

GOD

Obeying God's Word

God loves us so much that He sent His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, so that we can enjoy a more abundant life (John 10:10). To do this, we need to know and obey God's Word, His will. We put obedience to God's Word above what the world says, following the example of Peter and the apostles recorded in Acts 5:29, which reads: "We ought to obey God rather than men." As we obey God's Word, we are trusting in God that He is not only able but willing to fulfill the promises contained in that Word, giving us many great benefits to enjoy.

I John

3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence (*trust*) toward God.

3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

We "keep his commandments" by doing those things that God admonishes us to do in "the all truth" of the Church epistles. In I Corinthians 14:37 Paul wrote: "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." As we keep God's commandments, we have no reason to condemn ourselves and we can trust in God that He will supply all our need (Philippians 4:19).

Verse 22 tells us that we are to "do those things that are pleasing in his sight", those things we find in God's Word. James 1:22 tells us to "be doers of the Word, and not hearers only", because then, as it says in verse 25, we "shall be blessed in our deed". As "doers of the Word" we submit ourselves to God. James 4:7 tells us: "submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." The word "submit" in this verse is from the Greek word *hupotassō*, understood as making the deliberate decision to lovingly obey. As we submit ourselves to God by obeying His Word, we resist the devil, and he cannot touch us.

One of the blessings we can expect as we obey God's word is peace in our lives. Philippians 4:9 tells us: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." "God of peace" is a figure of speech emphasizing that it is God who gives peace. As we do God's Word, we will be blessed with the peace that only God can give.

Philippians

2:12 Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

2:13 For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

The word "obeyed" in verse 12 is from the Greek word *hupakouō*, meaning "to hear to the end of obedience; to submit to; to follow; to hearken submissively". What are we to obey? We obey God's Word. The rest of verse 12 says "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." We "work out our salvation" by studying to know and understand God's Word.

“Fear and trembling” is a figure of speech for “reverence (respect) and obedience”. The word “worketh” in verse 13 is the word “energize” – as we obey God’s Word, God will energize us.

In order for us to trust in God by obeying His Word, we first have to renew our minds:

Romans

- 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.
- 12:2 And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

God lovingly implores us to present, or make the free-will decision to yield, ourselves as a living sacrifice, giving our all for Him. We don’t fashion ourselves to this world with its standards and spiritual degradation. Instead, we “transform” ourselves by renewing our minds. The word “transform” can be understood as “transfigure” – we set a new figure in our minds as we put God’s Word on, replacing negative, worldly thoughts with believing images of victory.

II Corinthians

- 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

The word “obedience” in this verse is from the Greek word *hupakoē*, the noun form of *hupakouō*. We can gain a greater appreciation of what this verse is telling us by considering a literal translation of this verse according to usage:

- 10:5 Demolish your human logic from the high position to which you have lifted it vertically against the knowledge of God which you have known by experience; be wise, lead captive everything to Christ which you have attentively listened to and heard.

In other words, quit depending on human logic and depend on God. Stay your mind on God, making your thoughts obedient to His Word.

When we hear God’s Word and trust in God by choosing to obey and do it, we are building a firm foundation for ourselves that the adversary cannot shake. Luke Chapter 6 contains a record in which Jesus Christ, who always spoke the words that God gave him (John 12:49), expressed this great truth:

Luke

- 6:47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth *them*, I will show you to whom he is like:
- 6:48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.
- 6:49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

Throughout history, God's great desire has been for people to obey His Word. We see this expressed in I Samuel 15:22:

I Samuel

15:22 And Samuel saith, hath the Lord *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

The Bible contains many records for our learning of believers who obeyed God's Word. One of these was Joshua. In Joshua, Chapter 1, God was preparing Joshua to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land.

Joshua

1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

1:9 Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua chose to obey God's Word, and he and the Children of Israel experienced victorious results. Joshua remained committed to obey God's Word, as recorded in Joshua 24:15 where he said: "...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Another great believer who trusted in God by obeying His Word was Hezekiah, as recorded in II Kings, Chapter 18:

II Kings

18:5 He (*Hezekiah*) trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him.

18:6 For he clave to the Lord, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses.

18:7a And the Lord was with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth.

Let's consider a few verses from the Book of Psalms that tell us some of the benefits of obeying God's Word. God hasn't changed, so these benefits still apply to us today.

Psalms

16:8 I have set the Lord always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

16:9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fullness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for ever more.

To set the Lord, Jehovah (God in a personal relationship to you), before you, you focus on and obey His Word. "Rest" in verse 9 is from a Hebrew word meaning to trust, or dwell confidently. As you trust in God by obeying His Word, you can expect some great benefits.

Psalms

- 37:3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; *so* shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.
37:4 Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
37:5 Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

We do good, delighting ourselves in God, committing our way to Him, by obeying His Word. Again, we see some great promises that we can claim in our lives.

Psalms

- 84:11 For the Lord God *is* a sun and shield: the Lord God will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

We “walk uprightly” as we obey God’s Word. Then, we can expect to receive good things from God.

Psalms

- 112:1 Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man *that* feareth the Lord, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.
112:7 He (*the man of verse 1 who respects God and delights in His commandments*) shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed (established), trusting in the Lord.

As we trust in God by obeying His Word, our hearts are established and we never have to allow fear into our lives.

Finally, Proverbs Chapter 3, verses 1 through 10 present a great summary of some of the benefits we can expect to experience as we trust in God by obeying His Word:

Proverbs

- 3:1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
3:2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.
3:3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
3:4 So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.
3:5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.
3:8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.
3:9 Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase:
3:10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

We have seen that as we obey God’s Word, we can expect to be blessed with many great benefits as we live the more abundant life that God so lovingly made available to us.

- Dr. Rick Batt