he said, the light of the world. The only way for darkness to exist is for there to be no light. The light of Jesus is to be released and the flesh has to get out of the way for it to shine through. Therefore, we have to die.

2. Mary’s vial

In Mark 14: 3 it says that Mary broke a vial (box) and poured the contents on Jesus. In Matthew 26: 8-13 it is shown that Mary’s gift was a reflection of what was in her heart. Humility will bring us to a place of true worship, where our focus is on the Lord and not on us. Pride will never let a person do what Mary did. True worship is uncomfortable for some people to watch. Self-conscious people are uncomfortable with this type of worship. Let someone get stretched out face down on the floor in the middle of the worship service and some will want to run and others will think about going and seeing if there is something wrong with the person who is prostrated as such. Others will join in, moved at the release of self in worship.

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume Mary poured on Jesus (Jn.12: 3). By breaking the vial, the perfume was released, blessing Jesus and others who were in the house. Christ wants to manifest the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place through us (2Co.2: 14-15). Just like perfume smells differently on individuals, so is Christ revealed differently through different individuals. The same anointing,

Christ, is manifested differently through our personalities, gifts, and callings.

The fragrance of Christ is a sweet savor to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. The difference is that the believer is hated by some and loved by others. In the Roman military, they had a custom that gives explanation to this. When on the battlefield, when the battle had turned in favor of the Romans, they would have young boys release upwind fragrances and spices, or they would even run through the fighting to release them. As the Roman soldiers smelled the fragrances, they knew that the battle had turned in their favor, no matter what the fight was like where they were. It was an encouragement in the heat of the battle that their deliverance was close at hand and not to stop. It was also a sign of defeat to those who were about to perish or be taken captive.

3. The broken bread

In Matthew 14: 18-20, we see Jesus breaking the bread to feed the multitude. Jesus blessed the bread and broke it. Then God multiplied the bread to feed many. The brokenness process will take us to a place of nourishing many instead of a few. Without the brokenness and blessing, it remained just a lad's lunch. But with the blessing of the Lord and that brokenness, it became a meal for a multitude.

D. Pride's Manifestation

One of the ways pride manifests today is through the selfish desires of man. Selfishness is abundantly spoken against as a human evil in the Scriptures, at the other end of the spectrum from humility and its blessings to humanity. Selfishness is rooted in the self-will. It shows up as "I want what I want when I want it the way I want it." There are many words that attach to the word "self" and most if not all of them are bad news for humanity to operate in. The following may help us see why:

1. Self-will

Self-will is self-pleasing. It is found in the arrogant person. This person tries to turn everyone their way. The flesh wants its way and wants everyone else to believe their way. Self-willed people will fashion their vocabulary and the main word is "I." This word "I" is prominent in their speech and is the only person they want to talk about. This person actually has a streak of stubbornness that needs to be broken (Ps.78: 8).

2. Self-centered

The self-centered person feeds their flesh. They believe they are the beginning and the end. Everything they think and do is all for what it will do for them. It is their world and it revolves around them.

3. Self-assertive

The self-assertive person believes that everyone is interested in them. They project themselves into the sight, hearing, and presence of others. Often, they dominate conversations and eventually bring the conversation around to self.

4. Self-depreciation

These people differ from those with low self-esteem, in that they will close themselves off just to get others to run after them. It is a false humility. They tend to be a “lame duck” or have the victim syndrome. They want everyone to see how they suffer.

5. Self-conceited

This person has little regard for other people’s opinions. They may not realize how intelligent others really are, especially if it contradicts them. There is little compassion for others in the self-conceited person. If something does not include them, it is not worth doing.

6. Self-defensive

These people are jealous of their rights and will avenge any wrong they perceive has been committed against them. They will not receive an insult without defending themselves. These people do not receive correction or criticism without taking it personally. They always try to justify themselves. The self-defensive person is telling us they are insecure.

7. Self-conscious

These people put present themselves as being in control and that they have it going on. They always try to put their best foot forward. Their hair, clothes, speech, and appearance always line up, but the motives are insecurity based. Bound by the image of pride, they will apply pressure to their spouse or children to not get out of line. In public they do not want to look bad by others. They are afraid others will see them as less than they want to be seen as.

8. Self-righteous

This person has a “works” mentality. There is a wrong motive attached that is designed to promote self. Their acceptance of themselves is based on good works, comparing themselves to others.

9. Self-confidence

This person is confident in their own ability, talents, and self worth. It is hard for them to trust the outcome of events to someone else. They take pride in what they accomplish and often see others as less than fit to have the responsibility.

Most of us at one time or another have walked in one or more of these characteristics. Too, many of us have evidenced many or all of them, for they tend to piggy-back each other. But, as we overcome some of these areas, others will weaken. These self qualities become weaker and are eventually uprooted by the Word.

E. Peter, Our Example

Peter was a man who was always sticking his foot in his mouth, following a self-sufficient disposition that would have ruined him if he did not allow it to be changed by the Word. Peter got his name changed as Abram did, but it took much longer for it to work its work in him. John 1: 42 speaks of what Jesus said to Simon, and we see his character did not change for months and years. Some changes took almost a decade.

It was in Matthew that Peter received the revelation of who Jesus really was/is (Mt.16: 13-23). What an honor to be the first recorded man to say that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Yet with all Jesus commendation, it was only a few moments later that Peter was rebuked for speaking under the influence of Satan. Going against the plan of God will always draw a sharp rebuke, especially for a leader or future one. Who wants to hear the words, “Get thee behind me, Satan?”

In Matthew also, Peter walked on water. Yes, he began to sink, but it was because he took his eyes off the Word (Mt.14: 28-33). Peter was rash and incautious and really attached to Jesus, but he still was prone to fall due to his character. Afraid when in danger, he cried again for help. Thus the Lord suffered Peter to learn his own character, and his need of dependence on Jesus which is a lesson all Christians are allowed to learn, sooner or later, by experience if need be. Crying out to Jesus, He took him by the hand and lifted him up and

walked him back to the boat. But as they went, the rebuke came, "Why did you doubt?" (Mt.14: 28-31).

Pride and self propels Peter to think that he has been extremely magnanimous by asking Jesus if forgiving someone who has offended him 7 times is sufficient. The infinite number of Jesus (7 times 70) brings Peter face to face again with a requirement that the Jews would not normally follow. The Jews taught that they were never to forgive more than three times. Peter enlarges this maxim more than one half, while Jesus multiplies it greatly. Peter was often answering or speaking up for all the disciples, and perhaps here it was such. However, there had been a recent dispute and Peter had probably been the object of special envy. His forwardness in continually answering for the group of disciples had likely been brought up to him. Such insinuations and even confrontations were probably made often and Peter desired to know how often he was to stand it (Mt.18: 1).

In John 13 Peter refused Jesus' ministry and the call to servant-hood (Jn.13: 5-10). His words are exceedingly emphatic. Peter had often seen the great humility of his Lord, but never saw him condescend to such a level. It is incomprehensible to Peter that the Lord should do such, the job of the lowest slave of the household. Peter rebelled against it as a thing he could not stomach. The true inner attitude was exposed, that of refusal to what he saw as beneath His place. What the Lord would do, we may not fully understand, but he does it for our good, and it is often designed to teach us an important lesson of humility and piety. We should yield to all the requirements of God, even when we do not see how that obedience will benefit anyone.

If Peter then would not submit to let his Master wash his feet, how could he allow Christ to serve him in the act of salvation? One word indicates that veiled implication - "wash." Certainly this familiar scriptural symbol of the higher cleansing Peter was putting from him without any thought. No humility lies in the refusal to allow what He wants to do for us. Too, it is self-willed presumption to not receive what is a true gift, grace. Upon Christ' reply to Peter's strong words, he wanted his hands and head (all of him) washed also.

Peter, the disciples (and all of us) will be tested (Lk.22: 31-32). We will all go through our "Gethsemanes" to see what our resolve is; will we trust Him to lead us right, or will we require our own will and disobey. There is a sifting for us all and it is to see if we will stand in obedience or fall to the enemy's words and testing.

Jesus did not pray for Peter to get out of the sifting, but that his faith would not fail. Jesus encouraged Peter in that he had prayed for him and that he would return to strengthen his brothers. God has it all worked out and he is not losing

any battles. It is for us to be convinced that He is in control (Ph.1: 6). He is perfecting and bringing to full completion what He has begun in us.

This could be a time of great pain and sorrow, but restoration would come and he would not be rejected. Peter compromised his position that he said he would not vacate by following at a distance (Mt.26: 35; Lk.22: 54). This is not what Jesus had in mind (Mt.16: 24). Peter followed from a distance, no longer too willing to die with Christ. Following from a distance indicates that now something is between “me” and Jesus. Usually it is “me.”

As Peter followed from a distance, his fellowship changed and he sat among the heathen at the high priest’s courtyard fire (Lk.22: 55). He denied him (Lk.22: 57), and once he denied him he changed the way he spoke (Lk.22: 60). Peter was going through his “Gethsemane.”

Gethsemane means “wine press.” Every leader will have at least one Gethsemane. Anyone who is going to do anything significant for the Lord will go through these experiences several times. In relation to Luke 22: 39-46, we see that Gethsemane is a place where: 1) the spiritual battles occur (v.40-44); 2) loneliness is felt (v.41); 3) honesty is expressed (v.41-42); 4) submission is required (v.42); 5) strength is received (v.43). This is the place of the breakthrough that a person is looking for when under the pressure of Gethsemane.

During this brokenness process, we may feel vulnerable, exposed, and that many situations are out of our control. And they are. Later God has to deal with Peter’s prejudice as a symptom of the whole Jewish nation’s problem (Acts chapter 10). Too, Paul rebukes Peter for back pedaling over circumcision and the law keepers (Ga.2: 14). But, by the time of Peter’s letters, we read them from an established leader who has gone through the fire and the pressure of the maturing process. He has come to the point of humility and complete obedience. He has, indeed, died to self.

Dying to Self

When you are forgotten or neglected and purposely set aside;
And you don’t sting and hurt with the insult or oversight;
But your heart is happy, counting it worthy to suffer for Christ;
That’s dying to self.

When your good is spoken evil of, when your wishes are crossed;
Your advice is disregarded, your opinions ridiculed;
And refuse to let anger rise in your heart or even defend yourself;
But take it all in patient, loving silence;

That's dying to self.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, any lack of
punctuality or annoyance;
And you stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, or spiritual insensibility;
And endure it as Jesus endured it;
That's dying to self.

When you are content with any food, any offering;
Any climate, any society, any clothing;
Any interruption by the will of God;
That's dying to self.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation;
Or to record your own good words;
Or truly love to be unknown;
That's dying to self.

When you can see your brother prosper, having his needs met;
And honestly rejoice in spirit, and feel no envy;
Or question God while your own needs are far greater;
And in desperate circumstances;
That's dying to self.

When you can receive reproof from someone of less stature;
And can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly;
Finding no rebellion rising up within your heart;
That's dying to self.

Are you dead yet?

XIII. OBEDIENCE IN CONCLUSION

A. Summary

When the word obedience is mentioned, some Christians get a long face. Actually, obedience should be the Christian's greatest joy because God said, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Is.1:19). It is interesting to note that everyone is willing to eat the good of the land, but not everyone is willing to be obedient. What a vast difference between the two!

Another thing we need to recognize is that in true obedience there is an element of real humility. An obedient person is also a humble person. Why? Because he

puts the will and the desires of the one he serves above his own will and his own desires. Now there are many Christians who will try to prove just how humble they are. Although they may not say it in words, the attitude they portray is "I will show you just how humble I am." This is not humility.

Scripture tells us that we need to have the same mind, which was in Christ Jesus. Jesus emptied Himself, and took on the form of a servant, humbling Himself to the point of death on a cross. That is how complete His humility and obedience was (Php.2:5-7).

A true servant will know his/her role. A servant does not ask questions, or argue about the commands given. The servant knows that he/she is there only to serve the one in charge. Being a servant is of vital importance to the Body of Christ. Because of the way some people were raised, it is hard for them to understand and adapt to the attitude of a servant. They are afraid that if they do, it will put them right back into the lowly state from which they came.

Remember, that was in the devil's kingdom, under his evil tyranny. The rule of Satan is a rule of hate, distrust, and unbelief. In Satan's kingdom, the individual is nothing.

This is not how it is in the Kingdom of God under the rule of the King of Kings. The King's Kingdom is ruled by faith and love. When we become servants under God's rule, we actually become someone! When we become subject to God and bow before Him through the Lord Jesus Christ, then God Himself lifts us up and seats us with Christ (Ep.2:6).

Notice that in God's kingdom, humble obedience allows us to rule with Jesus Christ! With God, it is that attitude of humility, which is so important. Our attitude is all-important. The reason why some Christians are not receiving a return from their giving is because the attitude with which they are giving is not right before God. It is not that they are failing to give; it is that they are giving with the wrong attitude. Their attitude seems to be, "God, I am doing this for You, so You owe me!" But God does not owe us anything! We owe God everything! We are nothing without Him!

We can see that obedience is more than what some have thought. It is not just an act, or even a series of actions, or just something that we do or do not do. Obedience is more than acts or actions. It is a complete lifestyle; a life principle or attitude of heart by which we live.

B. Gifts of God for Obedience

1. The life God gives abides in your heart (1Sa.16:7).

2. The life God gives causes repentance as an act of obedience (Joel.2:12-13).
3. The life God gives is filled with trials and difficulty, but success is guaranteed by God's hand.
4. The life God gives is well, if we walk in God's Commandments, (Je.7:23).
5. The life God gives produces greatness. Abraham is a good example of greatness.
6. The life God gives carries responsibility for others. Jonah is an excellent example.
7. The life God gives is nurturing in faith and fosters righteousness (Ro.5:19).
8. The life God gives abides in the Believer. The Scriptures tell us that if we stay in God and obey His Commandments, we may ask anything of Him and He will grant us our desires.
9. The life God gives is continually filled with learning (He.5:8). It explains that even Jesus had to learn from experience what it was like to obey.
10. The life God gives is faith building. Chapter 6 of Acts tells us of Stephen, he was full of faith.
11. The life God gives provides love. John speaks very plainly of love and obedience (Jn.14:15-16). If we love and obey the Lord, He promises to send us the Comforter and He promises never to leave us alone.
12. The life God gives allows us, like Jonah, to turn around and run toward God's calling.
13. The life God gives allows us, like David, to turn to God after we have fallen.

C. Types of Hearts

There are 4 types of hearts that we can see, which if not changed, will be destructive to the one affected by it. These 4 hearts are demonstrated by the charts below.

Four Hearts of Men

Flesh Bent	Flesh Statement	Flesh Question
<u>Anger</u> Torch lighter Isaiah 50: 10	“I deserve some _____!” “My will be done!”	“Is God really on my side?” “How do I get some respect?”
<u>Foolishness</u> Broken cisterns Jeremiah 2: 13	“I want it now.” “I cannot help myself.”	“Is God really enough?” “How can I get more?”
<u>Despair</u> Vain striver Ecclesiastes 2: 20	“I need to be understood.” “No one knows my pain.”	“Is God compassionate?” “Does anyone really care?”
<u>Fear</u> Man pleaser Galatians 1: 10	“I am so unlovable.” “I cannot risk it.”	“Is God trustworthy?” “Does anyone like me?”

When the heart has been changed, the renewed conditions bring forth different statements and actions. These changes are listed below:

Four Hearts when Renewed

Renewed Statement	Renewed Question	Renewed Heart
“Christ is my Lord.” “His will be done.”	“Who can I serve?” “How do I forgive?”	Yielding and submissive Tender & kind
“God is worthy and awesome” “God is enough.”	“Who can I bless?” “Can I wait upon Him?”	Reverential fear, seeking wisdom and self control
“God is compassionate and near.” “I am in His sovereign hands.”	“Who can I give to?” “Where is my hope?”	Hopeful Giving
“I trust God with all my heart.” “My esteem/value comes from Christ’s love.”	“Who have I needed that I need to love more?” “With Christ as my friend, who shall I fear?”	Trusting, “loving more than needing.” Showing gratitude for all things.

Let us look at these hearts with some additional understanding:

1. The Angry Heart

The person characterized by an angry heart has a propensity to make an idol of power, control, and self-sufficiency or to be covetous. This person might find themselves making conscious and/or unconscious statements

like, "I want respect or peace....!" Or "I cannot believe so and so....!" A person who chooses not to deal with an angry heart may be characterized by bitterness, judgment toward others, discontentment, and lacking joy. Others might comment that their actions are volatile, ungrateful, condemning, grouchy, irritable, or difficult.

2. The Foolish Heart

The person characterized by a foolish heart has a propensity to make an idol of escape, pleasure, or self gratification. They may find themselves constantly in the pursuit of certain feelings, objects or the accumulation of things. This person may find themselves making conscious and/or unconscious statements like "I want it now!" or "I just cannot help myself!" The person who chooses to not deal with a foolish heart may be characterized by consuming addictions, blame-shifting, irresponsibility, and self-destruction. Others might comment that their actions are irresponsible, lazy, selfish or immature.

3. The Heart that Despairs

The person characterized by a despairing heart has a propensity to make an idol of easing pain, feeling good, and creature comforts. This person may find themselves making conscious and/or unconscious statements like "I deserve...." or "I am totally helpless!" The person who chooses to not deal with a despairing heart may be characterized by a victim mentality, an inordinate need for security, self-pity, strained relationships, and a propensity to self-medicate or escape through fantasy or self-destructive behavior. Others might comment that their behavior or moods are melancholy or down in the dumps. When relating to others they are often distant, isolating, draining, or self-absorbed. Sometimes despairing people are over-committed, and suffer from isolation, exhaustion, and a sense that "my needs are not met."

4. The Heart that Fears

The person characterized by a fearful heart has a propensity to make an idol of security, perfection, or looking better than they are. This person may find themselves making conscious and/or unconscious statements like "Will they reject me?" or "I cannot risk it!" The person who chooses to not deal with a fearful heart may be characterized by false guilt and shame, social and/or spiritual paralysis, fear of man, and a shaken faith. Others might comment that their behavior or moods are up and down, nervous or tentative, and that their social interactions are sometimes avoidant, or paranoid in nature.

D. Obedience Better Than Sacrifice

Under the Mosaic Law, obedience was looked upon as being better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams (1Sa.15:22). Obedience is faith in action. It is the outflow, the very test of love (Jn.14:21; Jn.15:10).

If anyone complains that man under the fall is too weak and helpless to obey these high commands of God, the answer is that, through the atonement of Christ, man is able to obey.

Those who say it is impossible to keep God's Commandments overlook one important consideration. It is the vital truth, which declares that through prayer and faith, man's nature is changed and made partaker of the divine nature. All reluctance to obey God is taken out of him. His natural ability to keep God's Commandments, growing out of his fallen and helpless state, is gloriously removed. By this radical change in his moral nature, a man receives power to obey God in every way and to yield full and glad allegiance. Then he can say, "I delight to do Thy will, Oh my God" (Ps.40:8).

Obedience can ask with boldness at the throne of grace. To do God's will without hesitation is the joy and the privilege of the successful praying man. If you have an earnest desire to pray well, you must learn how to obey well. An obedient life is a great help to prayer. In fact, an obedient life is a necessity to prayer. The absence of an obedient life makes prayer an empty performance.

One who has been disobedient may pray. He may pray for pardoning mercy and the peace of his soul. He may come to God's feet with tears, confession, and a penitent heart. God will hear him and answer his prayer. This kind of praying does not belong to the child of God, but to the penitent sinner, who has no other way to approach God. It is the possession of the unjustified soul, not him who has been saved and reconciled to God.

Unquestioning obedience is a high virtue, the quality of a soldier. To obey belongs preeminently, to the soldier. It is his first and last lesson. He must learn how to practice it without questioning or complaining at all times.

Obedience to God is a condition of spiritual thought, inward satisfaction, and stability to hear. Obedience opens the gates of the holy city and gives access to the tree of life. "Blessed are they that do His Commandments, which they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Re.22:14).

Universal obedience of the race is demanded. Nothing short of absolute obedience will satisfy God. The keeping of ALL His Commandments is the demonstration of obedience that God requires.

God never gives Commandments which man cannot obey. Is He so arbitrary, so severe, so unloving, that He issues Commandments, which cannot be obeyed? Never! To infer otherwise is to slander the character of God.

In principle, obedience to God is the same quality as obedience to earthly parents. It implies, in general, the giving up of one's own way to follow that of another. It requires the surrender of the will to the will of another. It implies the submission of oneself to the authority and requirements of a parent.

Obedience is love, obeying by anticipation. They are in error, and even sin, who say that men are bound to commit sin because of environment, heredity, or tendency. God's commands are not grievously difficult to obey.

E. Dedication

Entire dedication to God and full surrender, which carries with it the whole being in a flame of holy consecration, gives wings to faith and energy to prayer. It opens the door to the throne of grace.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners (He.7:26), had ready access to God in prayer. He had this free, full access because of His unquestioning obedience to His Father.

Loving obedience puts us where we can ask anything in His name. It gives us the assurance that He will do it. Loving obedience brings us into the prayer realm.

Remember that true praying is not mere sentiment, poetry, or eloquent speech. It does not consist of saying in sweet tones, "Lord, Lord." Prayer is not a mere form of words. It is not just calling upon a name. Prayer is obedience. It is founded on the unbending rock of obedience of God. Only those who obey have the right to pray. Behind the praying must be the doing. It is the constant doing of God's will in daily life, which gives prayer its potency.

If we want to pray well and get the most out of our praying, we must look at our obedience. Obedience is the groundwork of effective praying. This brings us near to God. The lack of obedience in our lives breaks down our praying.

It is not simply the saying of prayers, but holy praying. It is the prayers of the holy men of God. Behind such praying, giving to it energy and flame, are men

and women who are wholly devoted to God. They are entirely separated from sin and fully separated unto God. They always give energy, force, and strength to praying.

The lifting up of holy hands is essential to Christ-like praying. It is not a holiness, which dedicates only a closet to God. It does not merely set apart an hour to Him. It is a consecration, which takes hold of the entire man. It dedicates the whole life to God.

How many great misconceptions there are of the true elements and functions of prayer! There are many who earnestly desire to obtain an answer to their prayers, but who go unrewarded and unblessed. They fix their minds on some promise of God. Then they endeavor by stubborn perseverance to summon enough faith to lay hold on and claim it. This fixing the mind on some great promise may help in strengthening faith. But persistent and urgent prayer that expects and waits until faith grows exceedingly must be added to this promise.

Who is able and competent to do such praying except the many who readily, cheerfully, and continually obey God?

Faith, in its highest form, is the attitude as well as the act of a soul surrendered to God. His Word and His Spirit dwell in that soul. Faith must exist in some form or another in order to prompt praying, but in its strongest form and in its greatest results, faith is the fruit of prayer.

RESOURCE MATERIALS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CITED

- Greek-Hebrew Study Bible*, Dallas, Texas: Heritage Printers & Publishers, 1984.
- Holy Bible, Amplified Expanded Edition, KJV*, Zondervan Corporation and Lockman Foundation, 1987.
- Holy Bible, Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, KJV*, Finis Jennings Dake, Lawrenceville, Georgia: Dake Bible Sales, Incorporated, 1985.
- Holy Bible, Full Life Study Bible, NIV*, Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan Corporation, 1992
- Holy Bible, KJV*, Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1989.
- Holy Bible, The Message Bible*, Eugene H. Peterson, Colorado Springs, Colorado: Nave Press, 1995.
- Holy Bible, Thompson Chain Reference*, Frank Charles Thompson D.D., Ph.D., Indianapolis, Indiana, B.B. Kirkbride Bible Company, 1979.
- Hughes, Dr. Gregory, *Teaching Notes, Obedience*, Crossroads Bible Church, Spring, 2007, Norris City, IL 62869.
- Strong's Concordance*, James Strong, L.L.D., S.T.D. Nelson Publishers, 1995.
- The Biblical Illustrator*, Joseph S. Exell, M.A., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1973.
- Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, W.E. Vines, Merrill F. Unger, William White, 1985.
- Webster's Dictionary of the American Language, College Edition*, Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1960.
- www.horses-and-horse-information.com/articles/horse-training-young.shtml
- www.horsewhisperer.com/horse_training_methods.html
- www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_training

COURSE WORK RECOGNITION

<u>COURSE RESEARCHED AND DEVELOPED:</u>	Finch, Edwin, Th.D. 1993 Thompson, Verda L., Th.D.
<u>EXPANDED/REVISED BY:</u>	Hoskins, David, M.Th. 1996 Price, Roger, Th.D. 1998
<u>REVISED/EDITED BY:</u>	Thompson, Verda L., Th.D. 1997 West, Katherine, B.Th.
<u>REVISED/EDITED BY:</u>	Price, Roger K., Th.D. 1998
<u>REVISED/EDITED BY:</u>	Weimer, Darlene, Reverend Whittinghill, Sharon, B.Th.
<u>REVISED/EDITED BY:</u>	Price, Roger K., Th.D. 1999
<u>REVISED/EDITED BY:</u>	Thompson, Verda L., Th.D. Price, Roger K., Th.D. 1999
<u>REVISED/EDITED BY:</u>	Thompson, Verda, Th.D., Ph.D., D.C.C., D.R.E. Price, Roger K., Th.D., Ph.D. D.R.E., 2000
<u>REVISED/EDITED BY:</u>	Oakley, Elizabeth. B.R.E., 2003 Oakley, Walter, D. Div.
<u>FORMAT CORRECTIONS BY:</u>	Reiman, Edie, B.B.S. 2006
<u>FORMAT CORRECTIONS BY:</u>	Oakley, Elizabeth, Ph.D.; Th.D.; D.D. 2007
<u>EXPANDED/REVISED BY:</u>	Hughes, Gregory, Th.D. Price, Roger, Th.D., Ph.D., D.R.E., D.D. Oakley, Elizabeth, Ph.D., Th.D., D.D., 2007
<u>EXPANDED/REVISED BY:</u>	Thompson, Verda L., Ph.D., D.R.E., D.C.C., D.D., Th.D. Price, Roger, Th.D., Ph.D., D.R.E., D.D., 2008
ICBT PASTORAL ADVISORS:	Braswell, Dick, Th.D. Burden, Wendell, D.Div. Chapman, Del, Th.D. Hall, Leo, D. Div., D. Min.
AMT-ICBT BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF:	
Baldock, Michael, Th. D.	Price, Roger, Ph.D., D.R.E., Th.D., D.Div.
Brown, Eddy, D.Div.	Sansfacon, Mario, A.Min.
Burden, Wendell, Th.D.	Sansfacon, Teresa, B.Min., D.Div.
Carr, Mary, D. Min., D. Div.	Shepard, Sally D.Min., D.Div.
Craig, David, D.Div.	Thompson, Verda, Ph.D., D.R.E., D.C.C., Th.D., D.Div.
Cunningham, Kay, D.Div.	Vance, David R., A.C.S.
Goneau, Dean, M.A.	Wootten, Charles A., Th.D., D.Div.
Hall, Leo, D.Div., D.Min.	Wootten, Margaret S. D.Div.
Kisner, Brian, D.Div.	

THANK YOU

Information for International College of Bible Theology (ICBT) courses has been researched and compiled by many members in the Body of Christ. Gifted brothers and sisters from many areas of ministry have blessed us.

We thank those who have helped to write and compile courses for our curriculum. We gratefully thank all those in five-fold ministry, helps and lay ministry that have labored with us. A special thank you is extended to authors of various books, and leadership of other Bible Colleges that have been so very giving and gracious to us. It is not possible to name everyone by name. Laborers with ICBT have compiled over one hundred (100) courses. Let us all say "to God be the glory."

CHRISTIANS ARE CO-LABORERS

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God, which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

I Corinthians 3:5-11