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THE GOSPEL AND OTHERS

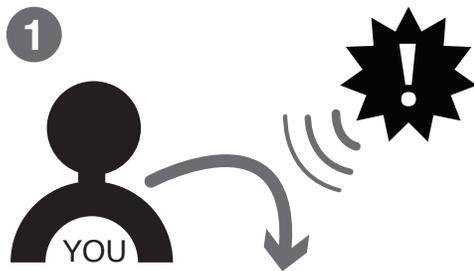
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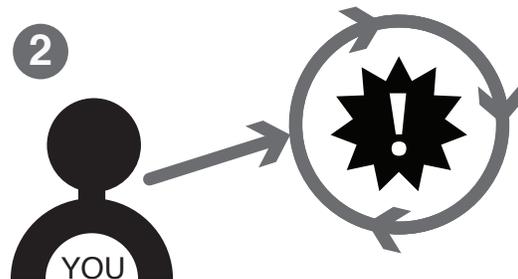
4 APPROACHES TO A PROBLEM



SUPPRESS OR IGNORE THE PROBLEM

- Withdraws, avoids difficult people/circumstances
- Controls by pleasing people/avoiding conflict
- Seeks comfort, pleasure, stress-free life

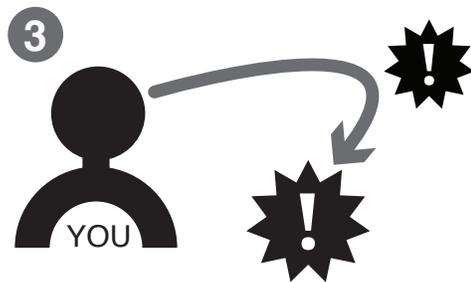
"I see no problem!!"



GO AROUND IN THE PROBLEM

- Focuses on the problem without a biblical solution
- Controls by demanding, convincing, arguing, worrying
- Seeks to control people/circumstances

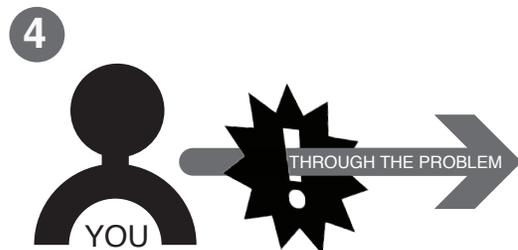
"I can fix the problem in my own way!!"



ESCAPE THE PROBLEM

- Escapes into fantasy, social media, TV, sports, hobbies, porn, illicit sex, drugs, alcohol, work, ministry
- Seeks to find relief from pain in sinful ways
- Creates a bigger problem

"I will escape the problem!!"



STRAIGHT THROUGH THE PROBLEM

- Faces the problem head-on
- Relies on God and His resources
- Accepts God's plan
- Perseveres in the trial

"I will rely on God to take me through the problem!!"

FACING EMOTIONAL PAIN



4 APPROACHES
TO A PROBLEM:
APPROACH
#1, #2 & #3

WRONG DECISION

Depending on self and your resources

- Unbelief; doubt God
- Pride; selfishness
- Fear; anxiety
- Self-oriented goals
- Disobedient life
- Blame others, anger
- Suppression; denial
- Fantasy
- Detachment; busyness
- Bitterness, self-pity, depression
- Manipulation, control
- Escapes to find relief

Protect your own kingdom

Results: hopeless, unrest

- Focused on self/circumstances
- Bondage to self
- Further frustration; depression
- Lack of growth
- Sinful attitudes
- Lack of spiritual fruit; bad fruit
- Broken relationships

Your kingdom crumbles

RIGHT DECISION

Turning to God and His resources

- Believe in, rely on God
- Humility, love others
- Trust His promises
- Pursue God's goals
- Obey out of love
- Forgive; respond graciously
- Accept God's plan
- Focus on God's truth
- Pursue fellowship
- Give thanks in all things
- Yielding; surrendering
- Face pain with God's help

Live for God's Kingdom

Results: hope in God, rest

- Focused on God/others
- Set free from self
- Peace and joy in the pain
- Maturity
- Christ-like attitudes
- Fruit of the Spirit; love
- God-honoring relationships

God's Kingdom grows

4 APPROACHES
TO A PROBLEM:
APPROACH #4



PART 1 - INTRODUCTION
THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL
BY RANDY MURPHY

“God is on a mission to reveal Himself and that mission is accomplished, in part, through the gospel... which involves a much bigger story than just how you are impacted personally.”

Randy Murphy

God's Call to Obedience

INTRODUCTION: THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRO

Introduction to Part One: The Gospel and Our Relationship With Others

You are about to embark on a great journey in discovering how to bring glory to God by developing a life of growing obedience. God's call on the believer is first and foremost to follow Christ, which produces a changed life: a changed relationship with Christ, a changed relationship with His Body, a changed relationship with others and therefore a changed purpose in this world.

In Part One of *God's Call to Obedience*, you will explore the implications of the gospel and your relationships with others. Sin has messed up some, if not many of your relationships. Through the gospel, God desires to reconcile those relationships to their intended design to reveal His life-transforming power. The greatest commandments of all are to "love God and love others." Love is to be the hallmark of the follower of Christ. The sin which permeates relationships has made loving others difficult. You will be sinned against by others until the day *they* die – you need a way to deal with *their* sin. You will sin against others until the day that *you* die – you need a way to deal with *your* sin!! Christ through the cross has provided all that is necessary to deal with all of this sin!

Living out the reality of a personal relationship with Christ in a way that puts Him on display is directly determined by your view of God and your view of the gospel. Any sin in your life, anything that hinders your growth in Christ and any sinful response to difficult situations, is a result of a wrong view of God or failure to live out the implications of the gospel.

God is on a mission to reveal Himself and that mission is accomplished, in part, through the gospel. The "gospel" is often described as the good news of how to go to heaven instead of going to hell, which is a key result. But the gospel involves a much bigger story than just how it impacts you personally. This story involves creation, the Fall, redemption and ultimately restoration.

Creation:

The gospel story begins with **creation**. God created a universe out of nothing by the power of His word. This included the heavens and the earth and all that is within it.

- Creation does not speak audibly in words but its message goes out to the ends of the earth, making the reality of God clearly visible to all. (cf. Rom. 1:18-20)
- God specifically created man in His own image to further reveal Himself and then gave him the task of tending this creation.
- Man was designed not only to reflect God's character, but also to interact with Him and the rest of creation in love and harmony.

“ For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”
CoL. 1:16,17 NASB

The Fall:

This harmony was greatly dismantled by the **Fall**. Given the ability to choose, Adam chose to disobey God and strive to have life on his own terms. He intended to establish himself as his own god, defying God’s authority. All generations since Adam have inherited this sinful nature and therefore, are separated from their Creator. Man now, in his natural state, is a sinner who:

- Rebels against God from birth (Is. 48:8b; Ps. 51:5; 53:1-3; 58:3)
- Breaks God’s commands continually (Rom. 3:23)
- Does not want to submit to God’s authority (Rom. 5:10a)
- Desires to control his own life (Is. 53:6)
- Does not want to deny himself and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23)
- Seeks to please God on his own terms (Rom. 3:11; Prov. 16:25)
- Deserves eternal punishment (Rom. 6:23)

The harmony with God and His creation was broken – death, both spiritually and physically, was put into motion. The impact is comprehensive, alienating man from the very One for whom he was created. He is left in a hopeless state, incapable of doing anything to fix this plight. (Rom. 5:5-10)

Redemption:

Even in this tragic tale of sin entering and remaining in the world, God refuses to give up on His creation and kingdom. God in His great mercy and grace provides helpless sinners the way for **redemption**.

God’s justice is perfect. Therefore, He demands punishment for man’s violation of His Holy Law, which is sin. (Deut. 32:4; Ezek. 18:4)

God’s love is perfect. Therefore, He created a plan to save sinful man from the punishment of hell. (Eph. 2:4-5; John 3:16)

- He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who is God, to become a man. (John 1:1; John 1:14)
- Christ lived a perfect life. (Heb. 5:9)

- Christ died an agonizing death on a cross taking man's sin upon himself.
 - To take God's wrathful punishment for man's sin (Is. 53:5)
 - To complete the work needed to save the sinner from hell (John 19:30)
- Christ offers His completed sacrifice as a free gift to undeserving sinners. (Rom. 6:23)

God's promise in Christ is to give eternal life in heaven to all who receive His gift. (John 14:2)

- Man must respond in faith, trusting only in Christ for his salvation.
- He must not depend on his good life or his good deeds as a means to gain favor or eternal life with God. (Eph. 2:8-9)
- He must realize that Christ's sacrificial death and glorious resurrection provided everything needed for his salvation. (1 Pet. 3:18a)

Man is made repentant by the work of God's Spirit. (Acts 11:18)

- The Holy Spirit gives man a willingness to let God control his life. (Rom. 8:13-14)
- The Holy Spirit gives man a willingness to turn away from his sin and to obey God. (John 14:15-17)

“ But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.”
TITUS 3:4-6

God seals the believer's eternal salvation with His Holy Spirit, who is God Himself living inside the Christian. (Eph. 1:13-14)

Man's response of faith to the provision of Christ restores relationship with God, his creator, and places him as a member of His body, the church.

This is the heart of the gospel – the result of redemption:

- man who was once dead, is now alive.
- man who was once condemned, is now accepted in the Beloved.
- man who was alienated from God, is adopted as His child.

- man who was in bondage to sin, is now free.
- man who was isolated and alone is now part of His body, the church.
- man who lived for himself, now lives for God.
- man who was hopeless now has hope.

“ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

1 PET. 2:9-10 NASB

Restoration:

But the story of redemption does not end with us!

- God’s plan is much bigger - it involves the **restoration** of all things back to their created purpose. (Col. 1:19-22)
- God’s salvation does not stop with humankind.
- God’s plan embraces His whole creation.

“ HUMAN SIN SPREADS BROKENNESS AND DESTRUCTION TO THE WHOLE CREATION INCLUDING PLANTS AND ANIMALS, BUT GOD’S SALVATION WILL RESTORE PEACE AND WHOLENESS TO ALL LIVING THINGS. IF WE IGNORE THIS EMPHASIS IN SCRIPTURE OUR VIEW OF SALVATION IS TOO NARROW.” ¹

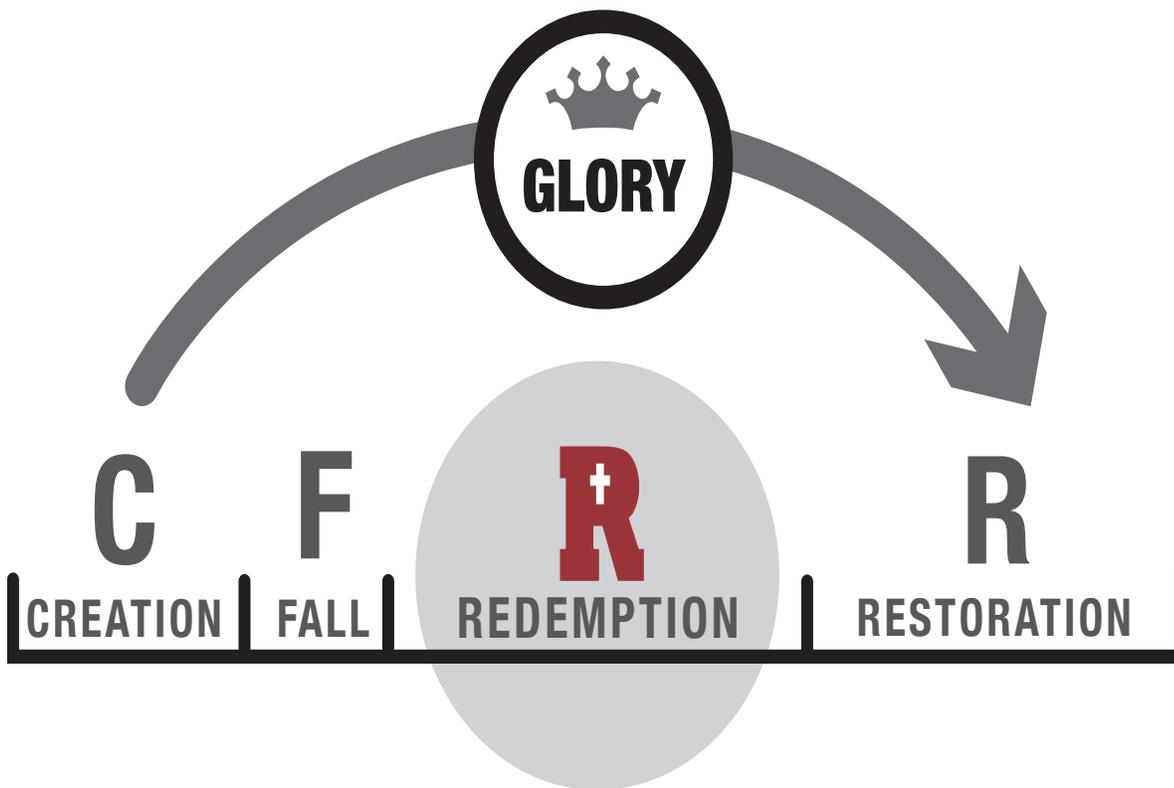
CRAIG G. BARTHOLOMEW AND MICHAEL W. GOHEEN

The hope for the future is to be in the presence of God, unhindered by the flesh and sin, giving Him glory and praise for all eternity. Finally free from the devastating results of sin and the ongoing heartache of living in a fallen world, we are restored to the relationship with God, which He intended in the original creation.

Part One: The Gospel and Our Relationship With Others is designed to help you begin relating to others, especially the difficult people in your life, the way God intended. Embracing the gospel gives you the resources and ability to relate to others according to God’s design. When you practice loving others biblically by forgiving, forbearing and admonishing one another and by putting on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, you glorify Him. The story of the gospel is being lived out and His mission is being accomplished!!

THE STORY OF GOD

REVEALING HIMSELF AND HIS GLORY



GOD IS ON A MISSION TO REVEAL HIMSELF AND HIS GLORY

God's design is that we join **His story**
and put **Him** on display through our changed lives.

We are the people of God living for the glory of God.



NOTES



PART 1 - A
UNDERSTANDING GOD'S
CALL TO OBEDIENCE

Obeying God is an expression of your love and gratitude for your salvation and His many blessings, which He has freely bestowed on you.

God's Call to Obedience

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENCE

A

“ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”
JOHN 10:27 NASB

The Westminster Shorter Catechism poses the question, “What is the chief end of man?” The answer given is, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Thus, your primary reasons for living are to glorify God and to delight in Him.

**“ Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God.”**
1 COR. 10:31 NASB

**“ Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances
of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the
strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified
through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion
forever and ever. Amen.”**
1 PET. 4:11 NASB

- I. Obeying God is an expression of your love and gratitude for your salvation and His many blessings, which He has freely bestowed on you.
 - A. Love for God flows from
 1. the *understanding* that you are unworthy of God’s love.
 2. the *understanding* of the *cost* of the Cross on your behalf, both to the Father and to the Son. (Is. 53:4-10)
 3. the *understanding* that you are capable of love because He first loved you. (1 John 4:19)
 - B. Love for God releases you from self-will to submit to His leadership.
 - C. Love for God is expressed in enjoyment in Him and His ways of blessing. (Ps. 16:11)
 - D. Christ reminds the believer that love is a primary motivation for obedience. (1 John 5:3)

“If you love Me, you will obey what I command.”
JOHN 14:15 NASB

E. Love for God produces a desire to glorify Him in all that you think, say and do.

II. Understanding your identity in Christ is a key to obedience. (2 Cor. 5:17)

A. You were adopted as God's precious child, bought at a tremendous cost, which was paid by Christ's sacrifice on your behalf. (Eph. 1:5-7; 1 Cor. 6:20)

B. You are viewed by God as righteous, holy and blameless because of Christ's work. (Col. 1:22)

C. You are given the ability to understand the things of God, especially His Word, because the Holy Spirit (God Himself!) lives inside you. (John 14:16,17; 1 Cor. 2:14)

D. You are dead to sin and alive in Christ. Your old nature is dead and your new nature is Christ Himself. (Rom. 6:1-4; Gal. 2:20)

E. Christ has the ability to free you from the bondage of sin when you believe that, **“... greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”** (1 John 4:4b NASB)

F. You are provided with every spiritual blessing and Christ's endless resources to draw on moment by moment to

1. overcome sin. (Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 10:13)

2. uphold, strengthen, comfort, sustain and enfold you when you are weak. (2 Cor. 12:10)

3. make you adequate for what He calls you to do in His Kingdom. (2 Cor. 3:5)

4. bring forth the fruit of the Spirit regardless of your circumstances. (Gal. 5:22,23)

5. have deep fellowship with God who is able to meet all your needs for holiness and for Kingdom service. (2 Cor. 9:8)

You are called to obey the commands of Scripture, which are impossible to live out in your flesh. God gives you many character-stretching commands and calls upon your life to *trust* you into a level of risk-taking, which is necessary to *experience* the supernatural life.

To say, **“I cannot”** to many of His commands is an accurate self-evaluation. God has deliberately designed biblical commands to be beyond your ability to obey through your own limited resources. Though **you** “cannot,” God is more than able to perform His works

through you as you yield to His power by taking steps of obedience in seemingly impossible circumstances. The call upon the Christian is to walk "by faith and not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7) *Knowing* God and *experiencing* His life being lived through you, is the essence of the Christian walk.

“**Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory...**”
EPH. 3:20,21A NASB

III. Being aware that pride is the root cause of all sin is helpful in understanding God's call to obedience.

A. **Pride** is defined as

1. unbelief or lack of faith in God's character, commands and promises.
2. belief in the lies of Satan and self.
3. the demand to control your world.
6. the placement of yourself on God's throne; becoming your own god.

B. **Fears** stem from pride and include:

1. the realization that you have lost control of your world.
2. the potential or possibility of losing control of your world.

C. **Self-protective** attitudes and actions are the result of pride and fear, which include:

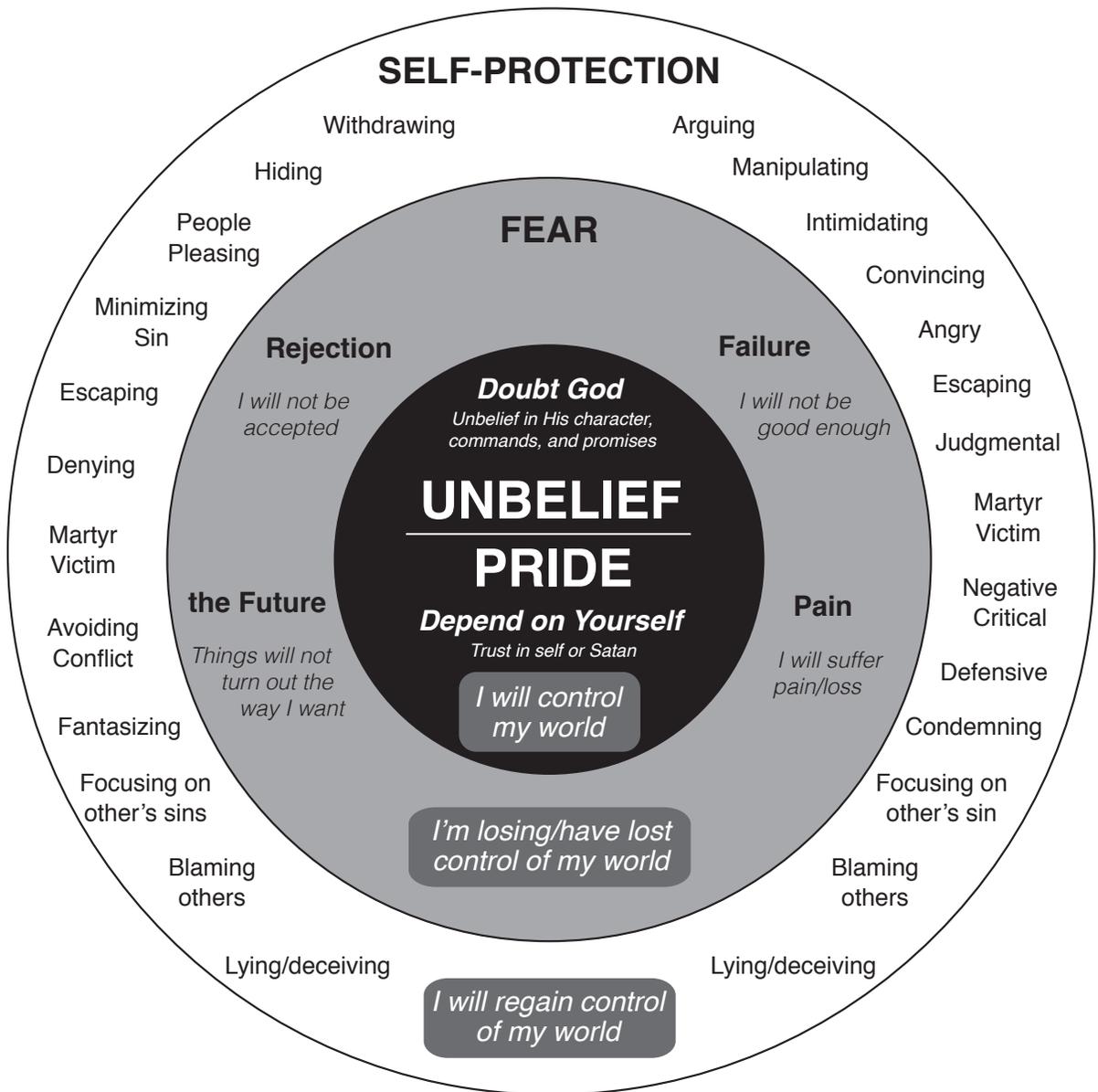
1. the demand to regain control of your world.
2. to regain control by use of your own resources.

IV. Understanding how **pride** can block obedience helps the believer mature.

“**...God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.**”
JAS. 4:6

A. Pride enthrones self in the place God alone deserves to hold in your life. See *Root Cause of All Sin* diagram.

ROOT CAUSE OF ALL SIN



1. "I want to control my world; I have a better way than God."
 2. "I choose to believe Satan's lies rather than God's truths."
 3. "I demand to be successful, fulfilled and secure through my circumstances."
 4. "I demand that God meet my perceived needs through people and circumstances the way I dictate."
 5. "I set the terms of obedience in my relationship with God and expect Him to put His stamp of approval on them."
 6. "I have the right to a happy, comfortable, carefree life."
 7. "I will not be inconvenienced or do what is difficult or uncomfortable to obey God or to serve others."
 8. "I will not be hurt. I will not suffer."
 9. "I will discredit God and His Word, and by doing so, call Him a liar. Then I feel justified in not obeying Him."
 10. "I will continue to give myself permission to sin."
 11. "I continue to say, 'I cannot obey,' rather than yielding to God's indwelling power to act through me."
- B. Pride is manifested in a refusal to handle painful or unpleasant situations God's way.
1. "I will grumble, complain and feel sorry for myself."
 2. "I will throw an internal temper tantrum with God when I don't get my way."
 3. "I will suppress, ignore, minimize painful realities."
 4. "I will remain apathetic, complacent and/or withdrawn in relationship to God and others."
 5. "I blame others for my problems; I excuse my angry, hateful attitudes."
 6. "I will angrily **demand** to know, 'Why?'"

Many Christians are leading defeated, inconsistent and/or complacent lives because they are prideful. The proud, disobedient Christian may find God is literally *opposing* him. (Jas. 4:6) No wonder the difficulties are great, or the Christian life is unfulfilling for those who refuse to believe that **obedience** is the key to the abundant life in Christ!

God often uses His discipline as a tool through which the prideful Christian is brought into submission to his Heavenly Father. (Heb. 12:5-11) God's opposition to pride is always an *act of love* to bring His child into harmony with Himself; then the believer can live his life to the fullest, yielding the peaceful fruit of righteousness. It is important to realize that the true believer *will* repent and desire to follow Jesus. (John 10:27; Jas. 4:4-11) If he persists in sin, he must examine himself to see if he is a Christian. (2 Cor. 13:5-8)

“ ...He (God) is able to humble those who walk in pride.”
DAN. 4:37B NASB

V. Understanding the principles of **humility** is another key to obedience. (Prov. 11:2; 29:23)

A. **Humility comes from understanding who you are and who God is.** (Eph. 2:2-5)

1. You need to remember who you were in your natural state, deserving only of God's condemnation. (Titus 3:3)
2. You need to begin to grasp the tremendous cost of Christ's sacrifice for you. (Titus 3:4-7)
3. You need to view your sinfulness in relationship to God's holiness and majesty. (Is. 6:3-5)

B. **Humility is dying to self-will and yielding to the Holy Spirit's control.** (1 Pet. 5:6-11)

1. God directs you to believe in His commands and promises and then to obey as He supplies His supernatural grace.
2. Grace is the power needed to obey God. It is supernaturally given to you through the Holy Spirit, who lives inside you.
 - a. God supplies His grace when you choose to *yield* to the Holy Spirit's control.
 - b. You do not obey Him through your human strength, which will only repeatedly fail, but through the Holy Spirit who empowers you to obey Him. (Zech. 4:6)

“ I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”
PHIL. 4:13

C. **Humility is denying self.** (Luke 9:23a)

1. It is denying yourself the sinful “easy way out” of a difficulty.
2. It is denying your sinful controlling strategies, motivated by love of self, and instead, choosing to be motivated by love of God and others.
3. It is denying yourself the sinful indulgences of unforgiveness, self-pity, anger, worry, fear, lust, immorality, blaming others, withdrawal from unpleasant people or circumstances and/or demanding your way.
4. It is denying yourself the sinful indulgence of not acknowledging, confessing and repenting of your sin.

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Luke 9:23

D. Humility is taking up your cross daily.

1. The **cross** is an *instrument of death*, and you are to voluntarily and daily put self to death so that Christ may live His life through you.

“For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.”
2 Cor. 4:11

- a. Christ voluntarily chose to die on the cross for you. (John 10:17,18)
- b. You are to voluntarily take up your cross by being “broken” of your self-will as the controlling agent of your life.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”
Ps. 51:17

- c. You are to be *characterized* as filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18; 1 Cor. 6:19,20)
 - d. You are to realize that God owns you and has legitimate ownership rights to all you possess – your home, money, family, time, job, material possessions, schedule and future. (Phil. 3:8)
2. The **cross** is an *instrument of suffering*, and you are to be willing to suffer for Christ’s sake.

“ For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

PHIL. 1:29 NASB

- a. You are called to voluntarily suffer for Christ’s sake in response to injustices and to further His kingdom. (Matt. 5:7-10)
 - b. God may lovingly choose suffering as a tool to break you of self-will and to bring you into submission to His will, where you will find intimacy with Him. (Phil. 3:10)
3. The **cost** of *identifying with the cross* is selfless giving to God and to others. (Phil. 2:5-8) Following Christ’s example, you are
- a. to respond with selfless love when facing
 - 1) uncomfortable, unjust or painful situations. (Rom. 12:9,10,12)
 - 2) unlovable people; your enemies. (Luke 6:27-36)
 - b. to give your life for another or for the cause of Christ, if God calls you to do so. (John 15:13)
 - c. to become more Christ-like as you persevere in trusting God in adversity, affliction and persecution.

“ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”

1 PET. 2:21

“ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

ROM. 5:1-4

4. The **fruit** of *identifying with the cross* is joy!

“ Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

HEB. 12:2

- a. As you walk by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit,
 - 1) your focus is changed from a preoccupation with self to focusing on God and others.
 - 2) Christ's Spirit produces His fruit in you: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5:16-26)
- b. When suffering deepens your dependency upon the Living Lord, your fellowship with Him is intimate, sweet and joyful. (Ps. 126:5)

“ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings...”
PHIL. 3:10

“ THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BROKEN IN WEALTH, BROKEN IN SELF-WILL, AND BROKEN IN THEIR AMBITIONS, AND BROKEN IN THEIR BEAUTIFUL IDEALS, AND BROKEN IN WORLDLY REPUTATION, AND BROKEN IN THEIR AFFECTIONS, AND BROKEN IN HEALTH; THOSE WHO ARE DESPISED AND SEEM UTTERLY FORLORN AND HELPLESS, THE HOLY GHOST IS SEIZING UPON, AND USING FOR GOD'S GLORY.”
 UNKNOWN

E. Humility is following Christ.

- 1. *Listening to His voice* by responding to His Word and His Spirit (John 10:27)
- 2. *Focusing on being grateful* and giving thanks for His wondrous gifts to you, rather than grumbling and complaining about difficulties and losses (Phil. 2:14,15; 1 Thess. 5:18)
- 3. *Surrendering your rights* to Him, just as Christ yielded all His rights, realizing you do not deserve them nor do you have a just claim to them
- 4. *Surrendering control* over people and circumstances to God's control
- 5. *Accepting difficult circumstances* and people in your life as God's will for you

“ ...those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”
1 PET. 4:19

- 6. *Choosing to believe* His commands are designed for your best interest and to trust in His unfailing promises

7. *Obeying* His commands in your thinking, attitudes and actions and learning biblical tools to solve problems God's way
8. *Learning to wait* on the Lord for His timing (Ps. 37:7)
9. *Being willing to grow spiritually* beyond your "comfort zones" to serve God and others sacrificially

The command of Jesus is hard, unutterably hard, for those who try to resist it. But for those who willingly submit, the yoke is easy, and the burden is light.¹ --Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!”

PHIL. 2:5-8

- VI. Understanding Satan, as the deceiver, will try to influence you to disobey God. (John 8:44)
- A. God warns you that disobedience is destructive to the believer. The consequences of sin may be immediate and/or long-range.

“Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”

GAL. 6:7

1. Disobedience to His commands opens the door of opportunity for Satan
 - a. to rob, kill or destroy your relationship to others.
 - b. to rob you of experiencing the fullness of your life in Christ.

“The thief comes only to steal, and kill and destroy...”

JOHN 10:10A

2. Disobedience to God's commands is usually the "easier" choice or decision; however, it may lead to bondage in sin.

B. God warns you that destruction is Satan's **only** mission. (John 10:10a; 1 Pet. 5:8)

VII. Obeying Christ is the route to experiencing the abundant life.

“ ...I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly.”

JOHN 10:10B NASB

A. Submitting to God brings forth the fulfilled life. Christ's call is radical, but the riches of His grace produce:

1. the fruit of His Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22,23)
2. a vibrant relationship with the Living Lord. (Ps. 37:4)
3. a vessel of God in a fulfilling ministry to others. (1 Pet. 4:10)
4. a consistent, obedient Christian life regardless of difficult or painful circumstances.
5. the wisdom which only comes from God.

“ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”

JAS. 3:17

B. Following God is often, initially, the “hard” choice, but it leads to freedom, as you are spiritually and emotionally released from the bondages of sin. (John 8:31,32)

“ But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.”

JAS. 1:25

C. Persevering in obedience through the power of His Spirit, releases you from being controlled by unpleasant circumstances even though you may be called to endure them. You can rise above your circumstances through God's power and grace. (Gal. 6:9)

“ No temptation has overtaken you but such is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.”

1 COR. 10:13 NASB

- D. Remembering to put your present life in the perspective of eternity is necessary for your growth in Christ. You are a citizen of heaven just passing through this earthly existence. (Phil. 3:20; John 14:2)

VIII. Understanding that your obedience should be a response to God's love for you.

- A. Loving God because He first loved you and revealed the Gospel to you

“ This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins...

We love, because He first loved us.”

1 JOHN 4:10.19

- B. Responding to His love in belief and humility (Phil. 2:3-8)

- C. Obeying Him as a demonstration of your love for Him

“ If you love me, you will do what I command.”

JOHN 14:15

- D. Loving others through the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22)

- E. Pursuing godly relationships (Matt. 22:37-39)

IX. Remembering to put your present life in the perspective of eternity is necessary for your growth in Christ. You are a citizen of heaven just passing through this earthly existence. (Phil. 3:20; John 14:2)

“ WE ARE NOT CITIZENS OF THIS WORLD TRYING TO MAKE OUR WAY TO HEAVEN; WE ARE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN TRYING TO MAKE OUR WAY THROUGH THIS WORLD. THAT RADICAL CHRISTIAN INSIGHT CAN BE LIFE-CHANGING. WE ARE NOT TO LIVE SO AS TO EARN GOD'S LOVE, INHERIT HEAVEN, AND PURCHASE OUR SALVATION. ALL THOSE ARE GIVEN TO US AS GIFTS; GIFTS BOUGHT BY JESUS ON THE CROSS AND HANDED OVER TO US. WE ARE TO LIVE AS GOD'S REDEEMED, AS HEIRS OF HEAVEN, AND AS CITIZENS OF ANOTHER LAND: THE KINGDOM OF GOD...WE LIVE AS THOSE WHO ARE ON A JOURNEY HOME; A HOME WE KNOW WILL HAVE THE LIGHTS ON AND THE DOOR OPEN AND OUR FATHER WAITING FOR US WHEN WE ARRIVE. THAT MEANS IN ALL ADVERSITY OUR WORSHIP OF GOD IS JOYFUL, OUR LIFE IS HOPEFUL, OUR FUTURE IS SECURE. THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN LOSE ON EARTH THAT CAN ROB US OF THE TREASURES GOD HAS GIVEN US AND WILL GIVE US.”²

JAN KARON

LOVE-MOTIVATED OBEDIENCE



Religion says, "I obey, therefore, I am accepted."
The Gospel says, "I am accepted, therefore, I obey."

The Christian life is a relationship with God that produces greater obedience, *not* a life of obedience that produces a greater relationship with God.

Our love-motivated obedience brings glory to God and puts Him on display.