

Seeking Revival

DAY 8—OBEYING THROUGH JESUS

“When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here!” 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Steps of Faith

Remember when Jesus worked His first miracle during the wedding at Cana? Jesus’ mother Mary told the servants, “Do what He tells you” (John 2:5). By saying this, Mary made the servants trust Jesus more. When Jesus asked the servants to fill the water jars, they did exactly as He asked. Then Jesus said, “Now dip some out. Take it to the person in charge of the dinner” (verse 8). Again, the servants did what Jesus asked, even though they did not understand why—and they soon knew they had seen a miracle. Look again at each step:

- By what she said, Mary increased the servants’ trust in Jesus.
- The servants showed their trust and willingness by doing what Jesus asked. In other words, they took the first steps to prepare for the miracle.
- Then Jesus alone worked the miracle.

The servants did nothing to change the water into wine—but would the miracle have happened without their steps to prepare? This is how obeying by faith is successful: We choose to trust Jesus, give Him our will (our plans), and we obey by faith. But Jesus—and Jesus alone—works the miracles.

How it Works

Paul explains that a mystery has been shown to us to help us obey by trusting Jesus (see Romans 16:25-27). What is this mystery (secret)? Colossians 1:27 says the mystery is that “Christ is in us.” What happens when we obey by trusting Jesus? “When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old (self) is gone! The new (born again self) is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). When we obey by trusting Jesus we have a new life through Christ living and working in us. We are new creations (new people that Jesus created in us)!

When we have “Christ in us,” our attitude (beliefs/ideas) toward God’s law changes. “His commandments are not hard to obey” (1 John 5:3). “Serving me is easy, and my load is light,” Jesus said (Matthew 11:30). “I enjoy obeying your commands. I love them.” because “the law You gave (Your teaching) is worth (value) more to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold” and “sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:47, 72, 103). “The people who love God’s law will enjoy wonderful peace. Nothing can beat them or make them fall” (Psalm 119:165). Obeying God and trusting Him is sweet because God, in His love, gave us only the best rules.

Obeying God is important, but obeying does not earn (pay) us our salvation, and we never obey because we are good (obeying does not mean we are good). Ellen White says, “The person who tries to reach heaven by their own works and obeying the law is trying to do the impossible (it cannot be done). People cannot be saved without obeying, but their actions should not be from themselves; Jesus should work in them so they want and do what pleases Him” (*Faith and Works*, p. 94). Three points are important to remember:

- It is not possible to go to heaven by my own works. You cannot earn anything from God—it is a free gift.
- We must obey as part of life with God, since Jesus’ followers are asked to live in agreement with His will.
- We cannot obey because of our own work, but our obeying is an amazing miracle that Jesus works in us.

What Is Our Responsibility?

Again, we cannot do anything to save ourselves, but God respects human free will (free choice) and He lets us choose. Ellen White says, "The Lord's plan is that God's power works with our human effort" (*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 10). What does that mean?

- **We trust.** We choose to grow our trust in Jesus, who works in us "to will and to do" (Philippians 2:13). Jesus gives us a desire (want) to follow His will and shows us what we need to do.
- **We decide.** We need to choose to obey God's will. God fully respects our free choice, He will only get involved with our lives if we decide to let Him work in our lives....He waits for us to make this decision.
- **We take steps to prepare.** We show our decision to follow Jesus by obeying in large or small ways.
- **God alone** saves us.

Remember, what we do—trusting, deciding, and preparing to obey—is done only in God's strength, when Jesus lives in us through the Holy Spirit. This makes obeying a great joy.

Praying God's Word

Obeying allows us to fully experience (learn) God's love.

"Anyone who knows my commands and obeys them loves me. My Father will love the one who loves me. I too will love them. And I will show myself to them" (John 14:21).

Father God, thank You for showing us how to have the best life possible. Forgive us when we refuse Your law and Your love. Help us to fully trust You and to give all of our hearts to You.

God is happy when we ask for hearts that obey.

"So give your servant a heart that obeys. . . . The Lord was pleased. . . . I will do what You ask" (1 Kings 3:9, 10, 12).

Lord, please give us hearts that obey. Give us complete (all) trust in Your leading and Your laws, even when we do not understand. Teach us to see that obeying through the power of the Holy Spirit is not a burden but a joy.

More Prayer Suggestions

Thanks and Praise: Give thanks for specific (exact) blessings and praise God for His goodness.

Confession: Take a few minutes for private confession (admit your sins/wrongs) and thank God for His forgiveness.

Guidance: Ask God to give wisdom for current challenges (now) and decisions.

Our Church: Ask God to bless the work of our local, regional, and world church.

Local Requests: Pray for the needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

Listen and Respond (answer): Take time to listen for God's voice and respond in praise or song.

Song Suggestions

SDA Hymnal: Trust and Obey (#590); Live Out Thy Life Within Me (#316); I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go (#573); He Leadeth Me (#537); O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee (#574).