



# LOVE GOD

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# OBEY GOD

## Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Regularly and willingly lives according to the teachings of scripture, according to the conviction and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and from a place of trust in God.

## Spiritual Outcome Described:

You might not recall the title of the 1887 hymn When We Walk with the Lord, but the chorus is well known:

*“Trust and obey for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.”*

I am accepted by God  
through the work of  
Jesus Christ; therefore,  
obey.

Timothy Keller

Central to our relationship with God is His call to trust and obey Him. Jesus said it simply, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." (John 14:23) Notice the language: *love, Father, home*. God is after relationship. It's only in the context of both trusting and obeying that we can experience intimate relationship with God and that we're also able to enjoy the blessings He has for us. A lack of trusting and obeying was what caused the Israelites to wander for 40 years, struggling relationally with God and missing out on the blessings He'd prepared for them in the promised land.

Also central to following Jesus is the fact that we often struggle to obey. It's essential to understand that our relationship with God is not based on whether we obey or not. Our relationship with God is based on grace. "For it is by grace you have been saved...not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Paul makes it even more clear when he wrote that he would "never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14). Even on our best days of obeying God, there's nothing for us to boast in. Our right standing before God is not because we have been good but because the cross of Christ has brought about much needed forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation.

This teaching of grace, though, is often grossly misunderstood and misapplied. Scripture clearly teaches us that our relationship with God is based on grace, but it does not teach that obedience is optional. Jude boldly challenges using grace as a license to sin when he wrote about an "ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord" (Jude 1:4). The cross of Christ is not a license to get away from God so that we can do our own thing. The cross of Christ makes it possible to get

close to God, so we can follow him and obey him, because God's ways are right and good. Freedom is not *freedom to* sin because we desire to sin, but *freedom from* sin because we love Jesus and thus hate sin. Putting off the old self and putting on the new is much of the Christ-follower's experience; it requires obedience, but we are not left to do it alone or in our own strength.

Grace is not only a means of salvation and forgiveness, but scripture tells us that grace is also the foundation and means of our spiritual growth. "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people (and it also) teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ... Jesus gave himself for us to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:11-14).

It is by grace through faith in Christ that we are saved, and it is by grace through faith in Christ that we learn to trust and obey.

### **Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:**

- Can identify progress in obedience over the last three months.
- Can offer specific examples of 'loss' or 'cost' due to obeying God at the expense of opportunity or relationship.
- Can name points of struggle or temptation that are currently being addressed by taking them to God for strength to overcome.
- Recognizes the Spirit's conviction and guidance and actively applies this guidance to one's life.
- Has a deepening trust in God.
- Experiences rest, hope, confidence, and blessing.

## **Guidance**

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

### **Deuteronomy 30:11-20**

Observations:

Discern Question: What is your perspective on obeying God? Do you believe (in your heart and head) that God has your best interest in mind? Do you believe obedience is possible? Do you want to obey God? Will obeying God give you life or will it be restrictive and oppressive?

### **Joshua 24:14-15**

Observations:

Discernment Question: If you were to commit your life to something or someone other than God, what would that be? What "god" would you obey other than God?

**Proverbs 1:10-19**

Observations:

Discernment Question: In your current season of life, where do you feel pressure to not follow God? If it's people, who are those people? If it's circumstances, what are those circumstances?

**John 14:15-24**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Jesus said that if we love God we will keep his words. What do you love about God that inspires you to want to follow him?

## **Ephesians 5:1-21**

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage names numerous common areas of disobedience: sexual immorality, covetousness, foolish talk, crude joking, drunkenness, etc. Which of these are you most susceptible to in your current season of life?

## **Philippians 3:17-21**

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage references those whose “god is their belly.” What physical appetites might you be obeying rather than obeying God? Why are they a challenge for you?

## **Colossians 3:5-17**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What most gets your attention in this passage, the things you're called to get rid of or the things you're called to do more of? Why?

## **Titus 2:11-14**

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage exhorts us to "wait" for our hope, Jesus Christ, rather than engage worldly passions. In other words, we must live in this world, to a degree, with unfulfilled desires, because these desires will be fulfilled in Christ not in this world's cheap substitutes. How good are you at waiting? How does this affect your obedience?

**1 John 2:15-17**

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage identifies three categories: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Which of these do you most battle with in your current season of life? Why?

**1 John 5:3**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you find God's commands burdensome or liberating? Why?

## **Jude 1:4**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your view of grace? Do you use grace as a license to sin or as power to overcome sin?

### **Next Steps**

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on obeying God? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.

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### **Memory Verses:**

James 1:22 NIV

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

1 John 5:3 NIV

In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

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