

# “Our LORD & Covenant Faithfulness”

Leviticus ch.26

April 8, 2018

**INTRO:** Let me ask you a question as we begin...

- Last week clarified... Easter/Day Atonement
- What if I were to tell you... today > importance?
- What could be more important than that truth???

**ANSWER:** What **YOU** do with it!

I have **3 more *eternal questions*** for you today...

- What role does obedience play in Christianity?
- How important a question is question #1 to you?
- Where are you getting your answers from?

**T/S:** Both our beliefs & our behaviors are a big deal!!! –JDP

Remember: Leviticus 19:2 & 1 Peter 1:14-16

*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also **be holy in all your conduct**, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*

**BIG IDEA:**

*SAVING-faith... loves & lives in faithful-obedience!*

One’s genuine faith & **real** relationship to Jesus & His gospel are evidenced by: **1).** The ***beliefs*** in their head; **2).** What’s ***beloved*** in their heart, and, figuratively speaking, **3).** How their hands ***behave***, as a predominant pattern of life.

## PREVIEW:

- I. CLARIFICATION
- II. CONTEMPLATION
- III. CELEBRATION

## CONTEXT:

- A. Leviticus, our LORD & His Law
  - i. Love letter...
  - ii. 3 Types of Law...
  - iii. Closing exclamation mark...
- B. Holiness
  - i. Sin (All of sin can be defined in a word: disobedience.)
  - ii. Salvation
  - iii. Sanctification

## I. CLARIFICATION (faithful obedience in worship)

**Key texts:** *Leviticus 26:1-2 (ESV)*

<sup>1</sup> *“You shall not make idols for yourselves... and bow down to them, for I am the LORD your God. <sup>2</sup> You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.*

**T/S:** **Obedience Is an Act of Worship...** [Romans 12:1](#)

**9X** in Leviticus the Lord **reminds** His people that He **delivered** them from Egypt & **deserves** their *obedience!*

*When we lose the sense of... privilege that it is to serve the Lord, then we begin to despise His Word and disobey His commandments. – Wiersbe*

**VIDEO:**            *“God’s Work & Our Walk & Worship”*

**T/S:**            *Consider some key biblical words & concepts... & their relationship to obedience &/or disobedience.*

- The Sermon on the Mount
- All Jesus’ parables... (Prodigal, Narrow Path, etc.)
- Rich young ruler & the middle road crowd
- All New Testament correction & commands...
- **Words:** *Sin, Grace, Church, Witness, Disciple...*

**LONG QUOTE:** (Ligonier Ministries)

Many who profess Christ today emphasize a wrong view of grace that makes it a free pass to do whatever they please. Tragically, they have convinced themselves that the Christian life can be lived without any binding obligation to the moral law of God. In this hyper-grace distortion, the need for obedience has been neutered. The commandments of God are no longer in the driver’s seat of Christian living, but have been relegated to the backseat, if not the trunk—like a spare tire—to be used only in case of an emergency. With such a spirit of “anything-goes,” what needs to be reinforced again is the necessity of obedience.

For all true followers of Christ, obedience is never peripheral.

At the heart of what it means to be a disciple of our Lord is living in loving devotion to God. But if such love is real, the acid test is obedience. Jesus maintained, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Therefore, genuine love for Christ will always manifest itself in obedience.

This does not mean that a Christian can ascend to sinless perfection. This will never be realized this side of glory. Neither does it imply that a believer will never disobey God again. Isolated acts of disobedience will still occur. But the new birth does give a new heart that desires to obey the Word.

God said in **Ezekiel 36:26-27**:

*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezek.*

*36:26-27)*

*Biblical-faith is grace-based, **miraculous-believing**... that lovingly receives, abides-in, & obeys the Son of God... the Word of God, the will of God, and the way(s) of God... no matter what! – JDP*

*“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life”*

*(John 3:36)*

## II. CONTEMPLATION (faithful obedience in warfare)

*As children of God, we already have everything we need for "life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3)... As we trust God's promises and obey His commandments, we draw upon our spiritual inheritance and are able to walk successfully and serve effectively. Like the nation of Israel in Canaan, we have battles to fight and work to do; but as we walk in obedience to the Lord, He enables us to overcome the enemy, claim the land, and enjoy its blessings. – Warren Wiersbe*

**VIDEO:**        ***“Obedience Brings Blessings”***

A redemptive relationship is our greatest reward!

**T/S:**        ***“It is a fearful/dreadful/terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” - Hebrews 10:31***

**VIDEO:**        ***“Disobedience Brings Pain”***

**NOTE:** We must confront the implications of the holy, just, & wrathful goodness of God, as seen in Leviticus 26 & His unchanging nature throughout the Bible & throughout human history... past, present, & future! - JDP

**NOTE:** God does NOT hesitate to take responsibility for the judgments that occur

**“God loves & hates sinners”** - take a close look at the cross!

**“Sinners in the hands of an angry God...”**

*“There will be no \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven...”* (**Revelation 21:7-8**)

*The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”*

Does that mean “just some” \_\_\_\_\_ will be in heaven? At least a few?

**\*\*\* 99% obedience = 100% disobedience \*\*\***

*Those who will not be parted from their sins by the commands of God, shall be parted from them by God’s judgments... – Matthew Henry*

### **III. CELEBRATION** (faithful obedience in witness)

*The cause of Israel's rebellion was "uncircumcised hearts," that is, hearts that had never been changed by the Lord (26:41).*

#### **A. God’s Grace & Glory**

1 Peter 4:11

*"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."*

**Verse 41: Only God could humble & regenerate their hearts.**

*"In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ" ([Colossians 2:11](#); cf. [Philippians 3:3](#)).*

**B. Our Going with His Gospel**

**Romans 1:5....** *through Christ we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations...*

*So grace is not just received by faith, it aims at faith. God gives gifts of grace so that we will be his instruments in bringing about "the obedience of faith." - Piper*

See the "trap door" analogy for disobedience via deceitful & deceptive definitions!

**VIDEO:**      ***"Motivations For Obedience"***

***(Don't quench the Spirit...)***

*Punishment is for those who stubbornly reject the gospel (be they inside or outside the visible church) and die in their sins, but discipline is for those who are truly a part of the family of God...*

**T/S:** When Jesus said: "You will know them by their fruit," He was saying: "You will know them by their faith & faithfulness," which is akin to: "You will know My chosen, Christian children by their faithful obedience." - JDP

**CLOSE:** *Biblical holiness is found in faithful obedience!*

**T/S:** Christianity is bookended by the gracious gift faithful obedience... One's new life begins: with "Follow Me" & ends with: "unless you pick up your cross daily (your means of blatant, daily death-to-self), you cannot be My disciple." - JDP

### **1 Corinthians 15:10**

*"By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."*

## **Let's PRAY**

**VIDEO:** *"O Come To The Altar"*

## Leviticus 26:1-46 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> **“You shall not (1)** make idols for yourselves or **(2)** erect an image or pillar, and **you shall not** set up a figured stone in your land to bow down to it, **for I am the LORD your God.**

<sup>2</sup> **You shall (3)** keep my Sabbaths and **(4)** reverence my sanctuary: **I am the LORD.**

<sup>3</sup> **“If you (5)** walk in my statutes and (6) observe my commandments and (7) do them,

<sup>4</sup> **then I will (8)** give you your rains in their season, and **(9)** the land shall yield its increase, and **(10)** the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

<sup>5</sup> **(11)** Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and **(12)** the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And **(13)** you shall eat your bread to the full and **(14)** dwell in your land securely.

<sup>6</sup> **I will give (15)** peace in the land, and **(16)** you shall lie down, and **(17)** none shall make you afraid. **And I will (18)** remove harmful beasts from the land, and **(19)** the sword shall not go through your land.

<sup>7</sup> **(20)** You shall chase your enemies, and **(21)** they shall fall before you by the sword.

<sup>8</sup> **(22)** Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

<sup>9</sup> **I will (23)** turn to you and (24) make you fruitful and (25) multiply you and (26) will confirm my covenant with you.

<sup>10</sup> **You shall (27)** eat old store long kept, and **(28)** you shall clear out the old to make way for the new.

<sup>11</sup> **I will (29)** make my dwelling among you, and (30) my soul shall not abhor you.

<sup>12</sup> **And I will (31)** walk among you and **(32)** will be your God, **and you shall (33)** be my people.

<sup>13</sup> **I am the LORD your God,** who **(34)** brought you out of the land of Egypt, that **(35)** you should not be their slaves. **And I have (36)** broken the bars of your yoke and **(36)** made you walk erect.

<sup>14</sup> **“But if you will not (1)** listen to me and **(2)** will not **do all** these commandments,

<sup>15</sup> **if you (3)** spurn my statutes, **and if (4)** your soul abhors my rules, so **that you will not (5) do all** my commandments, **but (6)** break my covenant,

<sup>16</sup> **then I will do this to you:** **(1)** I will visit you with panic, **(2)** with wasting disease and **(3)** fever that consume the eyes and **(4)** make the heart ache. **And (5)** you shall sow your seed in vain, **for (6)** your enemies shall eat it.

<sup>17</sup> **(7)** I will set my face against you, and **(8)** you shall be struck down before your enemies. **(9)** Those who hate you shall rule over you, and **(10)** you shall flee when none pursues you.

<sup>18</sup> **(11)** And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins,

<sup>19</sup> and **(12)** I will break the pride of your power, and **(13)** I will make your heavens like iron and **(14)** your earth like bronze.

<sup>20</sup> And **(15)** your strength shall be spent in vain, for **(16)** your land shall not yield its increase, and **(17)** the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

<sup>21</sup> **“Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins.**

<sup>22</sup> And **(18)** I will let loose the wild beasts against you, which shall **(19)** bereave you of your children and **(20)** destroy your livestock and **(21)** make you few in number, so that **(22)** your

roads shall be deserted.

<sup>23</sup> “**And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me,**

<sup>24</sup> **then I also (23) will walk contrary to you, and I myself will (24) strike you sevenfold for your sins.**

<sup>25</sup> **And I will (25) bring a sword upon you, that shall (26) execute vengeance for the covenant.**

**And if you gather within your cities, I will (27) send pestilence among you, (28) and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.**

<sup>26</sup> When I (29) break your supply of bread, (30) ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven and shall dole out your bread again by weight, and (31) you shall eat and not be satisfied.

<sup>27</sup> “**But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me,**

<sup>28</sup> **then (32) I will walk contrary to you (33) in fury, and I myself will (34) discipline you sevenfold for your sins.**

<sup>29</sup> (35) You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and (36) you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.

<sup>30</sup> **And I will (37) destroy your high places and (38) cut down your incense altars and (39) cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols, and (40) my soul will abhor you.**

<sup>31</sup> **And I (41) will lay your cities waste and (42) will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will (43) not smell your pleasing aromas.**

<sup>32</sup> **And I myself will (44) devastate the land, so that (45) your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled at it.**

<sup>33</sup> **And I will (46) scatter you among the nations, and I will (47) unsheathe the sword after you, and (48) your land shall be a desolation, and (49) your cities shall be a waste.**

<sup>34</sup> “Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while (50) you are in your enemies’ land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths.

<sup>35</sup> As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it.

<sup>36</sup> And as for those of you who are left, **I will (51) send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. (52) The sound of a driven leaf shall put them to flight, and (53) they shall flee as one flees from the sword, and (54) they shall fall when none pursues.**

<sup>37</sup> (55) They shall stumble over one another, as if to escape a sword, though none pursues. And you (56) shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

<sup>38</sup> And (57) you shall perish among the nations, and (58) the land of your enemies shall eat you up.

<sup>39</sup> And (59) those of you who are left shall rot away in your enemies’ lands because of their iniquity, and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them.

<sup>40</sup> “**But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against Me,** and also in **walking contrary to Me,**

<sup>41</sup> **so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity,**

<sup>42</sup> **then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.**

<sup>43</sup> But the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and **they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes.**

<sup>44</sup> **Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither**

**will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the LORD their God.**

<sup>45</sup> **But I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the LORD.**”

<sup>46</sup> **These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between himself and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai.**

**26:1-46** The covenant blessings for obedience (26:3-13) and curses for disobedience (26:14-39) are elaborated (cf. Deut. 28). A provision for repentance is also offered (26:40-45).

**26:1, 2** A representative summary of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:3-17) was set forth as the standard by which Israel’s obedience or disobedience would be measured.

**26:1** *image... pillar... engraved stone.* Israel’s neighbors used all of these devices for the worship of their gods.

**26:3-13** These blessings will reward obedience.

**26:4** *rain in its season.* If the rains did not come at the right times, the people experienced crop failure and famine (cf. 1 Kin. 17; 18).

**26:6** *evil beasts.* Dangerous animals such as lions and bears existed in that area. Joseph’s brothers claimed that such an animal had killed him (Gen. 37:20).

**26:7** *chase your enemies.* God provided victories repeatedly in the conquest of Canaan (cf. Josh. 8-12).

**26:9** *make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you.* What God commanded at reation and repeated after the flood was contained in the covenant promise of seed (Gen. 12:1-3), which He will fulfill to the nation of Israel as promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:5, 6).

**26:12** *your God... My people.* The promise of an intimate covenant relationship with the God of the universe is given (cf. 2 Cor. 6:16).

**26:14-39** These punishments will repay disobedience.

**26:15 break My covenant.** By disobeying the commandments and the various laws of the Mosaic covenant, Israel broke this conditional covenant. Unlike the ultimate provisions of the unconditional covenant made with Abraham, all blessings in the covenant of Mosaic law were conditioned upon obedience (cf. [Lev. 26:25](#)).

**26:16 wasting disease.** Perhaps tuberculosis or leprosy is in view (the subject of much legislation in [Lev. 13](#); [14](#)), but no certain identification is possible. *your enemies shall eat it*. They will be conquered by their enemies at a time when those enemies will enjoy Israel's harvest.

**26:22 highways shall be desolate.** The activity on a nation's roadway, i.e., messengers, merchants, and people traveling, reflected the well-being of that country. This is a picture of extreme economic siege.

**26:25 the vengeance of the covenant.** God's retribution for Israel's breaking the conditional Mosaic covenant is pledged.

**26:29 eat the flesh.** There will be widespread famine in the land and, thus, the people will even resort to cannibalism, which actually came to pass (cf. [2 Kin. 6:28, 29](#); [Jer. 19:9](#); [Lam. 2:20](#); [4:10](#)).

**26:30 high places.** These were natural shrines for the worship of idols. Solomon disobeyed God by worshiping Him on the high places ([1 Kin. 3:4](#)), and not long afterward, he was serving the gods of his foreign wives ([1 Kin. 11:1-9](#)).

**26:31-35** All this occurred in the terrible invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. by the Assyrians and the destruction of the southern kingdom of Judah in 605-586 B.C. by the Babylonians. In the case of Judah, it was a seventy-year captivity to rest the land for all the Sabbath years that had been violated. See [2 Chronicles 36:17-21](#).

**26:35 the time it did not rest.** By implication, this is because they had violated the Sabbath repeatedly. This violation became the basis of the later seventy-year Babylonian captivity (cf. [2 Chr. 36:20-21](#)).

**26:38** The ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel never returned directly from captivity. See [2 Kings 17:7-23](#); see note on [Acts 26:7](#).

**26:40-42 if they confess,... I will remember My covenant.** God's covenant was rooted in the relationship He had initiated with His people. True repentance would be honored by Him.

**26:42 Jacob... Isaac... Abraham.** The reverse chronological order of these names provides a look in retrospect as opposed to the actual historical sequence.

**26:46** Much of the content of Leviticus came during Moses' two "forty day and night" visits to Sinai (cf. [Ex. 24:16-32:6](#); [34:2-28](#); [Lev. 7:37, 38](#); [25:1](#); [27:34](#)).

## **K. Redemption of Votive Gifts ([27:1-34](#))**

[27:1-34](#) Standard legislation is given for dedicated persons, animals, houses, and lands.

[27:2-7](#) *consecrates by a vow*. This sets the gift apart from the rest of his household and possessions as a gift to the Lord and His service.

[27:3](#) *the shekel of the sanctuary*. See note on [5:15](#).

[27:26](#) *the firstborn*. The firstborn already belonged to the Lord ([Ex. 13:2](#)), so the worshiper could not dedicate it a second time.

[27:29](#) *person under the ban*. Like Achan in [Joshua 7](#).

[27:30-32](#) *tithe*. This general tithe was given to the Levites. Cf. [Numbers 18:21-32](#). This is the only mention of tithe or ten percent in Leviticus. However, along with this offering, there were two other OT tithes which totaled about twenty-three percent annually (cf. the second tithe—[Deut. 14:22](#); and the third tithe every three years—[Deut. 14:28, 29](#); [26:12](#)).

### Further Study

Harris, R. Laird. *Leviticus*, in Expositor's Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1990.

Wenham, G. J. *The Book of Leviticus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

- The MacArthur Bible Commentary.

[Leviticus 26:1-46](#)

*A Welcome Warning*

Blessings [26:1-13](#)

Curses [26:14-39](#)

Assurance [26:40-46](#)

## Setting Up the Section

[Leviticus 26](#) is one of the clearest warnings in the Pentateuch (and is reiterated more emphatically in [Deuteronomy 28](#)). God's standards for Israel's conduct and the results of obedience or disobedience

are given well in advance of punishment or blessing. This chapter does not contain just words of warning, though. It also reveals some of the greatest words of hope found in the Bible.

## [26:1-13](#)

### **Blessings**

God reminds the Israelites that they are His people ([26:1-2](#)) and then promises blessings if they will act as His people ([26:3-13](#)). In its broadest definition, God's blessings are conditioned by Israel's keeping of the Mosaic Covenant ([26:3-4](#)). At the heart of that covenant is worshiping God alone and observing the Sabbath ([26:1-2](#)).

The blessings God promises Israel are directly related to her possession of the land of Canaan: peace ([26:6](#)), prosperity ([26:4-5](#), [9-10](#)), and the presence of God ([26:11-12](#)). Those promises end with a reminder of past blessings and of God's faithfulness ([26:13](#)).

## [26:14-39](#)

### **Curses**

The curses are virtually a reversal of the promised blessings. Instead of prosperity, disobedience will bring poverty ([26:16](#), [26](#)). Instead of peace and security, disobedience will bring insecurity, peril, and fear ([26:16](#), [17](#), [21-22](#), [25](#), [31-32](#), [36-39](#)). Instead of God's presence, disobedience will bring separation ([26:17](#), [21](#), [23-24](#), [28](#), [34-35](#)).

## **Demystifying Leviticus**

There are a number of passages that are parallel to [Leviticus 26](#). [Exodus 23:22-33](#) is the first recording of the promise of blessings and curses, based upon Israel's obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. In [Deuteronomy 28](#), the blessings and curses are repeated in greater detail for the second generation of Israelites who are about to possess the land of Canaan. [Joshua 24:20](#) is a brief summation of the warnings of this chapter, and the writings of the prophets reveal some direct dependence on it ([Isaiah 49:1](#); [Ezekiel 34:25-30](#); [37:21-28](#)). [Leviticus 26](#) is key to understanding the history of Israel.

## [26:40-46](#)

### **Assurance**

God deals with Israel’s sin and with repentance at its roots, at the level of motivation. Israel’s disobedience is the result of her hatred of God’s laws ([26:15](#)). But God’s motivation in discipline is to have Israel turn back to Him ([26:41](#)). God assures Israel of an ultimate hope by reaffirming His love for them. In the end, God assures Israel that He will restore her not based on obedience to the Mosaic Covenant, but because of His own faithfulness ([26:40-45](#)).

### Take It Home

The benevolence of God is underscored in this chapter, even with its gruesome warnings. God’s desire is for restoration; to have Israel turn back to Him ([26:18](#), [21](#), [23](#), [27](#)). And in the end, despite their unfaithfulness, God assures Israel that He will restore them based on His faithfulness, not their deeds ([26:40-45](#)). Israel is always assured of God’s love and of His good purposes for His people. May we find hope in the faithfulness and mercy of God in our own situations.

Blessings ( <a href="#">26:1-13</a> )	Curses ( <a href="#">26:14-39</a> )
God Confirms Covenant ( <a href="#">v. 9</a> )	God’s Vengeance for Covenant ( <a href="#">v. 25</a> )
<b>God’s Presence</b>	<b>God’s “Absence”</b>
God turns toward His people ( <a href="#">v. 9</a> )	God sets His face against them ( <a href="#">v. 17</a> )
God will dwell among them ( <a href="#">v. 11</a> )	God sends them into captivity ( <a href="#">vv. 38-39</a> )
God walks among them ( <a href="#">v. 12</a> )	God becomes their adversary ( <a href="#">v. 33</a> )
<b>Peace</b>	<b>Peril</b>
Security ( <a href="#">v. 5</a> )	Soul pines away/sudden terror ( <a href="#">v. 16</a> )
Peace of mind ( <a href="#">v. 6</a> )	Terror, fear, panic ( <a href="#">vv. 36-37</a> )

Beasts won't harm them  
([v. 6](#))

Beasts destroy and decimate ([v. 22](#))

Prevail over their enemies  
([vv. 7-8](#))

Attacked by enemies—raids ([v. 16](#)) Struck down by enemies ([v. 17](#))  
Ruled by enemies ([v. 17](#)) Flee, but none pursue ([v. 17](#)) Delivered  
into enemy hands ([v. 25](#)) Scattered among nations ([v. 33](#)) Destroy  
themselves—cannibalism ([v. 29](#))

### Prosperity

### Poverty

God gives rains in season  
([v. 4](#))

God withholds the rains ([v. 19](#))

Crops will grow  
abundantly ([vv. 4-5](#)) Old  
grain cleared out for new  
([v. 10](#))

Crops don't grow ([v. 20](#)) Enemies raid and steal crops ([v. 16](#))  
Famine—lack of bread ([v. 26](#)) Land is desolate ([v. 32](#))

Israelites fruitful and  
increase ([v. 9](#))

Consumption, fever, waste away ([v. 16](#)) Wild animals decimate ([v. 22](#))  
Pestilence in cities kills ([v. 25](#)) Israelites kill and eat their own ([v. 29](#))

- Layman's Bible Commentary

## Grace has the Last Word

### [Leviticus 26:1-46](#)

THERE IS ALWAYS AN ADVANTAGE FOR THE SPEAKER who has the last word in a discussion or debate. The last words in any conversation are typically the ones best remembered. Also, the expression *the last word* can refer to ultimate authority, such as, "The doctor has the last word on my physical therapy." That chapter 26 presents the Lord's "last word" on worship and holy living in Leviticus makes this chapter especially important for our Christian lives. The final verse of the chapter reads, "These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between him and the people of Israel through

Moses on Mount Sinai" ([v. 46](#)). This verse implies all of the instructions found in the whole book, not just chapter 26. The verse echoes the very first verse of the book: "The Lord called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying..." ([1:1](#)). After that the Lord gave Moses the message of the book to the people. So chapter 26 wraps up the revelation made at the Tent of Meeting.

**In chapter 26 the Lord sets before the people the choice between obedience and disobedience and describes the consequences that will ensue in each case. If the people choose to obey, the consequences are wonderful blessings. If they choose to disobey, the consequences will be calamitous. But the Lord reveals that the people in the days to come will choose disobedience, and their persistent recalcitrance will result in eventual exile** from the land. The history of Israel proved that God was right. Although deserving final annihilation, the Lord promised that in their exile the people would come to their senses and repent. They would be restored to their land, and the blessings of God would flow once again. **Why did the Lord relent on his judgment?** we may ask ourselves. The passage ends on the Lord's last word on the matter: **God's faithfulness to his promises incites him to show grace to the repentant.** God himself will change the hearts of the people, and he will restore them.

**The chapter conveniently falls into four units.** The first unit is [verses 1, 2](#), which refer to two crucial commandments that call for **loyalty to God**. The final unit is [verses 40-46](#), in which the **Lord promises his loyalty** to the Israelites. **These two units border and encircle the two middle units that dominate the chapter.** [Verses 3-13](#) describe **the blessings of God**, and [verses 14-39](#) describe **the curses of God**.

## I. The Gold Standard for Worship (26:1, 2)

In a word **the gold standard for measuring the loyalty of the people to the Lord is their sole worship and obedience to him.** By gold standard I mean the highest example of faithfulness. The passage expresses this by listing two commandments found in the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were the centerpiece of the covenant agreement that God and the Israelites entered into on Mount Sinai ([Exodus 20](#)). **The covenant included promised blessings but also forewarnings of covenant curses depending on the response of the people to the stipulations of the covenant agreement (cf. [Exodus 23:25-33](#); [Deuteronomy 27, 28](#)).** **The two commandments are connected because they both concern the worship of God.**

***False worship*** ([v. 1](#)). ***The second commandment in the covenant prohibited the making and worship of idols*** ([Exodus 20:4-6](#); [34:17](#); [1 Corinthians 10:7](#); [1 John 5:21](#)). The worship of idols was universal in ancient religions. **Typically, ancient religions boasted of a pantheon of gods and goddesses. Theirs was an inclusive system in assimilating the various gods of the nations into religious syncretism.** **It was the Israelites who were the "odd" ones, for they worshipped a God who could not be represented by any physical object. God is Spirit and must be worshiped in spirit** ([John 4:23, 24](#)). The idea that any deity could be captured in a stone or metal idol is the height of spiritual darkness, utter foolishness ([Psalm 14:1](#); [53:1](#); [Isaiah 41:29](#); [44:9-20](#); [1 Corinthians 8:4](#)). Christian worship today is also countercultural,

not in step with the prevailing notion that the worship of God can be legitimate as long as it is moral and sincere. **The Christian claim that only through Christ can a person come to God is an unthinkable tenet today.** This, it is said by our popular culture, reflects the West's intolerance and prejudice. Christian orthodoxy that teaches there is but one Savior and Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Son of God, has been denigrated as nothing more than religious dogma used for subjugating others by the ruling powers of Western culture.

**If we give in to the pressures of the popular voices today, we fail to worship God in the only means whereby we can authentically know God and serve him. The clearest statement of this is Jesus' own words, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).** But elsewhere the New Testament continues to make this abundantly clear: ***"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).***

***True worship* (v. 2).** The positive call to true worship is the faithful observance of God's "Sabbaths" and "reverence [for God's] sanctuary" (also Leviticus 19:30). "Reverence" means "to stand in awe" of God. The word occurs only three times in the book of Leviticus, and each time it is tied to the observance of Sabbath. The point is to honor God by showing obedience, as in the exhortation, "Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father" (19:3). In particular God says "my Sabbaths" and "my sanctuary." These are distinctive of their God. They are his and must be honored by following his instructions. Chapter 25 called for the people to honor the Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee. Our passage builds on this. Here the Lord calls for the people to observe his Sabbaths, which would include the two just mentioned and the weekly Sabbath. The Sabbath day was the sign of God's covenant with the Israelites (Exodus 31:13, 17). By keeping Sabbath the Israelites were expressing in a tangible way their surrender to the rule of God. It was their visible weekly claim on God's promises.

**The mention of "sanctuary" refers to** the former instructions of Leviticus that pertain to the central place of worship in the life of the community. **The Tent of Meeting was in the middle of the wilderness camp. This symbolized that God was the center of Israel's identity.** He and he alone was the One who united them into a nation and who had redeemed them from Egyptian bondage. **The purity of the sanctuary was essential in the worship of the people.** It was at the various sanctuaries of the ancient peoples that their gods and goddesses were known by their clay, wooden, and metal idols. But Israel's sanctuary had no such images. **The image of God was the people themselves.** Keeping the instructions regarding the sanctuary, properly carrying out the sacrifices by the priest and people, and the holy living of the people exhibited the people's reverence for God in his sanctuary. The prophet Habakkuk said it well: "But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him" (2:20). **We as Christians know that the temple of the Lord is not of the same sort as found in the Old Testament. Now the presence of God in Christ, the incarnational tabernacle of God (John 1:14), has made worship centered in a person, not a place.** We come to the Lord only through the incarnational Jesus, whose body is the way into the presence of the Father (John 2:19-21; Hebrews 9).

**Blessings for His People (26:3-13)**

***Blessing with obedience (26:3).*** God promised his people blessings.

But the continuation of the blessings was coupled with the obedient behavior of the Israelites. It was common in ancient covenants to list benefits for the faithful observance of the covenant's stipulations. When nations entered into treaties, the Great King promised benefits to vassal kings who entered into the treaty. The most important requirement of a vassal king was loyalty to the Great King who received tribute from the vassal. In the setting of Biblical theology the Great King is the Lord God, and his vassals are the twelve tribes of Israel. The Lord is Protector and Provider of Israel, and the Israelites are loyal subjects who bring offerings of worship.

***What is a blessing? (26:4-13).*** The blessings that the passage lists were appropriate ones for Israel as a nation. These were national promises and were not necessarily applicable in every case to an individual Israelite.

The word "blessing" (*barak*) is common in the Old Testament Scriptures. The blessings that God promised Abraham and his descendants were chiefly expressed as material blessings, especially prosperity and protection. The reason for national promises of blessing was the purpose of the blessings. God's plan was to deliver all nations from their sins and to form a living relationship with the nations. He did this by creating a special nation that would be his vehicle of grace and salvation.

Abraham and his descendants were blessed by God so they could found a nation that prospered and enjoyed security, enabling them to survive and be a witness to the nations ([Genesis 12:1-3](#)). But the promise of blessing was not solely material in nature: "And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people" ([v. 12](#)). Blessing included the presence of God among his people and the spiritual benefits of knowing the one true, living God ([Psalm 103:2; 116:12](#)). He will love and care for his people ([Deuteronomy 7:13](#)).

***The blessings listed are four.*** First, the Lord promises the seasonal rains that will produce dependable harvests. Second, the Lord will grant the people peace in the land. This peace is achieved by driving out harmful beasts that otherwise would prowl the land, mauling people and robbing animal herds. Also, this peace is secured by the Lord's granting Israel victory over her national enemies. The third blessing is the promise of population increase, which was evidence of God's covenant commitment to Israel (cf. [Genesis 1:28; 9:1; 17:20; Deuteronomy 28:11](#)). The last blessing is the promise of God's enduring presence among his people. "I will walk among you," he says ([v. 12](#)), indicating the continuance of the covenant. In summary the blessings regard security and prosperity.

*Blessings for Christians.* After naming the blessings promised to the people of Israel so long ago, we are challenged to think about how God's character of blessing his people applies to Christians today. We typically think of our God as a good God who provides for his people. There is recognition in the New Testament that there are material blessings as well as spiritual ones ([Romans 15:27](#)). Jesus taught in his Sermon on the Mount, "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all" ([Matthew 6:31, 32](#)). Or consider Jesus' comforting words in [Luke 11:9-12](#): "And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who

asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?"

We usually think of blessings as those answers that meet an immediate crisis, such as healing for sickness, resources for indebtedness, or reconciliation for troubled marriages. **Wherever the need is most acute at the moment, we reckon the fillings of those needs as blessings.** And indeed they are blessings for which we give thanks to God. **When we consider, however, the idea and language of "bless" in the New Testament, it usually refers to the spiritual benefits that God has secured for us through Christ. The Beatitudes especially point us to the spiritual promises that are received by those who are kingdom citizens** ([Matthew 5:3-12](#)). The two passages that we quoted above that address **the material needs of believers clarify that the intention of answering our physical needs is so we can focus on the spiritual inheritance God has for us in Christ.** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus adds to the passage already quoted, **"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you"** ([Matthew 6:33](#)). And in speaking of the Father's love for his children, Jesus concluded with, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" ([Luke 11:13](#)). **The truly prized blessing that God has for us is the gift of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers. Our blessings are said to be "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places"** ([Ephesians 1:3](#)). **The blessings we have are those of the saving grace of the gospel** ([Acts 3:26](#); [1 Corinthians 9:23](#); [Galatians 3:14](#)), **the crown of eternal life** ([James 1:12](#)), **spiritual understanding and knowledge** ([Colossians 1:9](#)), **prayer** ([2 Corinthians 1:11](#)), **spiritual gifts and love** ([1 Corinthians 12-14](#)), **spiritual peace, hope, and assurance** ([Philippians 4:7-9](#); [Titus 2:13](#)), and **spiritual fruit** ([Galatians 5:22, 23](#)).

### **God's blessing for his people is at its heart the relationship**

with God that he has **made possible through his Son, Jesus**. For most Christians in the world today and across the centuries, the idea that the blessedness of Christian living is the result of bartering with God over accrued wealth and emotional happiness is totally foreign. In fact, **in many places in the world today becoming**

## Christian means the loss of financial security, the fracturing of family ties, and the sadness of personal trials.

We must think in terms of a vibrant meaningful relationship with God as the blessedness of Christian living. We sing the hymn's refrain, "I am satisfied with Jesus, But the question comes to me, As I think of Calvary, Is my Master satisfied with me?" When B. B. McKinney penned these words, he also explained in the lyrics of the hymn the meaning of his satisfaction with Jesus: "[Jesus] has done so much for me: He has suffered to redeem me, He has died to set me free."

### The blessedness of belonging to Jesus and Jesus belonging to us is the greatest benefit of all.

We may compare this to our relationship with a spouse or family members. What makes our lives rich in our relationships with others is to know, love, and trust one another. Yes, my spouse meets material and physical needs, too, but it is not that feature of our relationship that makes marriage a marriage. One could hire a nurse or servant to do the same tasks of domestic living. What makes a relationship rich beyond measure is sharing in one another's lives, making memories and growing old together.

### Curses for God's People (26:14-39)

#### *Curses for disobedience* ([26:14, 15](#)). God's covenant with

Israel also included curses for disobedience (e.g., [Deuteronomy 11:26, 29; 30:1, 19; Joshua 8:34](#)). In this Leviticus text the word *curse* does not occur, but the catalog of punishments named in the text match those of the curses enumerated in

[Deuteronomy 28](#) and other passages. **(1) We first notice that much more is said about the penalties than the blessings.** This corresponds to ancient covenants. The forewarnings are more detailed than the benefits because the force of the forewarning was the likelihood of its necessity.

Disobedience was the predisposition of Israel ([Exodus 32:9](#)). **(2) Yet we see that the passage emphasizes the conditional nature of the penalties by the recurring use of the preposition "if" in verses 14, 15. The people have the responsibility of right behavior. If the penalties rain upon Israel, it is the people's own fault, not fickleness on God's part.** **(3)** Another

indication of God's standpoint toward Israel's disobedience is reflected by the growing intensity of the penalties as they are listed. God showed mercy toward Israel's disobedience.

The Lord never enjoyed penalizing the Israelites. The recurring "if" in verses 18 and following show the stepping up of the penalties because of the continued resistance of the

Israelites. [Verse 18](#) reads, "And if in spite of this you will not listen to me..." Repeatedly the Lord warned that failure to respond to each judgment meant a greater judgment "sevenfold" ([26:18, 21, 24, 28](#)). God gave measured responses to the sins of

Israel with the goal of reclaiming them. Repentance would mean the end of their trials, if they would only repent.

*What is a curse?* Modern conceptions of curses should not be the way we understand the Biblical idea of *curse*. Curses today are usually considered magical incantations, specially worded formulas that set in motion evil penalties, often in the setting of a vendetta against someone. They are akin to hexes, which presuppose that there is power in the words spoken that affect the curse of the magical words. The victim believes himself doomed by the curse and can only appeal to another spoken formulation that will reverse the curse. **The Biblical view of curse is not magical at all.** The words spoken are not inherently powerful, able to bring about curse or blessing. There is no repertoire of magical chants that cause irreversible suffering. Moreover, Biblical curses are *not* based on ritual performance, that is, a sequence of special rites that call upon mystical cosmic powers to override the wishes and behaviors of people, be they good or evil. Blessings and curses are the result of God's moral order in the universe. By his autonomous will, God governs by his sovereign power. His judgments are rooted in his moral character and his right to sovereign rule. God's words are effective because he is supreme ruler of creation and history.

Superstitious incantations or sorceries are strongly condemned in the Bible because they are beliefs that in effect rival the rightful rule of God. The means whereby people know the will of God is the revelation of God's word through his appointed prophets and apostles. And true worshippers of God submit to God's will in faithful obedience. To resort to magical arts to learn of or to circumvent God's will is cast in the Bible as open rebellion against the rule of God (Deuteronomy 18:9-22; Galatians 5:20). Also, Biblical curses do not set in motion inevitable outcomes because they are conditional in nature. They are conditioned by human behavior, which permits genuine repentance and so God can choose to reverse the judgment he has cast.

*The word for "curse" ('arar) in the Old Testament (for example, Deuteronomy 27:15; 28:16) means simply the opposite consequences of blessings.*

In our passage, however, we read the specific judgments that are the curses forewarned by God. These include disease,

pestilence, famine, drought, wild beasts, foreign enemies, and finally national exile. It is God who brings these increasingly severe calamities.

The pronoun "I" refers repeatedly to God's initiation of the various judgments, including the most severe—the dissolution of the nation. [Verse 33](#) reads, "I will scatter you among the

nations." God does not hesitate to take responsibility

for the judgments that occur. He does not leave any room for a rival

power or authority or some all-powerful principle of justice that cannot bend. He

determines the outcome according to his will. But this does not

mean he disregards the accountability of the people themselves. On

the contrary, the passage assumes that the choices made by the

people are real and have real outcomes related to those choices. The

Lord's judgments evidence a correspondence of mercy and

severity in relation to the egregious character of the crimes

committed by the people.

His judgment does not exceed the nature of the crime. Thus, the most awful judgment of deportation comes only at the end of a series of trials designed to avert the final cataclysm.

*Discipline for Christians.* As in the case of the blessings, we must ask if Christians live under the threat of the judgments listed in the covenant made with Israel. Do we find in the New Testament Scriptures a list of the curses that can befall a disobedient Christian? The quick answer is no. The New Testament nowhere lists penalties against Christians in the same sense as our Leviticus passage. Rather, the New Testament describes the response of God to Christian disobedience as "discipline."

The words for "punishment" and "penalty" in the Greek New Testament describe retribution that inflicts suffering. The term "discipline" (*paideuo*) means to chasten or correct with the view

of teaching right behavior. The writer to the *Hebrews in [12:5-11](#)* compares Christian discipline to the discipline that children receive from their parents.

*He concludes: "[God] disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" ([vv. 10b, 11](#)). **The discipline that we receive shows that we are valued by God because he cares for us.***

A basketball coach invests time and energy in those players who have potential for success, whereas he neglects others who don't show promise of making the team. God does not condemn us, but he also does not neglect our spiritual training.

***Punishment is for those who stubbornly reject the gospel (be they inside or outside the visible church) and die in their sins, but discipline is for those who are part of the family of God and who grow up into good behavior.***

***Why is it that Christians do not suffer God's eternal wrath? Why are Christians not accursed by God? Jesus took upon himself the curse of disobedience and suffered death on the cross for us. The Apostle Paul shows this in [Galatians 3:10-14](#):***

*For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.*

We were not exempted from the wrath of God because of our sorrow over our sins, and not because God sympathetically understood our shortcomings, choosing to let us off scot-free. Rather, God showed his mercy toward us as sinners because Jesus on the cross bore the wrath of God against human sin ([Romans 5:10](#)). This is indeed good news!

## Repentance and Restoration of God's People (26:40-46)

Despite the obstinacy of the people of Israel, the Lord God was not through with his people altogether. **Grace is his last word in this chapter.** After purging the people of their sins, he promised to restore them to their land and prosperity. Historically, we know that the people went into exile, but the story of Israel continued (e.g., [Ezra 1-6](#)). God brought them back from their exile, establishing them once again in their land. **The covenant always held out hope because the Lord committed himself to fulfill his promises to their fathers by saving his people from their sins** ([Exodus 6:1-8](#); [Deuteronomy 7:7, 8](#); [30:1-10](#)). **It was due to their sins, not God's disregard, that the people would experience national devastation. Restoration was promised, but only after repentance and confession of their sins.** Yet, how could they change their "uncircumcised" hearts ([v. 41](#)) toward God since they were so spiritually incorrigible?

*The description "uncircumcised" meant that the people were not in right relationship with God, for the covenant required the people to commit themselves to God by spiritually circumcising their hearts ([Deuteronomy 10:16](#)).*

Only God could regenerate their hearts.

**Verse 41 reflects this spiritual regeneration of the human heart: "if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled." The text does not read, "if the people humble their hearts"; rather, the passive construction occurs in the passage, "is humbled." God humbles them; he is the one who spiritually circumcises his people ([Deuteronomy 30:16](#)).**

**Christian regeneration of the heart can only be achieved through Christ who circumcises our hearts:**

*"In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ" ([Colossians 2:11](#); cf. [Philippians 3:3](#)).*

It is incumbent upon all people today to repent of their sins and place their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior who has taken away our sins by his death on the cross (e.g., [Acts 17:30b](#); [Colossians 2:14](#)). In the future New Jerusalem there will be no "accursed" thing, only the blessing of the Lamb: "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him" ([Revelation 22:3](#)).

- Preaching the Word – Leviticus: Holy God, Holy People.

*Biblical-faith is grace-based, miraculous-believing... that lovingly receives, abides-in, & obeys the Son of God... the Word of God, the will of God, and the way(s) of God... no matter what! – JDP*

The importance of obedience in its relationship to faith:

- Without faith it is impossible to please God. – Hebrews 11:6
- You are saved by grace THROUGH FAITH – Ephesians 2:8-9 (Rom. 3:21; 5:1 & 10:9)
- The shield of faith... put out the fiery arrows of the Devil... - Ephesians 6
- By faith..... (ALL the heroes of Hebrews 11)
- We live by faith & not by sight... 2 Corinthians 5:7
- ...the testing of your faith produces perseverance. – James 1:3
- ...flee from sin and PURSUE... faith... - 1 Timothy 6:11
- Faith overcomes the world & proves salvation. – 1 John 5:4
- Faith/believing opens the door to miraculous blessings. – Mark 9:23

- **Biblical faith without biblical love amounts to NOTHING. – 1 Cor. 13:2**
- **Biblical faith is a repository for miraculous blessings. – Mark 10:52**
- **Biblical faith quenches the thirst of one’s heart. – John 6:35**
- **Biblical faith is the Christian’s life signature. – Romans 1:17**
- **Stand firm in your faith. Be courageous, be strong. - 1 Cor. 16:13**
- **Fight the good fight of the faith... - 1 Timothy 6:12**
- **Faith COMES by hearing the Word.... – Romans 10:17**
- **Make every effort to ADD to your faith.... – 2 Peter 1:5-7**
- **“...the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself thru love.” – Galatians 5:6**

## What does the Bible say about faith? [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

Question: "What does the Bible say about faith?"

**Answer:** [Hebrews 11:1](#) tells us that faith is “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Perhaps no other component of the Christian life is more important than faith. We cannot purchase it, sell it or give it to our friends. So what is faith and what role does faith play in the Christian life? The dictionary defines *faith* as “belief in, devotion to, or trust in somebody or something, especially without logical proof.” It also defines *faith* as “belief in and devotion to God.” The Bible has much more to say about faith and how important it is. In fact, it is so important that, without faith, we have no place with God, and it is impossible to please Him ([Hebrews 11:6](#)). According to the Bible, faith is belief in the one, true God without actually seeing Him.

**Where does faith come from?** Faith is not something we conjure up on our own, nor is it something we are born with, nor is faith a result of diligence in study or pursuit of the spiritual. [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) makes it clear that faith is a gift from God, not because we deserve it, have earned it, or are worthy to have it. It is not from ourselves; it is from God. It is not obtained by our power or our free will. Faith is simply given to us by God, along with His grace and mercy, according to His holy plan and purpose, and because of that, He gets all the glory.

**Why have faith?** God designed a way to distinguish between those who belong to Him and those who don’t, and it is called faith. Very simply, we need faith to please God. God tells us that it pleases Him that we believe in Him even though we cannot see Him. A key part of [Hebrews 11:6](#) tells us that “he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” This is not to say that we have faith in God just to get something from Him. However, God loves to bless those who are obedient and faithful. We see a perfect example of this in [Luke 7:50](#). Jesus is engaged in dialog with a sinful woman when He gives us a glimpse of why faith is so rewarding. “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” The woman believed in Jesus Christ by faith, and He rewarded her for it. Finally, faith is what sustains us to the end, knowing that by faith we will be in

heaven with God for all eternity. “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls” ([1 Peter 1:8-9](#)).

**Examples of faith. [Hebrews chapter 11 is known as the “faith chapter” because in it great deeds of faith are described.](#)** By faith Abel offered a pleasing sacrifice to the Lord (v. 4); by faith Noah prepared the ark in a time when rain was unknown (v. 7); by faith Abraham left his home and obeyed God’s command to go he knew not where, then willingly offered up his only son (vv. 8-10, 17); by faith Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt (vv. 23-29); by faith Rahab received the spies of Israel and saved her life (v. 31). Many more heroes of the faith are mentioned **[“who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies” \(vv. 33-34\).](#)**

**[Clearly, the existence of faith is demonstrated by action.](#)**

**[According to the Bible, faith is essential to Christianity. Without demonstrating faith and trust in God, we have no place with Him. We believe in God’s existence by faith. Most people have a vague, disjointed notion of who God is but lack the reverence necessary for His exalted position in their lives. These people lack the true faith needed to have an eternal relationship with the God who loves them. Our faith can falter at times, but because it is the gift of God, given to His children, He provides times of trial and testing in order to prove that our faith is real and to sharpen and strengthen it. This is why James tells us to consider it “pure joy” when we fall into trials, because the testing of our faith produces perseverance and matures us, providing the evidence that our faith is real \(James 1:2-4\).](#)**

**Recommended Resource:** [Faith Crisis: What Faith Isn't and Why It Doesn't Always Do What You Want by Ron Dunn](#)

What does the Bible say about obedience? ([GotQuestions.org](#))

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Question: "What does the Bible say about obedience?"

Answer: The Bible has much to say about obedience. In fact, obedience is an essential part of the Christian faith. Jesus Himself was “obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8). For Christians, the act of taking up our cross and following Christ (Matthew 16:24) means obedience. The Bible says that we show our love for Jesus by obeying Him in all things: “If you love Me, keep My commandments”

(John 14:15). A Christian who is not obeying Christ's commands can rightly be asked, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Obedience is defined as "dutiful or submissive compliance to the commands of one in authority." Using this definition, we see the elements of biblical obedience. "Dutiful" means it is our obligation to obey God, just as Jesus fulfilled His duty to the Father by dying on the cross for our sin. "Submissive" indicates that we yield our wills to God's. "Commands" speaks of the Scriptures in which God has clearly delineated His instructions. The "one in authority" is God Himself, whose authority is total and unequivocal. For the Christian, obedience means complying with everything God has commanded. It is our duty to do so.

Having said that, it is important to remember that our obedience to God is not solely a matter of duty. We obey Him because we love Him (John 14:23). Also, we understand that the spirit of obedience is as important as the act of obedience. We serve the Lord in humility, singleness of heart, and love.

Also, we must beware of using a veneer of obedience to mask a sinful heart. Living the Christian life is not all about rules. The Pharisees in Jesus' time relentlessly pursued acts of obedience to the Law, but they became self-righteous, believing they deserved heaven because of what they had done. They considered themselves worthy before God, who owed them a reward; however, the Bible tells us that, without Christ, even our best, most righteous works are as "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). The Pharisees' external obedience still lacked something, and Jesus exposed their heart attitude. Their hypocrisy in obeying the "letter of the law" while violating its spirit characterized their lives, and Jesus rebuked them sharply: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outside, but inside they are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so you also appear righteous to men outwardly, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:27-28). The Pharisees were obedient in some respects, but they "neglected the weightier matters of the law" (Matthew 23:23, ESV).

Today, we are not called to obey the Law of Moses. That has been fulfilled in Christ (Matthew 5:17). We are to obey the "law of Christ," which is a law of love (Galatians 6:2; John 13:34). Jesus stated the greatest commands of all: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:36-40).

If we love God, we will obey Him. We won't be perfect in our obedience, but our desire is to submit to the Lord and display good works. When we love God and obey Him, we naturally have love for one another. Obedience to God's commands will make us light and salt in a dark and tasteless world (Matthew 5:13-16).

**Recommended Resource:** [Lord, Change My Attitude Before It's Too Late](#), Revised by [James MacDonald](#)

# Why Is Obedience to God Important?

Explore What the Bible Says About Obedience

by [Mary Fairchild](#)

Updated April 20, 2017

From [Genesis](#) to Revelation, the Bible has a lot to say about obedience. In the story of the [Ten Commandments](#), we see just how important the concept of obedience is to God.

Deuteronomy 11:26–28 sums it up like this: "Obey and you will be blessed. Disobey and you will be cursed."

In the New Testament, we learn through the example of [Jesus Christ](#) that believers are called to a life of obedience.

### Obedience Definition in the Bible

The general concept of obedience both in the [Old and New Testament](#) relates to [hearing](#) or hearkening to a higher authority.

One of the Greek terms for obedience conveys the idea of positioning oneself under someone by submitting to their authority and command. Another Greek word for obey in the New Testament means "to trust."

According to *Holman's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* a succinct definition of biblical obedience is "to hear God's Word and act accordingly."

*Eerdmans' Bible Dictionary* says, "True 'hearing,' or obedience, involves the physical hearing that inspires the hearer, and a belief or trust that in turn motivates the hearer to act in accordance with the speaker's desires."

So, biblical obedience to God means, simply, to hear, trust, submit and [surrender to God](#) and his Word.

## [8 Reasons Why Obedience to God Is Important](#)

## 1. Jesus Calls Us to Obedience

In Jesus Christ we find the perfect model of obedience. As his disciples, we follow Christ's example as well as his commands. Our motivation for obedience is love:

### **John 14:15**

*If you love me, you will keep my commandments. [\(ESV\)](#)*

## 2. Obedience Is an Act of Worship

While the Bible places strong emphasis on obedience, it's important to remember that believers are not [justified](#) (made righteous) by our obedience. [Salvation](#) is a free gift of God, and we can do nothing to merit it.

**True Christian obedience flows from a heart of [gratitude](#) for the [grace](#) we have received from the Lord:**

### **Romans 12:1**

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. [\(NLT\)](#)*

## 3. God Rewards Obedience

Over and over again we read in the Bible that God blesses and rewards obedience:

### **Genesis 22:18**

*"And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me." (NLT)*

### **Exodus 19:5**

*Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. (NLT)*

### **[Luke 11:28](#)**

*Jesus replied, "But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice." (NLT)*

### **James 1:22–25**

*But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only*

*fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. (NLT)*

#### 4. Obedience to God Proves Our Love

##### **1 John 5:2–3**

*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (ESV)*

##### **2 John 6**

*And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. (ESV)*

#### 5. Obedience to God Demonstrates Our Faith

##### **1 John 2:3–6**

*And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. (NLT)*

#### 6. Obedience Is Better Than Sacrifice

##### **1 Samuel 15:22–23**

*But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! **Obedience is better than sacrifice**, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the command of the LORD, he has rejected you as king." (NLT)*

#### 7. Disobedience Leads to Sin and Death

The disobedience of Adam brought sin and death into the world. But Christ's perfect obedience restores our fellowship with God, for everyone who believes in him.

### **Romans 5:19**

*For as by the one man's [Adam's] disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's [Christ's] obedience the many will be made righteous. (ESV)*

### **1 Corinthians 15:22**

*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (ESV)*

## **8. Through Obedience, We Experience the Blessings of Holy Living**

Only [Jesus Christ](#) is perfect, therefore, only he could walk in sinless obedience. But as we allow the [Holy Spirit](#) to transform us from within, we grow in holiness.

### **Psalm 119:1–8**

*Joyful are people of [integrity](#), who follow the instructions of the LORD. Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts. They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths.*

You have charged us to keep your commandments carefully. Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your decrees! Then I will not be ashamed when I compare my life with your commands.

As I learn your righteous regulations, I will thank you by living as I should! I will obey your decrees. Please don't give up on me! [\(NLT\)](#)

### **Isaiah 48:17–19**

*This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow. Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and [righteousness](#) rolling over you like waves in the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sands along the seashore—too many to count! There would have been no need for your destruction, or for cutting off your family name." [\(NLT\)](#)*

### **2 Corinthians 7:1**

*Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God. [\(NLT\)](#)*

**The verse above says, "Let us work toward complete holiness." So, we don't learn obedience overnight; it's a lifelong process that we pursue by making it a daily goal.**

## Promises Upon Keeping the Precepts (26:1-13)

**This chapter contains a general enforcement of all the laws given by Moses; by promises of reward in case of obedience, on the one hand; and threatenings of punishment for disobedience, on the other.**

While Israel maintained a national regard to God's worship, sabbaths, and sanctuary, and did not turn aside to idolatry, the Lord engaged to continue to them temporal mercies and religious advantages.

**These great and precious promises**, though they relate chiefly to the life which now is, **were typical of the spiritual blessings made sure by the covenant of grace to all believers, through Christ.**

1. Plenty and abundance of the fruits of the earth. *Every good and perfect gift must be expected from above*, from the Father of lights.
2. Peace under the Divine protection. *Those dwell in safety, that dwell in God.*
3. Victory and success in their wars. *(We have victory in Jesus! - JDP)* It is all one with the Lord to save by many or by few.
4. The increase of their people. *The gospel church shall be fruitful.*
5. The favor of God, *which is the fountain of all Good.*
6. Tokens of his presence in and by his ordinances. The way to have **God's ordinances** fixed among us, is to cleave closely to them.
7. The grace of the covenant. *All covenant blessings are summed up in the covenant relation, I will be your God, and ye shall be my people;* and they are all grounded upon their redemption. Having purchased them, God would own them, and never cast them off till they cast him off.

## Threatenings Against Disobedience (26:14-39)

After God has set the blessing before them which would make them a happy people if they would be obedient...

God here sets the curse before them, the evils which would make them miserable, if they were disobedient.

## Two things would bring ruin.

**1. A contempt of God's commandments.** They that reject the precept, will come at last to renounce the covenant.

*“To break God’s commands was to break God’s covenant.”* - JDP

**2. A contempt of his corrections.**

- a. **If they will not learn obedience by the things they suffer, God himself would be against them; and this is the root and cause of all their misery.**
- b. And also, The whole creation would be at war with them. All God's sore judgments would be sent against them.
- c. The threatenings here are very particular, they were prophecies, and He that foresaw all their rebellions, knew they would prove so.
- d. **TEMPORAL judgments are threatened.** *Those who will not be parted from their sins by the commands of God, shall be parted from them by judgments.* Those wedded to their lusts, will have enough of them.
- e. **SPIRITUAL judgments are threatened**, which should seize the mind. They should find no acceptance with God.
  - i. A guilty conscience would be their continual terror.
  - ii. *It is righteous with God to leave those to despair of pardon, who presume to sin;*
  - iii. and it is owing to free grace, if we are not left to pine away in the iniquity we were born in, and have lived in.

## God Promises to Remember Those That Repent (26:40-46)

**Among the Israelites, persons were not always prosperous or afflicted according to their obedience or disobedience. But national prosperity was the effect of national obedience, and national judgments were brought on by national wickedness.**

Israel was under a peculiar covenant. National wickedness will end in the ruin of any people, especially where the word of God and the light of the gospel are enjoyed.

*Sooner or later, sin will be the ruin,  
as well as the reproach, of every people.*

*Oh that, being humbled for our sins, we might avert the  
rising storm before it bursts upon us! God grant that we  
may, in this our day, consider the things which  
belong to our eternal peace.*

- Matthew Henry Concise Bible Commentary.

## Obeying His commandments (Lev. 26:1-13)

In [Leviticus 26](#), to obey God is to "walk in [His] statutes" ([v. 3](#)), but to disobey Him is to "walk contrary" to the Lord and despise His statutes ([vv. 15, 21, 23-24, 27-28, 40-41](#)).

*The word translated "**contrary**" means  
"a hostile meeting with the intention of fighting."*

*If I'm walking one direction and God is walking another, I'm moving away from His presence; and God isn't about to change His direction! If I continue to walk contrary to Him, I'm going to have serious problems; for "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" ([Amos 3:3](#)). – Warren Wiersbe*

**Moses gave his people four excellent reasons why they should obey the Lord:**

***1. Because of who God is ([v. 1](#)).*** The God of Israel, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the true and living God and not an idol people have manufactured. He

reminded them, **"I am the LORD your God."** *The name LORD in capital letters signifies Jehovah God, the great I AM*, the self-existent One who entered into a covenant relationship with Israel and to whom the Jews said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (see [Ex. 19:1-8](#)).

A.W. Tozer reminds us, **"The essence of idolatry is the entertaining of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him"** (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, 11). When the Jews abandoned the worship of Jehovah for the worship of idols, or even worse, tried to worship both Jehovah and idols, they turned from reality to illusion, from truth to deception; and the consequences were disastrous. In spite of their promise to obey the Lord, the Jews broke the first two commandments when they turned to idols.

**2. Because of what God did (v. 2a).** The word "Sabbaths" (plural) refers to all the special days on the Jewish calendar and not just the seventh day of the week. We studied this calendar in chapter 9 and noted that these special days reminded the Jews of God's goodness to them. Passover memorialized Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and the Feast of Tabernacles reminded them of God's care of His people in the wilderness. First-fruits and Pentecost were "harvest festivals" that spoke of the Lord's blessing on their labors in the field, and Tabernacles was a time of harvest joy because of the fruit God gave in the vineyard and the orchard.

**Even the weekly Sabbath was a reminder that the Jews were God's special people**, for the Sabbath Day was a sign between the Lord and Israel ([Ex. 31:13](#)). **As they rested on the seventh day, the Jews could give thanks that they belonged to the true and living God who adopted Israel as His own special treasure.** They could also give thanks that God had strengthened them to labor for another week. Whether they reviewed Jewish history from the Exodus or just meditated on God's goodness from the previous week, the Jews had plenty of reason to thank God and obey His statutes.

**3. Because of where God dwells (v. 2b).** The God of Israel dwelt in the camp of Israel! The Jews had His sacred tabernacle in the midst of the camp with the "glory cloud" hovering over it. The nations around them had man-made gods in their temples, but Israel had the God who made them dwelling in their midst. How could they ever think of disobeying Him when He was so near to them, condescending to live with them in their camp? To deliberately disobey God was not only a violation of His holy law, but it was also a desecration of His sanctuary. To sin was to defile the camp, which explains why unclean people were made to leave the camp.

The application to the Christian believer today is obvious. Our bodies are the sanctuary of God, and we must be careful to use them for God's glory ([1 Cor. 6:15-20](#)). The Holy Spirit of God lives in us, and we must not grieve Him by using His temple for ungodly purposes ([Eph. 4:30](#); see [vv. 17-32](#)). If an Old Testament Jew sacrificed a pig on the altar or scattered human bones in

the tabernacle courtyard, he would have been guilty of the grossest violations of God's holy law. Christians who indulge in illicit sex or who defile their imagination with evil thoughts are guilty of violations just as serious.

**4. Because of what God promised (vv. 3-13).** The people of Israel were but children in their faith ([Gal. 4:1-7](#)), and **you teach children primarily through rewards and punishments.** You can't give children lectures on ethics and expect them to understand, but you can promise to reward them if they obey and punish them if they disobey. This approach will protect them from harming themselves, and it will give them time to grow older and better understand why obedience is the key to a happy life. **Children must gradually learn that both commandments and punishments are expressions of love for their own good.**

Moses later expanded on this "covenant of blessing" ([Deut. 28-30](#)). It was God's "lease" for the people to help them enjoy and maintain possession of the land that He promised to give them. They *owned* the land because of God's promises to Abraham ([Gen. 12:1-3](#); [13:14-17](#)), but they couldn't *enjoy* the land unless they obeyed the laws God gave to Moses. Unfortunately, they disobeyed the law, ceased to enjoy the land, and eventually were taken from the land to suffer exile in Babylon.

**As children of God, we already have everything we need for "life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3), because we now possess "every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Eph. 1:3, NIV). But to possess these blessings is one thing; to enjoy them is quite something else. As we trust God's promises and obey His commandments, we draw upon our spiritual inheritance and are able to walk successfully and serve effectively. Like the nation of Israel in Canaan, we have battles to fight and work to do; but as we walk in obedience to the Lord, He enables us to overcome the enemy, claim the land, and enjoy its blessings.**

To begin with, [God promised them rain and fruitful harvests \(Lev. 26:3-5, 10\).](#) [An agricultural nation, Israel depended on the "latter rain" in the spring and the "former rain" in the autumn to provide water for their crops and to meet their domestic needs. One reason Baal worship ensnared the Israelites is because Baal was the Canaanite storm god. If the Jews needed rain,](#)

they sometimes turned to Baal for help instead of turning to Jehovah. If God wanted to discipline His people, He would often withhold the rain, as He did in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 17-18).

The Lord also promised them *peace and safety in their land* ([Lev. 26:5-8](#)). They could go to bed without fear of either animals or enemies invading their land. If the enemy did invade, the Jewish armies would soon chase them out; and one Jewish soldier would be worth twenty to a hundred of the enemy soldiers! **Other nations depended for safety on large armies and supplies of horses and chariots, but Israel's victory came through faith in the Lord and obedience to His Word.** "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" ([Ps. 20:7](#)).

If Israel obeyed His law, God promised *to multiply their population* ([Lev. 26:9](#)). Unlike some today who abort babies and frown upon large families, the Jews wanted many children and considered large families a blessing from God ([Gen. 17:6](#); [Deut. 7:13-14](#); [Pss. 127-128](#)). New generations were needed to maintain the economy, to help sustain the clans and tribes, and to protect the nation. **A decimated population was a judgment from the Lord.**

**5. *The presence of the Lord* ([Lev. 26:11-12](#)) was the greatest blessing promised, because every other blessing depends on it.** What other nation had the sanctuary of the living God in their midst and their God walking among them? ([Rom. 9:1-5](#)) **How tragic that Israel's disobedience turned the temple into a den of thieves ([Jer. 7:11](#)), forcing the Lord to destroy the temple and send His people into exile.**

*When we lose the sense of the Lord's presence and the privilege it is to serve Him, then we begin to despise His Word and disobey His commandments.*

**Nine times in Leviticus we find the Lord reminding His people that He had delivered them out from Egypt and therefore deserved their obedience** ([Lev. 11:45](#); [19:36](#); [22:33](#); [23:43](#); [25:38, 42, 55](#); [26:13,45](#)).

In Deuteronomy, Moses emphasized that their love for the Lord should motivate their obedience because of all He had done for them.

It must be pointed out that this covenant of blessing was given only to Israel and should not be applied to the church today. God certainly blesses those who obey Him, but His blessing isn't always health, wealth, and success. Some of the greatest heroes of faith suffered because of their obedience and never experienced miracles of deliverance or provision from the Lord (Heb. 11:36-40). Millions of Christians have been allowed to fall into the hands of their enemies and be martyred for their faith. This covenant related only to Israel in their land and was God's way of teaching them faithfulness and obedience.

Some of the "success preachers" today like to claim these covenant "blessings" for the church but prefer to apply the judgments to somebody else! If this covenant applies to God's children today, then we should be experiencing the judgments whenever we disobey Him. However, experience shows us that more than one compromising believer is successful, healthy, and wealthy, while many of God's faithful children are going through trials and difficulties (see [Ps. 73](#)).

Submitting to His chastisements (Lev. 26:14-39)

"For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives" ([Heb. 12:6](#), NKJV; see [Prov. 3:11-12](#)). Israel's special relationship to Jehovah brought with it the obligation to obey His voice and glorify His name. "You only have I known [chosen] of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" ([Amos 3:2](#)).

Privilege brings with it responsibility, and no nation has enjoyed more spiritual privileges from the Lord than the nation of Israel.

Six periods of chastisement are described ([Lev. 26:16-17](#), [18-20](#), [21-22](#), [23-26](#), [27-31](#) and [32-39](#)), the last one being the most severe. In the first five, Jehovah punishes the people in their own land; but in the sixth judgment, they're taken out of the land and dispersed among the nations.

**Some of the chastisements are repeated from period to period, but they can be summarized as follows:**

1. Distress and terror;
2. disease;
3. drought and famine;
4. defeat before their enemies;
5. death from war, animals, and plagues;
6. destruction of the cities and nation;
7. dispersment and
8. exile among the Gentile nations.

**Moses later expanded on these chastisements ([Deut. 28:15ff](#)).**

**How sad that innocent children would have to suffer for the sins of their parents ([Lev. 26:22, 29](#)).**

The phrase "I will punish you seven times more," repeated four times in these warnings ([vv. 18, 21, 24, 28](#)), means "a complete punishment," since seven is the Hebrew number signifying completeness. Each period of chastisement would be full and complete, with nothing lacking; and the next period would be more severe than the previous one.

[Verses 16-17](#). "Sudden terror" means confusion of mind, the kind of terror you feel when you can't control what's going on. "Consumption" would describe diseases that slowly wasted the body, like tuberculosis. During the Book of Judges, the Gentile nations invaded Israel at harvest time and took their crops. If the Israelites had obeyed, God's face would have "[shone] upon them" ([Num. 6:22-27](#)); but their disobedience made Him turn His face away from them (compare [Lev. 26:17](#) with [Prov. 28:1](#)).

[Verses 18-20](#). God's aim was to "break down [their] stubborn pride" ([v. 19](#), NIV). The rains would cease and the ground would become so hard that the seed wouldn't germinate. There would be great toil but no harvests ([Amos 4:6-13](#)). You would think that all this suffering would bring the nation to its knees in repentance, but they refused to repent. **It will be that way in the end times when God sends judgment upon the whole world** ([Rev. 16](#), especially [vv. 9](#) and [11](#)).

Verses 21-22. One judgment is named here: **the invasion of wild beasts that would kill cattle and humans, especially the children. Imagine the terror that would prevail in a nation if hungry beasts were on the prowl! If only for the sake of their children, you would think the adults would repent and turn to God.**

Verses 23-26. Warfare, famine, and plague usually go together. When people are crowded into a walled city, hemmed in by the enemy, they run out of food and become ill, and terrible plagues begin to spread (see [Ezek. 5](#)).

Verses 27-31. Famine causes people to do things that are inhuman, such as killing and eating their own children (see [2 Kings 6:29](#), [Jer. 19:9](#); [Lam. 4:10](#)). The enemy armies would destroy the idolatrous shrines the Jews had built and throw the dead bodies of the Jews onto their idols which could not save them. [Leviticus 26:31](#) suggests that the people would try to revive their worship of Jehovah, but it would be too late. Their cities and sanctuaries would all be leveled to the ground.

Verses 32-39. **This section describes the climax of God's chastisements, made necessary because of the hardness of His people's hearts. Up to this point, He had chastened the people in their land, but now He removes them from the land. In 722 B.c, the Assyrians took captive the Northern Kingdom of Israel; and then in 605 B.c, the Babylonians began their capture of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.** The seventy years of Babylonian Captivity left the land to rest and "enjoy her sabbaths" ([vv. 34-35, 43](#); [2 Chron. 36:21](#); [Jer. 25:11](#)).

The Lord mercifully brought a remnant of Jews back to the land, but the kingdom never regained its former power or glory. Except for short periods of freedom, such as under the Maccabees, the Jews were always under the control of some foreign power. Their ultimate dispersion was after A.D. 70, when the Roman armies invaded and took Jerusalem captive. The siege of Jerusalem more than fulfilled the prophecies in [Leviticus 26:22](#) and [29](#).

Trusting His covenant (Lev. 26:40-46)

Even in the worst situations, however, **there is always hope; for the Lord is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin"** ([Ex. 34:6-7](#)). His covenant with His people never changes; and if we confess our sins and repent, He will forgive and restore

[\(Lev. 26:40; 1 Kings 8:33-34; Neh. 9:2; 1 John 1:9\)](#). **Whether in blessing, chastening, or forgiving, God always keeps His covenant and is true to His Word.**

God may punish His people, but He will never reject them or cast them away ([Rom. 11](#)). In fact, **one reason for His chastening is to bring His erring people back into His arms of love, where He can enjoy them and bless them once again** ([Heb. 12:1-13](#)). God's people may forget His law, but God remembers His covenant. He also remembers the land, because it belongs to Him ([Lev. 25:23](#)).

There will be a future regathering of Israel to their land prior to the coming of Christ to the earth to establish His promised kingdom. (See the discussion on the Feast of Trumpets in chap. 9 of this book.) God gave the land to Abraham and his descendants, and He will not go back on His word.

***The cause of Israel's rebellion was "uncircumcised hearts," that is, hearts that had never been changed by the Lord ([26:41](#)).***

The Jews boasted that they were circumcised in body, but that wasn't enough to save them ([Matt. 3:7-12](#)). The mark on the body was the outward seal of the covenant, but it took more than that to change the heart (see [Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25; Rom. 2:29](#)).

When we disobey the Lord, the enemy accuses us and wants us to believe there's no hope because God is through with us ([2 Cor. 2:1-11](#)). "If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself" ([2 Tim. 2:13](#), NIV). King Solomon pointed out the promise of forgiveness when he dedicated the temple ([1 Kings 8:31-53](#)), and it was that promise that Jonah claimed when he repented of his sins ([Jonah 2:7](#)).

The promise of forgiveness in [1 John 1:9](#) should never be used as an excuse for sin, but it is certainly a wonderful encouragement to God's people when they have sinned. God's faithfulness to His Word and to His covenant is a great assurance to the believer that "there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared" ([Ps. 130:4](#), NKJV). ***Since the Word never changes and God's character never changes, we have every encouragement to come to Him and make a new beginning.***

- Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Holy (Leviticus).

# Grace-Fueled Obedience Is Absolutely Necessary for Christlikeness

FROM *STEVEN LAWSON* JAN 09, 2017 CATEGORY: *ARTICLES*



Can you imagine a Christian couple actually praying about living together before marriage? Can you fathom a young woman who professes Christ even bothering to pray about whether she should marry an unbeliever? Can you grasp a Christian businessman having to pray about whether he should tell the truth in a transaction? When the Word of God is so clear, praying to discern God's will becomes a convenient excuse—or even a prolonged filibuster—to avoid doing what Scripture commands.

Many who profess Christ today emphasize a wrong view of grace that makes it a free pass to do whatever they please. Tragically, they have convinced themselves that the Christian life can be lived without any binding obligation to the moral law of God. In this hyper-grace distortion, the need for obedience has been neutered. The commandments of God are no longer in the driver's seat of Christian living, but have been relegated to the backseat, if not the trunk—like a spare tire—to be used only in case of an emergency. With such a spirit of antinomianism, what needs to be reinforced again is the necessity of obedience.

For all true followers of Christ, obedience is never peripheral. At the heart of what it means to be a disciple of our Lord is living in loving devotion to God. But if such love is real, the acid test is obedience. Jesus maintained, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Therefore, genuine love for Christ will always manifest itself in obedience.

This does not mean that a Christian can ascend to sinless perfection. This will never be realized this side of glory. Neither does it imply that a believer will never disobey God again. Isolated acts of disobedience will still occur. But the new birth does give a new heart that desires to obey the Word.

In regeneration, God says:

*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.  
And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a  
heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause  
you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*  
*(Ezek. 36:26-27)*

In this heart transplant, God causes the believer to pursue Spirit-energized obedience. The Apostle John agrees when he writes, “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments” (1 John 2:3). In the new birth, the elect are granted saving faith, and they immediately begin to walk in “the obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5). There is no time-lapse between the time of conversion and when one begins to obey Christ. The exercise of saving faith is the first step of a life of obedience. When Jesus preached, “Repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15), this was issued as an urgent imperative. The gospel is more than an offer to be considered—it is a word from God to be obeyed. John writes, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life” (John 3:36). In this verse, believing in Christ and obeying Him are used synonymously. Simply put, true faith is obedient faith. To be clear, our obedience of faith is not the grounds upon which God declares us righteous, but it reveals our faith to be genuine.

At the moment of conversion, we transfer our allegiance from our old master, sin, to a new Master, Jesus Christ. Paul explains, “Do you not know that if you present

yourself to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?” (Rom.

6:16). Here, the Apostle quotes a general axiom in life, namely, that slaves live in obedience to their ruling master. In conversion, there is an exchange of masters, a relinquishing of our old bondage to sin for a new loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul further stresses this truth: “You who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, became slaves of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17–18). Everyone is a slave, either of sin or of righteousness. Before conversion, we were slaves of sin and lived in obedience to sin. But in conversion, we became slaves of Christ and live in obedience to Him.

Throughout one’s Christian life, John claims that genuine believers will continue to “keep his commandments.” “Keep” is in the present tense, indicating an ongoing obedience throughout the entirety of a believer’s life. Here is the perseverance of the saints. All who are born again will pursue obedience to the end. “Commandments” is plural, indicating obedience to the full spectrum of the divine requirements. Following Christ does not allow for selective obedience. Rather, we must obey all the commandments of God, not merely the convenient ones.

When John says believers “keep” the commandments, this pictures a guard or watchman watching over a priceless

treasure. In like manner, the one who knows God will keep a sharp watch over all that His Word requires. “And his commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3), but they are a blessing (Ps. 1:1). Every step of heart-prompted obedience leads to experiencing abundant life in Christ. Conversely, every step of disobedience takes us away from the joy of divine goodness.

Far from being optional, grace-fueled obedience is absolutely necessary for Christlikeness.

Is there any need to pray about whether or not to obey God’s Word?

You just need to obey.

MAY 10, 1998

By His Grace, for His  
Name, Through the  
Obedience of Faith

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- Resource by  
John Piper

- **Scripture: Romans 1:1-5** Topic: The Grace of God

*Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 **through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake.***

**This morning we are going to focus on verse 5, and in particular the three phrases: "grace and apostleship," "obedience of faith," and "for his name's sake." We will try to see the nature of grace as a free and undeserved enabling for ministry, the effect of grace in the obedience of faith, and the ultimate goal of grace in the glorifying of Christ's name among all the peoples.**

Grace – at the Heart

**Grace is a very precious reality.** I hope I can show you from the book of Romans what it is and why it is so precious. The word is **used 155 times in the New Testament** – over 100 of them in the writings of Paul, and almost a fourth of those in Romans (24 times). You cannot comprehend this book if you don't comprehend grace. We will see it again and again. It is at the heart of the book and the heart of the gospel and the heart of God.

But I don't assume the word communicates now the precious Biblical reality it was meant to. Today, I would guess that the average person would say grace is the beautiful movement of an ice skater. Then they might say grace is a short prayer before meals. And finally, they might say grace is undeserved kindness.

But what is the Biblical reality of grace? Let's look at [Romans 1:5](#) and its connections. Notice that in verse one Paul began to introduce himself and speak of his being a bond-servant of Christ and of his calling as an apostle and his consecration for the gospel of God. Then in verses 2-4, he talks about what the gospel of God is: it's planned long before it happens; it's about God's Son; it's about the fulfillment of Old Testament hopes and the arrival of the Messiah, the Son of David; and it is about the risen Christ who came forth triumphant from the dead as reigning Son of God in power.

With that picture of a great, triumphant, reigning Messiah and Lord before us, Paul can now talk about grace on its proper basis. **He says in verse 5, "*through whom we have received grace.*" In other words, God's grace has come to Paul through the Lord Jesus Christ who was born as a son of David and was raised as Son of God in power. We may say from what Paul writes later that grace was obtained for us through the obedience and death of the incarnate Messiah ([Romans 3:24-25](#); [5:18-21](#)); and grace is poured out through the risen and reigning Son of God in power. There is no grace toward sinners apart from the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.** Verse 5 says plainly that God gives grace "through him," referring to "Jesus Christ our Lord" at the end of verse 4.

So grace is a reality that comes from God; and comes through Jesus and his work for us. It is not something we have a right to. Jesus obtained it for us. We get it freely because of the obedience and death of another.

## What is Grace?

But what is it? Well, in this verse it is connected with Paul's ministry, his apostleship. "Through [Christ] we have received *grace and apostleship*." I take this to mean that his calling as an apostle was a gift of grace and that he fulfils that ministry by the power of this grace. So that grace is not just God's clemency toward Paul's sin, but is also a power to enable Paul to do his calling as an apostle.

I base this on what Paul says about the relation between grace and ministry in chapters 12 and 15. For example, **in 12:6 Paul says, "We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us."** And in 12:3 he says, "Through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you . . ." **In other words, grace is God's enabling for various ministries through gifts he gives**, and Paul's gift includes speaking as an apostle. Similarly in 15:15b-16 Paul says, "Grace was given me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles." So I conclude that when he says in 1:5, "Through whom we have received grace and apostleship," he means that God not only saved him from his sin, but he also gave him grace to be an authoritative spokesman for the risen Son of God in power.

## How Do We Get Grace?

And how does that mean he gave it to him? Does it mean that he gave it in response to good works? No. **Paul said that he was set apart for the gospel before he was born (Galatians 1:15; Romans 1:1). Grace is not God's response to our deserving or meriting. Grace is God's free gift before we do anything good, and his enabling of us to do anything good.** For example, in [Romans 4:4](#) Paul says, "Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited according to grace, but according to debt" (my translation). In other words, grace is not what you get when you work for somebody: that's what he *owes* you. Grace is never owed. It is always a free bonus from the overflow of goodness.

Therefore grace is always received through faith, not earned by works. You can only receive grace as a gift and acknowledge that it comes to you freely; you can't work for it or earn it. [Romans 11:6](#) states the principle: "If it [election] is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."

**Grace would not be grace if you earned it by your works. We receive it through faith. By simply welcoming it as a gift and relying on it.**

This is why [Romans 4:16](#) says, "For this reason it [= being an heir of the promise] is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace." This is Paul's way of saying that grace is absolutely free and cannot be deserved or merited. **When grace comes to you it is through faith or not at all.**

Grace has its own power. You don't work it up. It is, in fact, part of the power referred to in verse 4, where Paul says that Jesus "was declared the Son of God *with power* by the resurrection from the dead." **Grace is not just forgiveness of our sin and mercy on our misery, it is also a divine power that comes to us through Jesus absolutely freely for the sake of ministry.** Paul says in [Romans 5:21](#), "As sin reigned in death, even so grace reigns through righteousness to

eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (my translation). Grace is the power of a king: it "reigns" and leads mightily to eternal life through Christ.

So we have seen that grace is a *power* from God for ministry (like Paul's apostleship). It is *free* and cannot be earned or deserved. It is received as a gift by *faith*, not merited by works.

## The Effect of Grace

Now ponder the implications of this for a moment – for Paul and for you. I mentioned one of them last week. When Paul calls himself, in verse 1, a "bond-servant of Christ Jesus" and an "apostle," he means that he *serves* the risen Christ as an apostle. But now, from verse 5, we know something utterly crucial about that service: it is given and enabled by grace. He says in [Romans 15:18](#), "I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me [that's the power of grace], resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles" – which is the same aim as 1:5. Paul serves Christ by the grace with which Christ serves Paul.

I linger over this because if you get it early, the book of Romans will open to you like a flower. And if you don't get it, the book will not make sense. And I linger over it because this is the essence of how God means for you to live your life. God wants you to read verse 5 and in the end put your calling in the place of the word "apostleship." "Apostleship" is Paul's – not mine and not yours. You might put, "Through Christ I have received grace and the teaching role." Or: grace and singing. Or: grace and studentship. Or: grace and singleness. Or: grace and widowhood. Or: grace and motherhood. And what you should mean is: God has freely given me forgiveness and the power to do a calling, and fulfill a role which I accept by faith.

There is not a role in life that can be lived the way God wants it lived apart from enabling grace. Being a godly mother or being an apostle is impossible without the power of grace. So when Paul says, in [1 Corinthians 15:10](#), that all his apostolic labor is by grace, you insert your own calling: **"By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."** The decisive, enabling power for all ministry and all service is God's grace. Paul is tremendously jealous to exalt grace in his life and in yours. We should join him in this. Why this is becomes clearer as we look at the next two phrases in [Romans 1:5](#).

## "The Obedience of Faith"

"Through [the living Son of God risen in power] we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the obedience of faith*." **So grace is not just received by faith, it aims at faith. God gives gifts of grace so that we will be his instruments in bringing about "the obedience of faith."** This is what I called the *effect of grace*.

Now **what does the phrase "obedience of faith" mean?** The two main choices are: "the obedience that *comes from* faith" (NIV), or the obedience which *is* faith, because faith is what the gospel demands." As you might say: "acts of courage" – acts which come from courage. Or you might say, "Block of wood" – the block is wood. Both of these goals (faith and obedience that

comes from faith) are really Paul's goals in ministry. And it is very difficult to decide which he means to focus on right here.

But I am moved by Leon Morris's question: If Paul only means "faith," why use two words to say it (*The Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988], p. 50)? In other words, if Paul only means, "We received grace and apostleship to bring about *faith* among all the gentiles," then why complicate matters and say, "the obedience of faith"? I think the answer is that he really does want us to think not only of the obedience which faith *is*, but also the obedience of love which faith produces (1 Timothy 1:5). We will see in chapter six that Paul cares a great deal about Christian obedience. And we will see in [Romans 9:32](#) that ***obedience is "by faith and not as though it were by works."*** **And we will see in 14:23 that "whatever is not from faith is sin." In other words, in Paul's mind, all true obedience is the fruit of faith.**

Now why is this? Why does all true obedience come from faith? I hope you can see the answer if you compare what I have said so far about grace and faith.

**God gives grace as the power and the enabling for service, which means that grace is the power and enabling of obedience.** So all true obedience is done in the power of grace, not our own power.

But how do we receive and rely on grace? The answer is "by faith." So you can see why **all true obedience is the fruit of faith. It's the fruit of faith because God's grace is given to enable obedience, and faith is the way we rely on that grace, and so obedience is the fruit of that faith.**

So what we have seen so far is that God wants to be the Giver in this relationship. God wants to be gracious. God wants to be the fountain and the source of our service and our obedience and our ministry – whether apostleship, or pastor, or student, or mother, or any other calling. God intends to be the source of enabling, empowering, sustaining grace. Our job is to trust him and act in reliance on him. This is the essence of the Christian life.

## Why Is Everything Dependent on Grace, through Faith?

And the final question is, Why? Why does God set it up this way – with everything dependent on his grace through our faith? And the last phrase in [Romans 1:5](#) gives the answer: "Through [Christ] we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles [= peoples] *for His name's sake*." **The ultimate goal of all God's dealings is that his name (or the name of Christ, who is his image) would be known and admired and cherished and praised above all other realities.**

[Romans 9:17](#) puts it like this: "For the scripture says to Pharaoh, 'I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my *name* may be proclaimed in all the earth.'" God's aim in history and in all that happens is that his name be known and worshipped. **Verse 5 says that the aim of Paul's apostleship is "for the sake of the name" – that the name of Jesus (which stands for his character) might be known and loved and treasured and exalted and glorified.**

Now this is why God makes all our salvation and all our ministry and all our obedience dependent on his grace and makes all our salvation and ministry and

obedience the fruit of faith in grace – because *the giver gets the glory*. If our ministry and all our obedience is by grace through faith, then God gets the glory and we get the help. *If Paul relied on himself to serve as an apostle, and if the effect of his ministry was to bring about the obedience of works, not the obedience of faith among the gentiles, then the name of Christ would not be praised, Paul would be.*

The giver of the power, the enabler of the obedience, gets the glory. Here's the way [1 Peter 4:11](#) puts it: *"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."* You see how clearly Peter makes the connection: God gets the glory for our service if God gives the grace for our service, and if we serve by faith in that grace, in the strength of that grace and not our own.

## If God Aims for His Own Exultation, Is He Loving?

The final question that people often ask about this Biblical teaching is whether a God who aims at the exaltation of his own name is a loving God. The book of Romans gives two answers to that question. First, [in Romans 10:13](#) *Paul says, "Every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." So yes, it is loving for God to push his own name and his own glory, because everyone who calls on that name will be saved. For him not to spread and exalt his name as our only hope would be unloving of God.*

And the second answer is given in [Romans 5:2b](#), where Paul says that while we stand in grace by faith "we exult in hope of the glory of God." In other words, the glory of God *is* our hope and our salvation and our exultation – our joy. We don't just call on the name of the Lord to get something else. We call on the name of the Lord so that everything that separates us from the Lord will be overcome by the grace of God and we will have access to the Lord himself. "We exult in hope of the glory of God." Therefore **it is loving for God to make the name of God – that is, the glory of God – the goal of all his grace, because this is the goal of all our longings.**

**Is this – is he – the goal of your longings? If so, then the gospel of grace will make sense and you will embrace it. If not, call upon the name of the Lord so that he would open your eyes to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, the image of God ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)).**

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JANUARY 26, 2016

# If We Are Faithless, He Remains Faithful?

2 Timothy 2:11-13

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- Look at the Book by  
John Piper

<https://youtu.be/wuHrfuhYLNA>

- Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:11-13 Topic: The Glory of God

“If we are faithless, he remains faithful.” In this lab, John Piper asks whether this popular phrase was written to be a comfort or warning. He believes that many misunderstand these words because they have taken them out of context and made them something they do not say.

## Principle for Bible Reading

Some popular verses in the Bible are often misquoted or misused. People will wield the words of the Bible wrongly because they have ripped them from their context in Scripture. The words are made to fit or serve some other purpose than their original meaning. Read the context carefully to confirm that favorite verse means what you think it means.

## Study Questions

1. Why would Paul say that [2 Timothy 2:11-13](#) is “trustworthy”? What does that say (or not say) about the rest of his letter?
2. What structure, if any, do you see in the saying in [2 Timothy 2:11-13](#)? How do the four lines of the saying seem to relate to one another, and what would that suggest about the meaning of the first half [2 Timothy 2:13](#)?
3. If the beginning of [2 Timothy 2:13](#) is a warning after all, why would it be good news that God will not deny himself? What makes the faithfulness of God to himself good news for a believer?

## Introduction/Prayer (00:00–03:03)

1. Beware of Bible slogans without context.
2. Glad expectancy of God-centeredness pays off.

## A Trustworthy Saying (03:03–05:17)

- “The saying is trustworthy” ([2 Timothy 2:11](#)) does not mean some things are reliable and others are not.
- Paul is saying that there are common phrases in the church that are trustworthy and others are not. Paul advocates for the truthfulness and reliability of this saying.
- The verses say that the saying is trustworthy because God is faithful (“for”). ([2 Timothy 2:11](#))

## If We Die, We Will Live (05:17–07:06)

- Paul introduces a positive pair of statements in [2 Timothy 2:11–12](#).
- If we die with Christ through faith, we're going to live with him forever. ([2 Timothy 2:11](#))
- Paul goes further to say that if we endure in faith with him, we will not only live with him, but reign with him. ([2 Timothy 2:12](#))

## If We Are Faithless (07:06–09:14)

- If we deny him — we deny that he is to be preferred over the things we want in this life — he also will deny us. ([2 Timothy 2:11](#))
- What will he deny us? He will deny us the privilege of being with him, of reigning with him.
- Another way to say the same thing is to say that if we do not have faith in him, he remains totally committed to himself and his glory. ([2 Timothy 2:13](#))

## Beware of Bible Slogans (09:14–10:14)

- Beware of Bible slogans without context.
- People often wrongly quote [2 Timothy 2:13](#) to suggest that God is faithful to save *us* when we are faithless. Paul is saying the opposite.
- This quote, ripped out of its context, has given lots of people false assurance.

## God's Faithfulness to God (10:14–12:00)

- God is radically committed to God. He's radically God-centered and God-exalting. ([2 Timothy 2:13](#))

- Why is that good news? Because he is completely and utterly faithful to himself and to his promises.
- If you die with him through faith (2 Timothy 2:11) and endure with him through faith (2 Timothy 2:12), he will faithfully fulfill every promise to you.

BEWARE the “nobody’s perfect,” cheap-grace crowd.... They say things like: “Well... that’s what we have grace for.” Or, you’ll hear the sinful serenade that encourages cuddling up to sin... You know that song – it’s chorus always comes back to something along the lines of “I’m only human” or “I don’t want to beat myself up.” OR, my all-time favorite devilish deception that I love to expose & pull into the light: “It’s okay... God knows my heart.” - JDP

Passion & perfection are as different as the average Christian and our AWESOME Christ... And while Christians are to BE passionate, knowing all the while that only Christ is perfect... True Christ-followers, true biblical Christians, are to live & love in passionate pursuit of Christ-like perfection – in EVERY facet of life. (cf. Acts 1:8; John 20:21; “you are to live a life worthy of your calling!”) - JDP

Begin by reviews the 3 types of OT Laws:

1. Civil
2. Ceremonial
3. Eternal/Christian (the Law of Christ)

Note v.1-2 show us the Law type (heart worship)

How important is obedience in biblical NT Christianity?

List & define key biblical words & their relationship to obedience &/or disobedience.

- Lord
- Savior
- Sin
- Repent
- Grace
- Mercy
- Love
- Church
- Faith
- Eternity

**Hebrews** has **3 types of people** (relate truth, love, & obedience/disobedience to each one.)

See the “trap door” analogy for disobedience via deceitful & deceptive definitions!

“Obedience brings joy. Disobedience brings pain.”

ALL of sin can be defined in A word: disobedience. – JDP

Romans 9:6b-7a (ESV)

*...For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring..."*

"The Beatitudes, Sermon on the Mount, 4 Gospels, NT letters, OT teachings, the Bible as a whole... ALL ultimately & eternally emphasize God's glory, Christ's gospel, & man's response. - JDP

What IS biblical, NT obedience?

Connect biblical faith &/to biblical obedience:

Connect biblical grace &/to biblical grace:

NOTE: Obedience proves one's surrender to the Lordship of Christ. Faulty grace allows for a savior that is not necessarily Lord.

- See ROI
- Check Fruit
- Whose really calling the shots
- How much, what percentage, of your TTT, over the Last 24hrs/week/month/year... has been devoted to, PRIMARILY intended to produce GLORY for God?
  - ~ If you're put off by that... See Gen & Jn 1
  - ~ Think it's unloving... See the cross
  - ~ Think it's over the top... Hear God's Word

Connect biblical repentance, believing & loving...

- A. Repentance
- B. Faith/Believing
- C. Loving
- D. Obey
- E. Persevere (2 Timothy 2:11-13)

Hebrews 10:36-39

Hebrews 11 (all)

Hebrews 12:1-2

\*\*\* Matthew 24:13 = (endure to end = saved)

Biblical faith is belief that obeys God's Word, God's will, & God's way(s). - JDP

Note the language & context of Hebrews 11... By faith (so and so)..... demonstrated obedience (no matter what)!

The concept of consequence is epitomized in Christ & Christianity.  
- JDP

Christianity is bookended by faithful obedience... One's new life begins: with "Follow Me" & ends with: "unless you pick up your cross daily (your means of blatant, daily death-to-self), you cannot be My disciple." - JDP

The stakes are too high....  
our Savior too... holy  
His standards too... holistic to ignore.

The Law of Christ is:

1. Repent
2. Believe

3. Love
4. Obey
5. Repeat

- A. Apostles ( \*\*\* Romans 1:1-5 \*\*\* )
- B. BE ( \*\*\* Romans 9:32 \*\*\* )
- C. Confirm ( \*\*\* 2 Timothy 2:11-13 \*\*\* )
- D. Do... ( \*\*\* 1 Corinthians 15:10 \*\*\* )

NT effect of Christian disobedience is to quench the Spirit

See & define “Christian stumble”

Read Psalm 51

See biblical calls & consequences for obedience & disobedience...

“It is a fearful/dreadful/terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” - Hebrews 10:31

See parallel illustration... While OT civil & Ceremonial Laws/consequences are no longer in place or binding, the laws of Christ and their corresponding character & eternal principles are the same for every generation...

While Griffin & Monet had different specific rules to follow at times, they were always under the same “heart standards” and authoritative umbrella...

The parallel holds true for Silas & Gideon:

- ~ ...in comparison of each other
- ~ ...in comparison to Griffin & Monet

NOTE:

- Hebrews 4:12
- Hebrews 10 (later verses)
- Hebrews 11:6 (and balance of chapter)

\*\*\* CONNECT the concept of obedience with:

- A. The parables in general
- B. The prodigal
- C. Jesus' teaching about the narrow gate & path vs the broad road!  
We have to ask before we finish... "But what about a middle road option?"
- D. The Rich Young Ruler...

- I. PURITY (Clarification)... For What? Worship
- II. PROMISES (Contemplation)... So What?
  - A. Winning
  - B. Warning
- III. PURPOSE (Celebration) Now What? Wonder
  - A. Grace
  - B. Gospel
  - C. Glory

NOTE: We must confront the implications of the holy, just, & wrathful goodness of God, as seen in Leviticus 26 & His unchanging nature throughout the Bible & throughout human history... past, present, & future! - JDP

See David Platt's "God loves & hates sinners"

See Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the hands of an angry God..."

No \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven (Rev.)

So does that mean “just some” \_\_\_\_\_ will  
be in heaven? At least a “few” right???

NO! God’s Word is:

~ Authoritative

~ Clear

~ Absolute

\*\*\* There will be NO \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven.

\*\*\* Hence, 99% obedience =  
100% disobedience.

Don’t tell ME I don’t love... (John 14 2X)

When Jesus said: “You will know them by their fruit,” He was saying:  
“You will know them by their faith & faithfulness,” which is akin  
to: “You will know My chosen, Christian children by their faithful  
obedience.” - JDP

Chapter 26 is Leviticus’ emphatic exclamation mark!