



The
FLOW
Adult CURRICULUM

#32

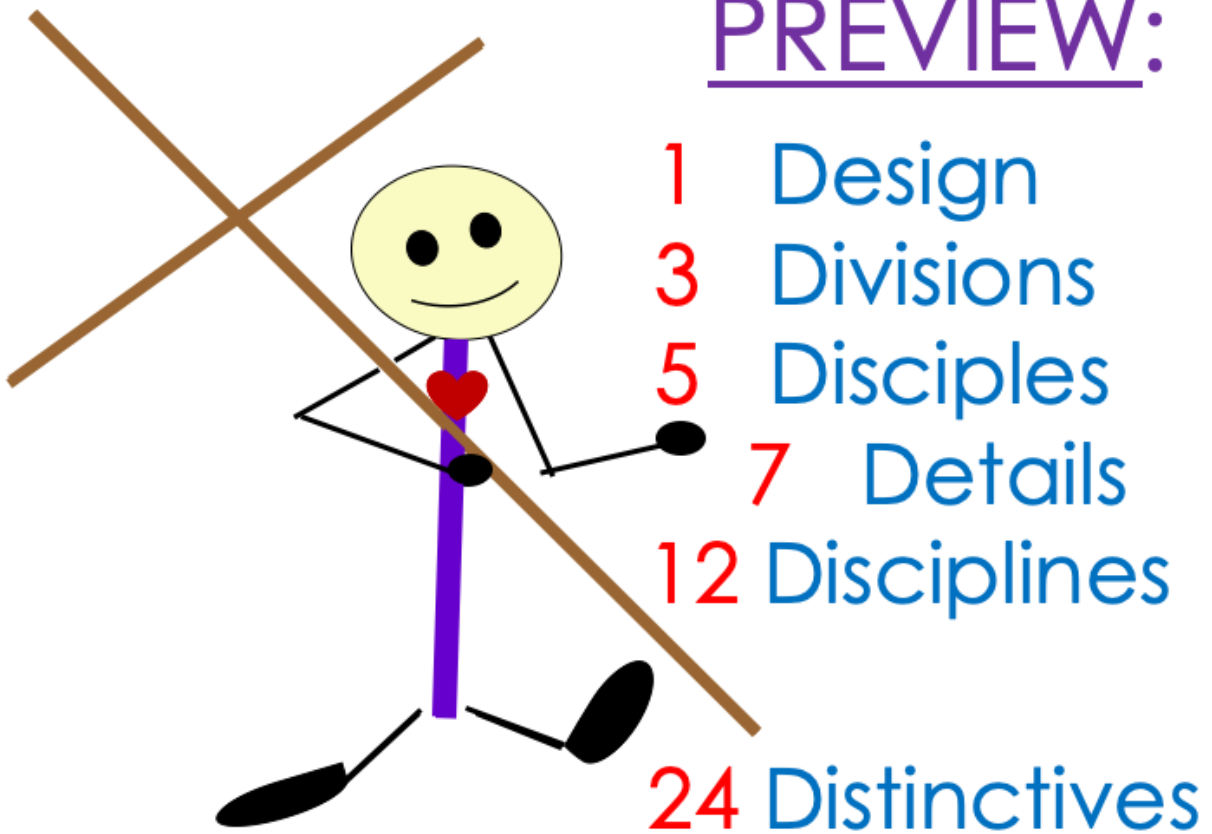
Obeying God's Word

2 Timothy 3:15-17

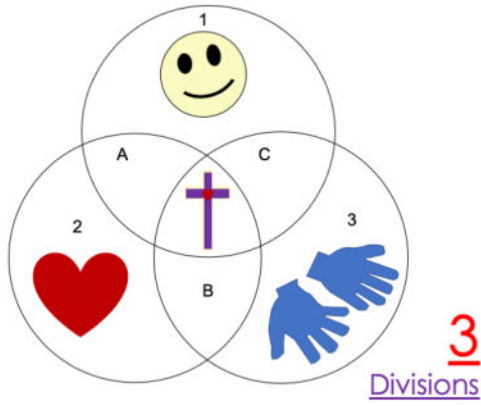
(Come And See Christianity book pages 95)

The FLOW

PREVIEW:

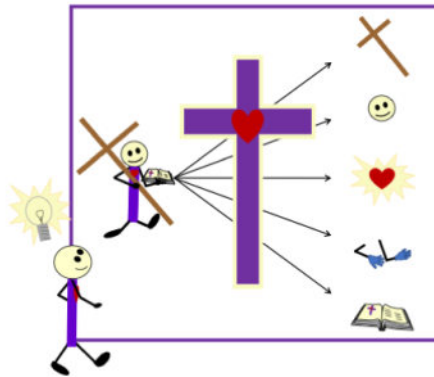


SECTION SIX: 12 Disciplines



The Disciple's "Hands" put into **action** the **truth** & **love** of God's Word, God's will, & God's ways. In short, when **each Christian's Head, Heart, & Hands** are united in purpose & power, the family of God is **living** as the **Body of Christ!**

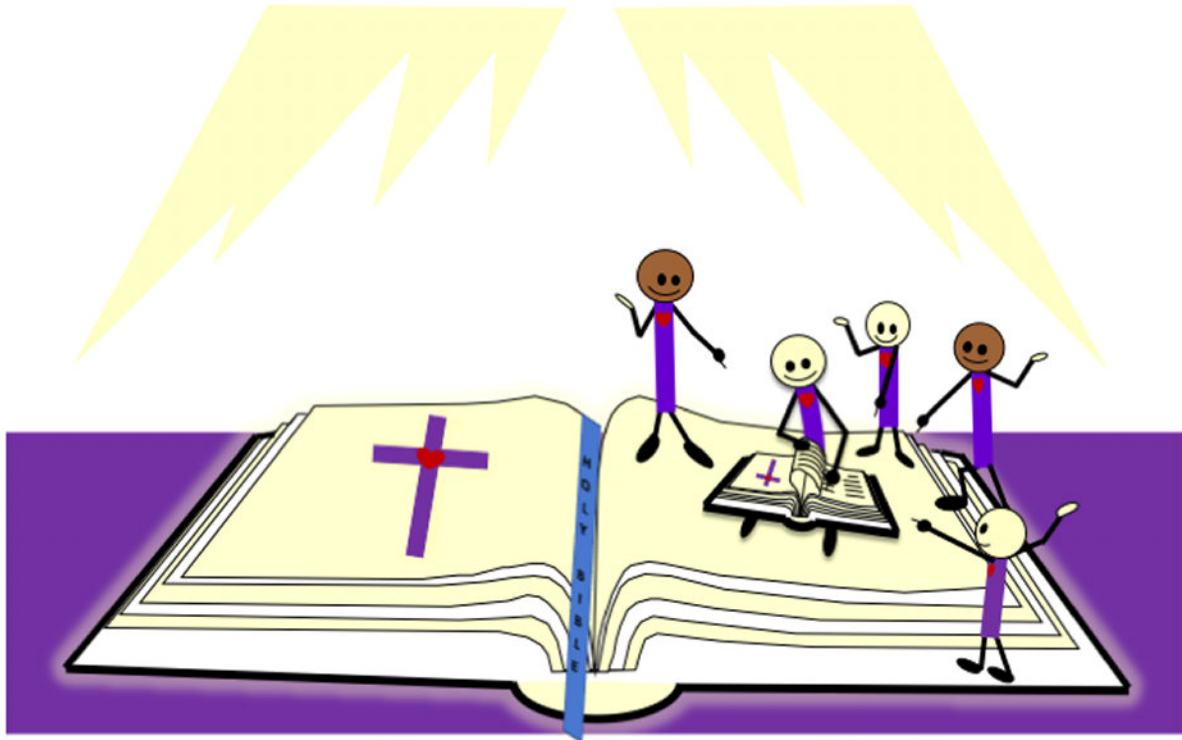
24 Family Distinctives:



24 DISTINCTIVES:

The “**distinctives**” are a family portrait... When you add God’s Word, God’s Spirit, God’s Truth, God’s love, and God’s people all together, the **distinctives** are what **we look, love, & live like :-)**

We are...



Trusting the Bible

INTRO:

As we begin to **see the beautiful, biblical portrait of Christ's faith-filled family** defined and described by God's Word, will, and ways, it is critical to remember that the Holy Bible is to ALWAYS BE our ultimate source, authority, and interpreter in ALL things pertaining to one's understanding of reality and application of truth in love.

Remember,
The biblical Church is Christ's missional family...
Moreover, God's Word reveals our Father's will and His family's ways.

[2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Here are ***24 defining & describing HANDS-on DISTINCTIVES of Christianity:***

True Christians are biblically, miraculously, intentionally, missionally, and imperfectly...

1. ***Responding to grace***
2. ***Repenting of sin***
3. ***Trusting the Bible***
4. ***Obeying God's Word***
5. ***Growing in Christ***
6. ***Living Spirit-led***
7. ***Praying for guidance***
8. ***Following by faith***
9. ***Dying to self***
10. ***Carrying our cross***
11. ***BE-ing The Church***
12. ***Loving one another (truly loving one another)***
13. ***Equipping the saints***
14. ***Exemplifying supernatural unity***
15. ***Ministering as ambassadors***
16. ***Discerning matters shrewdly***
17. ***Worshipping God vertically***
18. ***Experiencing Him horizontally***
19. ***Proclaiming the Gospel (no matter what)***
20. ***Fishing for men***
21. ***Making disciplined warriors***
22. ***Winning spiritual warfare***
23. ***Loving our King***
24. ***Serving His kingdom***

PRAYER:

LORD, we seek to bless You with all that is within us. Help us here, we pray, to be that blessing as we come to better understand You and Your eternal truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Help us to see with Your eyes and love with Your love, all that You would reveal to us through Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. May we grow in our grasp of Your realities, Your means of restoration, and Your mission of reproduction. In the holy name of Jesus, we pray. Amen and Amen

CONTEXT:

Macro

This lesson marks another major transition point in our curriculum's eye-opening explanation of Christianity. By way of review, we began in Section One with the reality of Almighty God having 1 Divine DESIGN (also known as a biblical worldview and the eternal application of Jesus Christ's Gospel). In Section Two, we addressed the 3 DIVISIONS (Head, Heart, and Hands) that make up the "being" in every human being. Next, in Section Three, we demonstrated how Christianity accounts for, defines, and describes all of humanity, every person, past, present, and future. We noted that all people can be identified as one of the 5 DISCIPLES – Lost, Lover, Learner, Leader, or Lifer. Moving forward, Section Four revealed, engaged, and explained the 7 fundamental DETAILS of God's Divine DESIGN... because **we all need to know what we need to know**. To be more specific, those seven truths are: The Foundations, The Framework, The Facts, The Fight, The Faith, The Family, and the truth about Forever.

Then, in Section Five, which we just completed, our focus shifted from HEAD based truths to 12 HEART shaping exercises or disciplines - each having the potential to strengthen one's personal relationship with Christ, His Church, and their collective mission: bringing God glory by finding & growing more glorifiers.

We used the acronym **J.E.S.U.S.'S. P. S.W.O.R.D.** to outline and harmonize a biblical, missional, and intentional methodology for growing in God's love - & His loving witness. The 12 HEART DISCIPLINES are: **J**ournaling... **E**ating-nothing (fasting)... **S**cripture-intake... **U**nderstudy of Scripture... **S**tewardship... **S**olitude... **P**rayer... **S**erving... **W**orshipping... **O**utreach... **R**elationships... and **D**evelopment.

Now, our curriculum and study will transition to The HANDS. This is where **Christians demonstrate to the world that Christ is in their worship & witness**. Whereas our time spent in the HEAD sections (1-4) focused on the truths that Christians need and seek to LEARN, and our concentration on the 12 HEART DISCIPLINES of section 5 helped us to grow in God's LOVE, our sixth and final section will **walk through the 24 DISTINCTIVES, which explain & exemplify how Christians are to faithfully LIVE... and fully BE The Church... together** – all by God's grace & ALL for His glory!

God's Word puts it this way:

"Let us not love with word and tongue but in action and truth." – 1st John 3:18

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47](#)praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. – Acts 2:46-47

I. **DISTINCTIVES are FRUIT:**

It is important to realize that God's miraculous and authentic **Christian DISTINCTIVES are the FRUIT of saving grace and faith** (Ephesians 2:1-10). As Jesus described in John 15, people can do nothing outside of their abiding in Him and obeying His Word, will and ways. In short, there will be no fruit unless one remains attached to and provided for by the true Vine and divine Root. With that said, a cautionary note is worth sharing here, beware the counterfeits that abound around the world. ***Plastic fruit is deceptive vs. DISTINCTIVE!***

Galatians 5:22-25

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

II. **DISTINCTIVES are FAMILY:**



DISTINCTIVES, by definition, are those “distinguishing characteristics that are notable for having a special quality, style, and/or attractiveness” (Dictionary.com).

When it comes to God's family, the true Church, each Christian and their individualistic DISTINCTIVES are as unique as their potential. At the same time, in the same way that a billion unique snowflakes can be combined to make a single snowstorm, or countless swatches of scrap fabric can be sewn together to make a single quilt, so it is with God's family. The LORD creates His Christian family with a both/and combination of DISTINCTIVE uniqueness, as well as DISTINCTIVE love and defining unity.

Christianity's DISTINCT family (ecclesia) has a DISTINCTIVE unity (koinonia).

“By this all people will know that you are My disciple, if you have love for one another.”
– John 13:35

“The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

III. **DISTINCTIVES are WITNESS:**

The most biblical and healthy understandings of Christianity will include an embrace of two overarching and DISTINCTIVE purposes. Namely, per God’s Word, will, and ways, every Christian has received miraculous, saving grace, as well as the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to:

1. Bring glory to God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God.*

2. BE Christ’s witness.

Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, **and you will be My witnesses** in Jerusalem (locally), and in all Judea and Samaria (regionally), and to the end of the earth (globally).”*

God’s DISTINCTIVE people have been filled with His Holy Spirit for the express purpose of living DISTINCTIVE lives. When the world sees the LORD’s loving family living out their divinely empowered and God-honoring worship, work, and warfare, the resulting fruit will serve as a faithful witness, built with supernatural, grace-based, and missional DISTINCTIVES.

“God created me—and you—to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion—namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life.”

- John Piper

The Christian Distinctive

What distinguishes Christianity from all other religions is that it is a *revealed* religion. Christianity is not about our search for God or our means of finding him. Christianity is not a religion that works its way upward. It is all about God coming to us — God in grace making himself known to us and making a way for us to enjoy fellowship with him.

And so, at the very heart of Christianity is, simply, a message — a message from God to us about what he has done to bring us to himself.

If Christianity is distinctively revealed religion, then it is also uniquely *authoritative*. It does not offer itself as the best and highest of human thinking about God or even the best or most successful of human efforts to know God. It professes to be nothing less than the unique word from God, his very own self-disclosure and the record of the actions he has taken in Jesus Christ to bring us into fellowship with himself.

One of Rudyard Kipling's characters declares, "The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone; He don't obey no orders unless they is his own." That is to say, human religions lack authority — they form their own ideas and "discover" their own beliefs.

By contrast the Christian is "under orders," because unlike human religions, Christianity is a revealed religion — divinely revealed. We Christians are not our own touchstone of truth, and we do not confuse our ideas about God with His own self-revelation. We learn truth about God not from "inner lights" within ourselves but from God's own objective Word.

And apart from this external authority, there is no Christianity. This, at bottom, is Christianity's leading distinctive.

And so, we **Christians, prize Scripture as God's Word. We joyfully submit to it. And we enthusiastically proclaim its message of grace in Jesus Christ to the world.**

- Dr. Fred Zaspel

Micro

*If you have no intention of letting Christ rule your life,
then forget Christianity; it is not for you.*

- Kay Arthur

John 3:36

*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life;
whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life,
but the wrath of God remains on him.*

Message

Biblical obedience involves much more than most people think...

*Salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred
Scriptures... Apart from obedience there can be no salvation, for
salvation without obedience is a self-contradictory impossibility.*

- A. W. Tozer

There are three essential, miraculous prerequisites that must be in place before a person or people will be able to ***biblically*** OBEY GOD'S WORD. They must have RESPONDED TO GRACE, REPENTED OF SIN, and TRUSTED THE BIBLE.

Establishing this sequential order is critical to point out for a number of reasons. First, *per John 3:36, **heaven and hell weigh in the balance.*** Next, we must rightly & righteously acknowledge that any and all genuine, biblical OBEDIENCE is a gift from the Lord and His grace. To think otherwise is to sinfully disregard Christ & self-righteously disobey His Word (John 15:4-15).

Just as a servant knows that he must first obey his master in all things, so the surrender to an implicit and unquestionable obedience must become the essential characteristic of our lives.

- Andrew Murray

Third, **biblical OBEDIENCE is never a coincidence.** No. Instead, OBEYING GOD'S WORD is an intentional resistance or restorative response to the threat, affects, or consequences of SIN. On the other hand, to see this point from the positive perspective, **to biblically OBEY GOD'S WORD requires a passionate pursuit of holy and holistic devotion to Christ. It means more than becoming a churchy "copy-cat"** – there needs to be a "meant-to" and heartfelt "want-to," (even a "get-to") attitude undergirding a person's or people's cleaned up actions. Again, to be Scripturally clear, **Messianic & missional mimicking is not the same as biblical obedience.**

With that said, our fourth prerequisite, TRUSTING THE BIBLE, now makes more sense. Just consider the potential trappings of KNOWING the right thing to do and/or DOING the right thing, but in both cases, having the wrong motive and heart. Be sure of this, if one's HANDS are right but their HEAD and/or HEART are wrong, per God's Word, will, and ways, the results are a mess. In short, **biblical obedience is faith-full obedience** (John 10:27).

*Wicked men obey from fear; good men, from love.
- Augustine*

A fifth justification for our focusing on proper sequencing is found in John 14:15, where Jesus declared: *"If you love Me you will obey My commands."* Thus, per the King of kings and LORD of lords, **biblical obedience is loving obedience... and love-less obedience is disguised disobedience.** Again, to merely mimic or seek to copy Christ-likeness without actually loving Christ & His Church is nothing more than moralistic deism, religious hypocrisy, and/or deceptively destructive, self-serving behavior(s).

With the proper theological prerequisites in place, **the lesson will now shift & focus on how to learn, love, and live OBEYING GOD'S WORD.**

*Love is not just a sentiment. Love is a great controlling passion and it always expresses itself in terms of obedience.
- Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

BIG IDEA:

"Obeying God's Word" is the Christian's defining, grace-based, Spirit-empowered, holistic and missional... blueprint, bullseye, and battle-cry --- all faithfully unified to bring glory to God.

PREVIEW:

1. OBEYING
2. GOD's
3. WORD

TEXT:

2 Timothy 3:15-17

*(14But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.)
15and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, fully-equipped for every good work.*

1. OBEYING

Illustration:

*"God's commands are designed to guide you to life's very best. You will not obey Him, if you do not believe Him and trust Him. You cannot believe Him if you do not love Him. You cannot love Him unless you know Him."
- Henry Blackaby*

Explanation:

OBEYING GOD's WORD is a worshipful & witnessing example of sovereign grace & human responsibility being harmonized (1 John 2:6).

*You can only learn what obedience is by obeying.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

What Does it Mean to Obey God?

Obedience in a biblical and Christian context refers to the act of willingly submitting to the authority and will of God as expressed in the teachings and commandments found in the Bible. It is a fundamental Christian concept and is often associated with faith and discipleship. Here are some key aspects of obedience in this context:

1. **Obedience to God:** Christians believe that obeying God is the highest moral duty. It involves following God's commandments, living according to His principles, and aligning one's actions and choices with His will. This is based on the belief that God is the ultimate authority and source of truth.
2. **Obedience to Jesus Christ:** For Christians, Jesus Christ is seen as the ultimate example of obedience to God. They strive to follow His teachings and example, including His... principles of righteousness and ethical living.
3. **Faith and Obedience:** Obedience is often seen as a demonstration of one's faith in God. The Bible teaches that faith without works is dead ([James 2:26](#)), meaning that genuine faith leads to obedient actions...
4. **Biblical Commandments:** Obedience in the Christian context involves following the moral & ethical (commands) guidelines laid out in the Bible...
5. **Repentance and Forgiveness:** When Christians fall short of God's standards, they are encouraged to repent, seek forgiveness, and return to obedience. The Christian faith emphasizes [God's grace](#) and forgiveness, allowing believers to reconcile with God (and each other) through faith in Jesus Christ.
6. **The Holy Spirit:** Christians believe that the Holy Spirit helps them in their journey of obedience by providing guidance, courage, and empowerment to live in accordance with God's will.
7. **Obedience in Daily Life:** Obedience is not limited to religious rituals but extends to all aspects of life. It is about living... Christian values and principles.

- Christianity.com

Taking up my "cross" means a life voluntarily surrendered to God.

- A. W. Pink

Application:

Reader be ready! BE ready, willing, and joyful... thanking the LORD for your privilege AND your responsibility to biblically OBEY GOD's WORD. **The Bible is filled with such admonishments and exhortations.** While this lesson cannot possibly bring all that GOD's WORD has to say on the topic, you can be certain of this biblical admonition's authenticity and authority.

Here is just a tiny sample...

Matthew 7:21 & 28:18-20a

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven..."

*18*Then Jesus came to them and said, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *20*and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..."

John 14:15 & 15:14

*If you love Me you will obey My commands...
You are My friends if you do what I command you.*

Romans 1:5.

Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake.

2 Corinthians 10:5.

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

James 1:22

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

1 Peter 1:14

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

1 John 2:6 & 2 John 1:6

*Those who claim to be in Christ must walk as He walked...
And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments;*

Revelation 14:12

This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.

Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

- George Mueller

2. GOD'S

Illustration:

Partial obedience is not obedience at all; to single out easy things that do not oppose our lusts, which are not against our reputation, therein some will do more than they need; but our obedience must be universal to all God's commandments, and that because He commands it. Empty relationships are nothing; if we profess ourselves God's servants and do not honor Him by our obedience, we take but an empty title.

- Puritan Richard Sibbes

Taking up my "cross" means a life voluntarily surrendered to God.

- A. W. Pink

Explanation:

Simple & direct explanations are usually the best explanations...

With that in mind, when it comes to OBEYING GOD'S WORD, helping people to realize that the Bible IS GOD'S WORD is the most simple and direct way to encourage OBEDIENCE. Therefore, in addition to our lesson's specific text (2 Timothy 3:15-17), consider the following facts. Romans 10:9 tells us "Jesus is LORD." Matthew 4:4 makes clear that the Lord Jesus taught that the Holy Scriptures are "from the mouth of God." Even more, when tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus Himself responded by quoting multiple Scriptures (Matthew 4:4-10). Later, in Matthew 5:17, Jesus went so far as to say that He came to "fulfill the Law & the prophets."

It really is simple... **OBEYING GOD'S WORD is OBEYING GOD** and conversely, **disobeying God's Word is disobeying the God of The Word!**

2 Peter 1:21

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Cultivate prompt, exact, unquestioning, joyous obedience to every command that it is evident from its context applies to you. Be on the lookout for new orders from your King. Blessing lies in the direction of obedience to them. God's commands are but signboards that mark the road to present success and blessedness and to eternal glory.

- R.A. Torrey

Application:

OBEYING GOD'S WORD is, in one sense, simple. **Just do it!** At the same time, without the grace of God, the Spirit of God, & a true, full context embrace of the Scriptures... be advised, **biblical** obedience will be impossible.

Men would pray better if they lived better. They would get more from God if they lived more obedient and well-pleasing to God.

- E.M. Bounds

Rest in this - it is His business to lead, command, impel, send, call or whatever you want to call it. It is your business to obey, follow, move, respond, or what have you.

- Jim Elliot

Greatness in the kingdom of God is measured in terms of obedience.

- John Stott

3. WORD

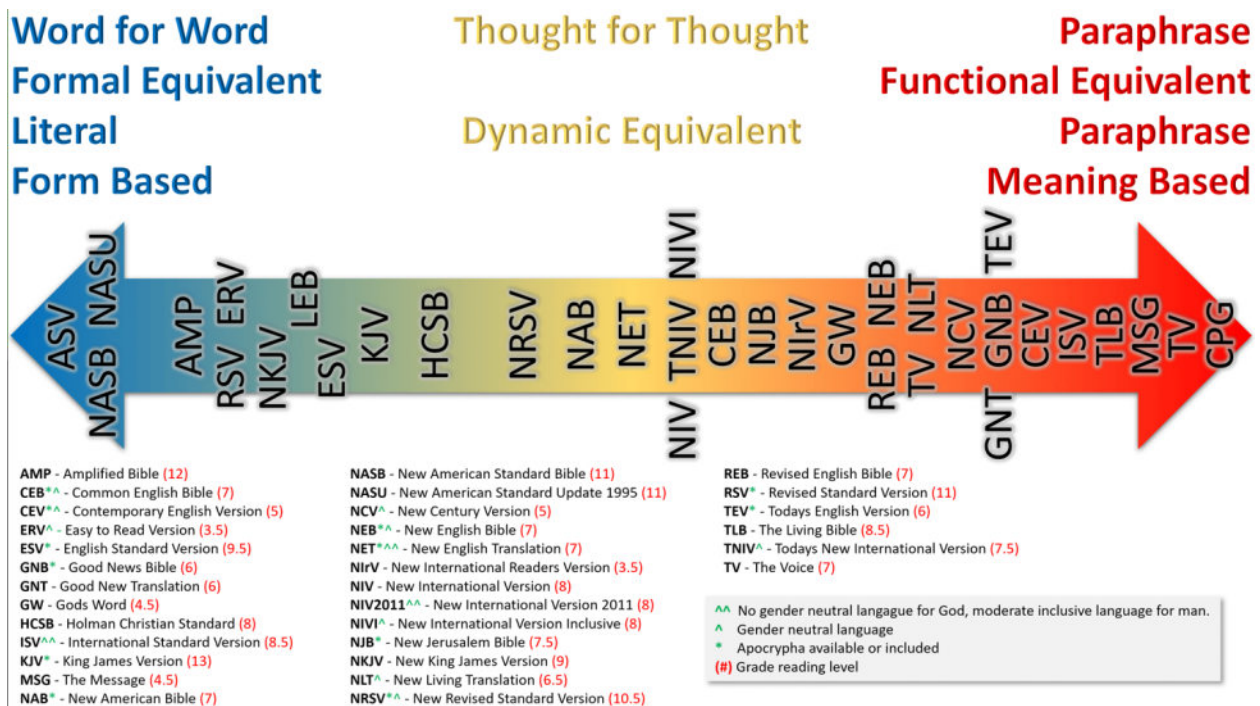
Illustration:

An ounce of obedience is worth a pound of protection.
 - Woodrow Kroll

Explanation:

When biblical Christianity refers to GOD’s WORD, there is a diversity of inspiration tied to that term. First and foremost, the LORD Jesus Christ IS The WORD (John 1:1). And, as noted above, He has declared & demonstrated that the Holy Scriptures are His own supernaturally inspired WORD.

With that said, there are less obvious aspects and a broader context to OBEYING GOD’S WORD... One such area worthy of investigation and deeper understanding involves the defining realities and different intents of various TRANSLATIONS of the Bible. Try to be careful and intentional when it comes to choosing your personal translation (or when reading other translations). See the chart below for a visual explanation and introductory sample.



Another important but somewhat obscure aspect of OBEYING GOD'S WORD is centered on one's need to understand how the Lord laid out and filled the Bible. To that end, two exceptional books are here recommended: Max Anders' "30 Days To Understanding The Bible" and Robert Stein's "A Basic Guide To Interpreting The Bible." In both cases, the reader will be walked through God's biblical blueprinting and bullseyes.

Lastly, we need to realize that GOD's inspired WORD is ultimately intended to reveal His will and ways to the world. Moreover, God's family is entrusted with God's Word so that we can grow in our ability to bring Him glory... by faithfully sharing and obeying His will, all while worshipping and walking within the guardrails of His ways.

True faith will inevitably manifest itself in the performance of works of obedience... The performance of works are the result of faith and the fruit of justification.

- R. C. Sproul

Our modern culture really pushes freedom, to the point of self-contradiction. As long as you accept anyone's authority over you, we are subtly and not so subtly told, you are not really free. It is therefore very important to counteract this false idea of self-autonomy with the recognition that true freedom, freedom from sin, is only found in obedience to God,

- C.S. Lewis Institute

A passion for God isn't necessarily the same as abiding in God; it must be coupled with obedience to be true love for God.

- Ed Cole

Application:

All Christians are universally called, commanded, and commissioned to love and faithfully obey the One, true, living God. In full context, that means OBEYING Creator Christ, OBEYING all that the Holy Scriptures (which were God breathed - 2 Timothy 3:16) teach, and OBEYING every detail that constitutes the revealed will and/or missional ways of God. From forgiving one another, to carrying our crosses, to going and making disciples who will be able to make disciples who can make disciples... OBEYING GOD'S WORD comes down to saying: "Yes, LORD" no matter what!

The Bible recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience, nor does it recognize any obedience that does not spring from faith. The two are at opposite sides of the same coin.

- A. W. Tozer

It is Christ who is to be exalted, not our feelings. We will know Him by obedience, not by emotions. Our love will be shown by obedience, not by how good we feel about God at a given moment. "And love means following the commands of God." "Do you love Me?" Jesus asked Peter. "Feed My lambs." He was not asking, "How do you feel about Me?" for love is not a feeling.

He was asking for action.

- Elisabeth Elliot

CLOSE:

NEVER confuse liking with loving or observing with obeying!

Having a trustworthy map and studying its details is not the same as taking the journey and arriving at your desired destination.

All the paths of the Lord are loving and faithful (Psalm 25:10). I have pondered this verse lately, and have found that it feeds my spirit. All does not mean "all - except the paths I am walking in now," or "nearly all - except this especially difficult and painful path." All must mean all. So, your path with its unexplained sorrow or turmoil, and mine with its sharp flints and briers - and both our paths, with their unexplained perplexity, their sheer mystery - they are His paths, on which he will show himself loving and faithful.

Nothing else; nothing less.

- Amy Carmichael

For What?

Unless he obeys, a man cannot believe.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Maturity comes from obedience...

- Leonard Ravenhill

If you look up into His face and say, "Yes, Lord, whatever it costs," at that moment He'll flood your Life with His presence and power.

- Alan Redpath

So What?

It does not require great learning to be a Christian and be convinced of the truth of the Bible. It requires only an honest heart and a willingness to obey God.

- Albert Barnes

*Truth without obedience is hypocrisy;
obedience without truth is legalism.*

- Jack Wellman

See in the meantime that your faith brings forth obedience, and God in due time will cause it to bring forth peace.

- Puritan John Owen

"So great is my veneration for the Bible, that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hopes that they will prove useful citizens to their country and respectable members of society."

- John Quincy Adams

Now What?

Something is wrong when our lives make sense to unbelievers.

- Francis Chan

Joy, not grit, is the hallmark of holy obedience. We need to be light-hearted in what we do to avoid taking ourselves too seriously.

It is a cheerful revolt against self and pride.

- Richard J. Foster

*The right attitude is this: that I have my own will,
yet I will the will of God.
- Watchman Nee*

*There's some task which the God of all the universe, the great
Creator, your redeemer in Jesus Christ has for you to do, and which
will remain undone and incomplete until by faith and obedience you
step into the will of God.
- Alan Redpath*

BE a living apologetic!

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for the Truth and Love of Your Word, will, and ways. Please help us to absorb and apply ALL that You have shared and commanded in the Bible. May our heads be infilled with Your defining Scriptures, for the express purpose of informing, inspecting, and inspiring our sanctified hearts and serving hands.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen and Amen

Support Sermon:

"Scripture's Power, Purpose, & People"
2 Timothy 3:15-17
January 9, 2011
Sermon Series: Faithfully Fight To The Finish