

Is Obedience Optional?

It is a known fact that most people are obedient to authority. The dominant belief is that one must follow the rules to live a peaceful and fulfilling life. Take, for example, traffic lights and traffic signs. If we choose to ignore them, the results can be catastrophic.

However, we began showing signs of willfulness and defiance when we learned to walk as toddlers. Giving into the demands of another runs contrary to our human nature. Instead, we give into our instincts than listen to the voice of reason and wise counsel. We desire to be masters of our destiny, preferring to do it our way, not realizing what it will cost in the long run.

Throughout the Bible, we read how God has always desired to have a relationship with us as individuals, but sin separated us from Him. Therefore, God made a provision through the life, death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ for all humanity, having nailed all our sins to the cross. So that those who come to faith in Him can enjoy communion with Him and experience true peace and joy. Jesus stated in John 15:10, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." And again He stated in John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." God gave us His word, which we are to live by, yet because of our fallen nature, God's commands are impossible to obey apart from the help of the Holy Spirit. When we struggle to follow His word apart from His assistance, we live in constant restlessness and anxiety. We long for peace and rest for our weary souls, but it often eludes us because we are not in the right relationship with God. We often obey our sinful hearts rather than follow what God's word teaches us to do.

Faithful obedience comes from a heart of love and gratitude to the Lord for all He has done. Loving Jesus and following Him means living a life of obedience and adhering to all God instructs in His word through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The moment we surrender to the Lord's will in obedience, we will experience His peace - the peace of God that surpasses all human understanding. But this peace is not absent of suffering, for we would never know peace if it wasn't for the turmoils and storms in our lives. Nonetheless, peace always follow obedience. Perhaps God has placed you in a difficult situation, yet it's in this place where God calls for obedience. The Lord has graciously laid out in Scripture what He desires for us; our job is to obey. Resist the need to question God's authority and wisdom, and learn to trust Him. Obedience is the attitude of one who trusts God despite the difficulty He's called them to endure. Trust that

your loving and merciful God is in control and is working all things out according to His purpose for your life, even when you cannot see the whole picture.

Many Christians miss out on a life of peace, joy and blessing because they believe obedience is an option. But obedience is not optional; it's necessary for all who love and follow Jesus. An old hymnal writer expressed it eloquently, "Trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."