

December 6, 2009 PM

FOLLOWING GOD'S DIRECTIONS

Luke 7:1-9

"Follow all the directions the Lord has given you. Then life will go well for you."

(Deut. 5:33, GN)

This great act of faith by a Roman soldier was said of Jesus to the greatest faith He had seen in all Israel. Why? Because faith and obedience are interlocked. When you understand authority you know that authority is to be obeyed. This Roman soldier believed Jesus to be the Son of God. Therefore, when he spoke it was as if God had spoken. His faith in Jesus was based on his faith in God. He was right.

All the promises of God are based upon us following the direction we are given; by placing ourselves under God's authority. This is the first instruction God gave to His people.

God has so many promises that He gives to His people if we only obey Him.

What God promises if we obey Him

"God blesses those who obey Him." (Prov. 16:20, LB)

"God saves those who obey Him." (Ps. 7:10, GN)

"The Lord watches over those who obey Him." (Ps. 33:18, GN)

"The Lord takes care of those who obey Him." (Ps. 37:18, GN)

"God helps those who obey Him." (Ps. 7:9, LB)

"God gives us what we ask for because we obey His commands." (1 John 3:22, NCV)

Because of obedience

"Always obey the Lord and you will be happy." (Prov. 28:14)

"Keep God's laws and you will live longer." (Prov. 19:16, GN)

"Those who obey the Lord lack nothing good." (Ps. 34:10, GN)

“Those who obey Him have all they need.” (Ps. 34:9, GN)

You will:

“...live in perfect freedom.” (Ps. 119:45, GN)

“...have greater wisdom.” (Ps. 119:100, GN)

“...dwell in security and peace.” (Prov. 1:33, NASB)

“...be prosperous and successful.” (Joshua 1:8, GN)

“...be great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:19, NCV)

“...be rewarded.” (Prov. 13:13, NCV)

These are but a sampling of God’s promises. Notice God’s promises have a premise or a condition. We get God’s promises by grace, but we enjoy them by following His direction.

Questions:

- 1) Do you think obeying God is a good idea or a bad idea?
- 2) Do you think it is smart or foolish to disobey what God has told us to do?
- 3) When I don’t understand God’s command, is it more beneficial for me to obey it anyway, or do what I think is best?

God often gives us commands without explaining why. They often don’t make sense or reason; they may seem unfair and limiting to us and our lifestyle. It becomes a matter of trusting God that He knows better for us. Obedience is an act of faith and often is the door of blessing into our lives. God promises to reward us if we will follow His directions.

As your pastor I don’t want you to miss out on God’s promises and their benefits. So today the message is “how to receive God’s promises.” When you know God’s command:

I. I must obey God immediately.

A. I don’t put God off.

The Psalmist said, ***“I will quickly obey your commands.” (Ps. 119:32, NCV)***

“Without delay I hurry to obey your commands.” (GN)

1. When God has spoken, we do it.
2. Even if I don't understand it or feel like it.
3. You don't have to understand something to benefit from it.

***NOTE** Parents know what it is to tell kids to do something and they say, “Why do I have to?” We respond, “Because I said so.” Behind those words is the truth, “You are not smart enough to understand if I explained it to you; one day you will discern reality; I know what's best so trust me and obey.” Sometimes it's God saying, “Because I said so.”

4. Well, I don't want to be a hypocrite so I'm not going to pretend I want to do it, so I'm not.
5. If you do it you will start to understand it's benefits and you will want to.

B. Only immature people live life by their feelings.

1. Mature people just do it.
2. You do the right things then they work on their sorry attitudes.
3. Feelings follow actions.
4. When God gives a command and no deadline, it means do it now.
5. Delayed obedience is disobedience.
 - Kids pretend they don't hear.
 - Kids imagine it must be for someone else.
6. It's disobedience because it questions God's wisdom and His love.

Question: How would you like God to respond to your needs at the same pace that you obey Him? When you cry out to God, when do you want Him to respond?

II. I must obey God completely.

“Lord, you gave your orders to be obeyed completely.” (Ps. 119:32, NCV)

A. God’s mind has never changed.

1. If something was wrong in the Old Testament, it’s still wrong today.
2. Culture changes and popular opinion changes, but God’s truth and moral law has and never will change.
3. What’s right is right and what’s wrong is wrong. Right is never wrong; wrong is never right.

B. God has a better perspective.

“Your job is not to decide whether God’s law is right or wrong, but to obey it.” (James 4:11, LB)

1. The oldest temptation is to doubt God’s word; “Did God really say...?”
2. Does God’s word still apply in our century?

***NOTE** I am not a detailed person, but I can tell you God is. God is into details. Every hair on your head is numbered by God. He is not only interested that you obey Him, but how you obey Him, and why you obey Him. When I ask my son to mow the grass I expect it to be done; I also expect it to be done the right way; “my way” and with a proper attitude. A loving son does all three. I will do it when, how and for the right reason.

3. Faith is trusting God in the details of life.

“Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own.” (Prov. 3:5, The Message)

***NOTE** Remember Naman who had leprosy and he came to the prophet for healing? He was to go to the Jordan River and dip himself seven times. He did not want to because he was famous and that would be humiliating. When he obeyed he was healed. Was there special power in the water? Absolutely not. God honored his obedience. Jesus said if you obey me in the little things, the details of life, I will reward you with bigger things now and in heaven.

4. Partial obedience is a lack of trust.

III. I must obey God joyfully.

“Obey Him gladly. (Ps. 100:2, LB)

“I enjoy obeying your commands.” (Ps. 119:16, NCV)

“I find pleasure in obeying your commands.” (Ps. 119:47)

A. Why is it enjoyable to obey God?

1. Because I will have fewer problems. When you are putting something together from the factory does it help to follow instructions? Yes!
2. I know God will be pleased.
3. Because I love God.

“Loving God means doing what he tells us to do.” (1 John 5:3, LB)

B. The longer you walk with God the more you want to please.

1. Love is not measured by what we say.
2. Love is measured by what we do.

“If you love me keep my commandments.”

“Help me to prefer obedience to making money!” (Psalm 119:36, LB)

IV. I must obey God continually.

“I am determined to obey you until I die.” (Psalm 119:112, LB)

A. My faith is for life.

“Just tell me what to do and I will do it, Lord; as long as I live I’ll wholeheartedly obey.” (Ps. 119:33, LB)

1. I prayed this prayer when I returned from the military.
2. My life has been an adventure I can’t explain.

B. I can’t hear God speak.

1. It’s likely because you have not obeyed what God has already clearly told you.
2. God does not play games. You don’t get to decide what you want to obey.
3. Why would God give further instruction if you haven’t acted on the truth you already know?

“We must be sure to obey the truth we have learned already.” (Phil. 3:16, NLT)

4. Faith without action is dead. It’s more than hearing; it’s obeying what you have heard.

“Not all people who sound religious are really godly. They may refer to me as Lord, but they still won’t enter heaven. The decisive issue is whether they obey My Father.” (Matthew 7:21, NLT)