



# Obedience

week 8





## Introduction

Christian obedience to God is a fundamental aspect of Christian living, rooted in the understanding that following God's commands is an expression of love, trust, and submission to His divine will. The Bible serves as the primary guide for Christian living, outlining principles and moral guidelines that believers are encouraged to follow.

The foundation of Christian obedience lies in the teachings of Jesus Christ, who stressed on the importance of obeying God's commands as an expression of love. In John 14:15, Jesus states, "If you love me, keep my commands," highlighting the intimate connection between love for God and adherence to His instructions. This concept underscores the idea that obedience is not merely a set of rules to follow but a relational response to God's love and grace.

Obedience in Christianity is not driven by a legalistic or fear-based approach; rather, it flows from a desire to live in alignment with God's purpose and character. The Apostle Paul, in his letters to various Christian churches, frequently emphasised the transformative power of faith and the importance of obedience as a natural outflow of that faith. For instance, in Ephesians 2:10, Paul notes that believers are created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance for them to do.

Christian obedience to God is a multifaceted expression of faith, love, and submission. It involves aligning our will with God's, grounded in the belief that His commands lead to a purposeful and meaningful life. This obedience is motivated by love and gratitude, finding its ultimate exemplar in the life of Jesus Christ. As we, Christians navigate the complexities of life, the call to obey God remains a guiding principle, shaping our character, relationships, and lifestyle.



# Devotion 1: Joshua 6:1-21

The Battle of Jericho is one of the most unusual battles described in the Bible. The purpose is not just about conquering the city, but rather, Israel was to learn a lesson of obedience to God. In essence, God was in the process of conquering Israel's heart.

Questions:

1. List out all the unusual aspects of the Jericho Strategy?
2. Why did God insist on Israel carrying out such an unusual war tactic?
3. What did Israel learn from the Jericho campaign?

Prayer:

Dear God,

I pray that you might help us to obey and submit, even in the direst circumstances.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

# Devotion 1: Joshua 6:1-21

## Joshua 6:1-21

1 Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. 2 Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. 3 March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. 4 Make seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. 5 When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, make the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in.'

6 So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, 'Take up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and make seven priests carry trumpets in front of it.' 7 And he ordered the army, 'Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the Lord.'

8 When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the Lord went forwards, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the Lord's covenant followed them. 9 The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. 10 But Joshua had commanded the army, 'Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!' 11 So he had the ark of the Lord carried around the city, circling it once. Then the army returned to camp and spent the night there.

12 Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. 13 The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forwards, marching before the ark of the Lord and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the Lord, while the trumpets kept sounding. 14 So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

15 On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. 16 The seventh time round, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, 'Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! 17 The city and all that is in it are to be devoted[a] to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. 18 But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. 19 All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the Lord and must go into his treasury.'

20 When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. 21 They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it – men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

## Devotion 2: Matthew 26:36-46

The unanswered prayer of Jesus demonstrates the determination of God to save the lost world, yet at the same time, this unanswered prayer was answered through the submission and obedience of Jesus.

Questions:

1. What is going on in Jesus' mind? Does he want to drink the cup or not? Why?
2. Comment on: "Jesus' willingness to submit to the Father, even before the cross, shows that he has already triumph over Satan."
3. How does Jesus' prayer teach us to be submissive and obedient?

Prayer:

Dear God,

I give thanks for Jesus' willingness to submit to you which resulted in our salvation.

In Jesus name,

Amen

## Devotion 2: Matthew 26:36-46

### Matthew 26:36-46

36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.' 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'

40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter. 41 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

42 He went away a second time and prayed, 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.'

43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

45 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!'



## Devotion 3: Acts 8:26-35

Obedience to God can lead to unfathomable outcome. Here, Philip obeyed God and immediately went down from Jerusalem to Gaza, where he met an Ethiopian eunuch, and subsequently led him to Christ. Had he delayed or postponed his obedience, he would have missed meeting the eunuch.

Reflection Questions:

1. Imagine Philip's daily schedule, how easy was it for him to obey God's calling?
2. Why did Philip obey the angel's instruction, even with little insight?
3. How does Philip's obedience encourage us to obey God?

Prayer:

Dear God,

I give thanks to God for demonstrating the benefits of obedience, not only to the obedient one, but also to people around him.

In Jesus name,

Amen

### Acts 8:26-35

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road – the desert road – that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' 27 So he started out, and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means 'queen of the Ethiopians'). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it.'

30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. 'Do you understand what you are reading?' Philip asked.

31 'How can I,' he said, 'unless someone explains it to me?' So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

'He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.'

34 The eunuch asked Philip, 'Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?' 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

## Family Discussion Point

"I'm going to count to 5 and you had better do what I said." ... "Enough screen time, now go into your room and finish your homework." ... I'm sure you have heard similar things said by your parents before. Or these from your teacher ... "Sharing is caring." ... "No talking, pay attention." Even the Bible teaches us to "obey God fully" (Exodus 19:5). As a kid, it may seem like there are lots of rules to follow and obey, right? Have you ever thought about why we have to obey?

Obedience to God is the first step to following God, but it is not out of fear, rather it is out of love. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commands. (John 14:15) Because we know that God loves us, and his commands and teachings are good for us, so we want to obey him to express our love to him.

Read Matthew 26:36-46.

36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." 43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. 45 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Jesus set the example of what it means to obey, by submitting to the plan of his Father. He wishes that there may be another way to save the people of the world, but he is willing to obey his Father's way, that is, to die on the cross. Obedience to God is to trust in God's plan and to follow his way.

Question:

1. What did Jesus mean when he said "keep watch with me"? (v.38, 40)
2. What is one of the reasons why we need to pray? (v.42)
3. Why is being obedient so difficult?

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for Jesus who set the example for me to follow and obey you. Please help me when I find it hard or uncertain to obey you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.