

Why a Servant of Christ Obeys

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Obedience is often misunderstood. In the world, it is seen as restriction—something that limits freedom or imposes control, often driven by pressure or fear of consequences. Even within the Christian life, obedience can be reduced to rule-following or moral effort, as if the goal were simply to behave better. But Scripture presents a different picture: for a servant of Christ, obedience is not merely duty—it is worship. It is the natural response of a heart that has come to see God rightly. It begins with relationship, is sustained by grace, and flows from love and reverence for who God is. As Scripture calls us, “present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). Obedience is not simply what we do—it is how a life devoted to God is lived.

From the beginning, Scripture reveals that God relates to His people through covenant—“on that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram” (Genesis 15:18a). This relationship is not built on human performance but on divine promise, as God declares, “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts” (Jeremiah 31:33). In Christ, believers now live within the New Covenant, established by His sacrifice, where Jesus says, “this cup... is the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20). Because of this, obedience is no longer an attempt to earn God’s favor, but a response to having already received it. Worship is not offered to secure relationship—it flows from it. When a Christian obeys, they are responding to God’s faithfulness with their own lives. In this way, obedience becomes devotion, not obligation. A servant of Christ obeys because their life belongs to the God who has already bound Himself to them in covenant love.

Obedience is also shaped by what we value and revere. Scripture teaches that “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7), pointing to a reverent awe that rightly orders the heart toward God. Worship begins with seeing God as He truly is—holy, sovereign, and worthy of all honor. When this vision is clear, obedience becomes a natural response of reverence. By contrast, when the fear of man dominates, obedience becomes inconsistent and shallow, shaped by the opinions of others. But Scripture reminds us, “if I were still trying to

please man, I would not be a servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10). True worship reorients our lives so that God, not people, is at the center. Obedience, then, is not about managing appearances—it is about honoring God. A servant of Christ obeys because they worship God, not because they seek the approval of man.

At the heart of obedience as worship is a life that continually turns toward God. Scripture calls us not just to feel rightly about God, but to respond to Him with our whole lives. Sin—following self rather than God—disrupts that worship, but it does not end it. Instead, it becomes an opportunity to return. As Scripture reminds us, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), yet God invites His people to draw near rather than hide. Obedience, then, is not the absence of failure, but the continual reorientation of life toward God. Worship is not perfection—it is direction. Every act of turning back to God is an act of worship, acknowledging His worth and our dependence. A servant of Christ obeys because their life is being continually reoriented toward the God they worship.

This life of worship leads to transformation. Scripture assures us that “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6), reminding us that God is actively shaping His people. Worship is not static—it changes the one who offers it. As we respond to God in obedience, our hearts are gradually conformed to His will. This transformation is not self-generated, for “it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). God Himself enables the obedience He calls for, giving a new heart and Spirit, “causing” His people to walk in His ways (Ezekiel 36:26–27). Over time, what once felt difficult becomes increasingly natural. Obedience becomes not just an action, but a reflection of a changed heart. A servant of Christ obeys because their worship is shaping them into the likeness of the One they worship.

As this transformation takes place, it produces fruit. Jesus teaches that “whoever abides in me... bears much fruit” (John 15:5), showing that obedience flows from remaining in Him. This fruit is the visible expression of a life of worship. It appears inwardly as the Spirit forms “love, joy, peace...” (Galatians 5:22–23), and outwardly in a life that reflects Christ. This fruit is not self-produced, for apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:4). Instead, it grows as a

natural result of abiding in Him. This visible fruit becomes a testimony to others, as Jesus says, “by this all people will know that you are my disciples” (John 13:35). In this way, obedience not only honors God but points others to Him. A servant of Christ obeys because their life is an offering of worship that bears visible fruit.

None of this worshipful obedience is accomplished by human effort alone. God gives His Spirit to dwell within His people, and “anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him” (Romans 8:9). The Spirit enables worship that is not merely external, but from the heart. As Scripture commands, “walk by the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16), showing that obedience flows from dependence on Him. The Spirit leads, convicts, strengthens, and sustains a life of worship. He empowers believers to put sin to death and live in obedience (Romans 8:13). This means obedience is not simply something we do for God, but something God creates in us. A servant of Christ obeys because God Himself is at work within them, enabling a life of true worship.

Obedience, then, is not a single act, but a way of life shaped by worship. It flows from covenant relationship, is grounded in reverence for God, is renewed through continual turning, is formed through transformation, produces visible fruit, and is empowered by the Spirit. Each of these reveals that obedience is not the means of earning life with God, but the expression of a life devoted to Him. Worship is not confined to moments—it is lived out in daily obedience. Every act of obedience becomes an offering to God, a reflection of His worth. A servant of Christ obeys not to earn love, but because they worship the One who is worthy of it. Obedience is not simply what we do—it is how a life devoted to God is lived.