

Are You Really Obeying God?

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Eph. 6:1). When a parent teaches a child to obey, the parent should expect three things. The child should (1) do what is asked (2) in the way that has been prescribed (3) for the reason that has been given. True obedience really does deal with the questions of **what, how, and why**.

God expects this kind of obedience from us as well. His grace is offered to all, but the condition of accepting that grace is loving, submissive obedience to His plan for our lives (Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Titus 2:11-14). Are you really obeying God? Consider some examples where many fail to fully obey His will.

Baptism – Baptism is God’s will for the life of every human being of accountable age (Acts 2:38; cf. Luke 7:40). If we are not baptized into Christ, we are not obeying Him (Gal. 3:27). Additionally, God has specified that baptism is to be a burial in water (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 8:36), and it is specifically for the purpose of remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Just as those who refuse to be baptized are disobedient, those who refuse to be baptized in the manner God has authorized (i.e. by sprinkling or pouring) are also disobedient to Him. Further, if baptism is not for the reasons God has given (remission of sins, receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, being added to the church), then we have not really obeyed God in this matter at all (cf. Acts 2:38-47).

The Lord’s Supper – It is God’s will that Christians observe the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Those who fail to do so are disobedient to Him. Observers of the Lord’s Supper are taught to observe this memorial by eating bread and drinking the fruit of the vine (1 Cor. 11:24-25). In addition, those who eat the Lord’s Supper are to do so in a reflective, discerning spirit as they contemplate the sacrifice Jesus made (1 Cor. 11:29). The early disciples met on the first day of every week for the purpose of observing this memorial (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 11:26), and we are to follow their example of obedience to God. Finally, those who observe the Lord’s Supper are commanded to do so as a proclamation of the Lord’s death until He comes (1 Cor. 11:26). When we ignore any part of God’s will concerning the Lord’s Supper, we disobey Him.

Forgiving Others – God wants His people to be a forgiving people (Col. 3:13). Any disciple of Jesus who fails to forgive others is not obeying His will (Eph. 4:31-32). Not only that, but when a Christian forgives, it is to be done freely, quickly and graciously, for this is the manner in which God’s forgiveness has been granted to us (Eph. 4:32; Heb. 8:12; Micah 7:19). Forgiveness is also to be given on the basis of the grace that God has bestowed in our lives (Matt. 18:21ff). If He has forgiven us so much, how much more should we be willing to forgive the offenses others commit against us (Matt. 6:14-15; Eph. 4:32)?

Are you really obeying God? Are you doing what He says in the way He has said to do it? Are you obeying Him for the reasons He has given? **--JB**