

Keeping God's Law in Faith Driggs Matabaran

Obedience to God is of utmost importance. His laws must be obeyed and followed. However, is obedience enough? Obedience alone is not sustainable. In the Old Testament, we see that Israel was not able to sustain following God's commandment: there was a missing ingredient.

There is no doubt that obedience is very important. God instructs us to follow Him obediently. Obedience is a vital requirement to our Christian life so that we can develop the character necessary to be a worthy citizen in God's kingdom. However, obedience must be reinforced with deep understanding of God's law, ways, character and plan, *in which we must have total faith*.

Do we thoroughly study and understand God's law and what is required of us? Do we deeply understand why God requires us to follow His law? Could it be that we simply follow His law out of obligation or because we fear the consequences of disobeying it? How do we view God's law? Do we feel it restricts us or helps us?

Our answers to these questions are very important as we urgently allow God to refine our character in the little time available before He comes 'as a thief in the night'. Many perceive laws and ordinances as a means to be controlled; many view God's laws as a way of restricting our 'freedom'. This is the usual misconception. The problem is that many do not usually look deeper into the spirit and purpose of the law to understand that God's laws were given to be a *solution* to ensure our well-being, and not a means of control.

Like in any country, laws are put into place as a solution to problems. Let me cite only one common physical example: the law of using seatbelts. Seatbelts are required as a solution to the number of injuries and deaths caused by car accidents. However, if it were not for the traffic police who strictly implement the law, most drivers would probably not observe it – even though the law is put in place for their own good. Many observe this law to avoid being fined or penalized. This is possibly the same attitude with how some might view and apply God's law.

Let us consider a spiritual example: God has given us a command to keep the Sabbath day (Ex. 20:8). How do we consider this law? Do we see it as a solution, or as a means of control? Do we see it as interfering with our freedom, work and our ability to earn more money?

After Mr. Armstrong's death, the observance of the Sabbath day was relaxed in the Church, especially throughout the 90's. This made some members happy, probably because for them the Sabbath was a burden and seen as pure restriction. Some have meanwhile stopped keeping the fourth commandment altogether! People who have fallen into this trap did not understand that the Sabbath was God's solution for man to rejuvenate himself physically and spiritually – to be able to fellowship with Him and to strengthen the relationship with His Maker. The Sabbath is God's appointed time of rest, giving us extra time to meditate and deeply appreciate God's plan of salvation. It is an identifying sign of His people (Ex. 31:12), purposely made so that God's begotten children have the opportunity to commune with each other and fellowship.

In order to enjoy the benefit of God's law, one must obey the law. Obedience implies that rules, instructions, ordinances or laws have to be followed and adhered to. People violate God's law because they are deceived. Satan the Devil deceives the whole world (Rev 12:9).

If we want to follow God, we should be vigilant and submissive to Him. Being vigilant implies that we should be carefully watching ourselves, that we do not transgress God's law. As we

transgress God's law, we commit sin (1 John 3:4). We should examine ourselves daily and ask ourselves whether we are really abiding by God's law.

We must do whatever it takes to obediently follow God. Christian life has to be a life of continual repentance as we overcome and endure to the end. We must be careful of simply absorbing what we are taught, but should instead prove all things (1 Thess. 5:21) and test our leaders (Rev. 2:2).

In the book of Exodus after Moses read and explained to the people of Israel their covenant with God, they stated: "All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Exod. 24:7). Unfortunately, the Israelites failed to keep their promise!

The Bottom line – Faith!

Our Faith enables us to obey God's law. Obedience must lead to the building of that faith. It would follow that the more faith we have, the more this should give us courage to obey the law. God's word is replete with example of persons obeying God in faith. The patriarch Abraham is one example. Israel enjoyed God's blessings because of his obedience and faith.

The prophet Jeremiah reminded us about obeying God's Voice: "But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you (Jer. 7:23). What if God's people will not obey? He pointed – "But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD" (Jer 12:17). The Bible shows that there are blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

We should obey the Truth of which God's laws are a part. We should continually seek God's Truth and obey it once we find it by proving it. We should continually live by God's Truth, by being in constant submission to His law.

We should grow far beyond mere obedience. We should have total faith that His laws are in place for our own good; this is one essential aspect of God's plan. God's laws will totally be enforced in God's kingdom. These are the set of laws that will govern the peaceful, harmonious and eternal glory of God's sovereignty. It is for this reason that we should have total faith in God's law and His plan, while striving to perform our duties in God's Work. The faith of Jesus Christ that is in us will enable us to succeed and claim the victory.