

The Relationship Between Faith and Obedience (part one of a seven-part study)

At the very heart of God's plan of redemption for each of us is the requirement of faith and obedience. God desires a positive response from everyone in fulfilling that imperative. Yet, throughout redemptive history, a common misunderstanding of this prerequisite has been to get the cart before the horse. In other words, many have embraced a lifestyle of self-righteous good works in order to gain acceptance with God. Since the standard for such acceptance is sinless perfection, those efforts are doomed to failure.

Therefore, if we are to experience God's plan of redemption, we must first exercise faith in the Redeemer whom God has provided for our salvation. Then, and only then, can we express our faith in Jesus Christ, on a daily basis, with a life of obedience to Him. As long as we maintain that all-important distinction, there will never be an incompatibility between the two. Ironically, the very first act of obedience to God anyone can fulfill involves placing one's trust in the one and only Savior of the world (John 14:6; Acts 6:7b; Romans 16:26). There is no better description of the complimentary nature of a genuine faith in Christ manifesting itself in an obedient life, than what Paul provides for us in Ephesians 2:8-10 –

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

One way to interpret and apply the above passage is as follows. We don't do good works to get saved. We don't perform good works to stay saved. Instead, our good works prove that we are saved. As we continue this study, I am confident that our understanding of this critical connection between faith and obedience will deepen and grow. Perhaps you have already discovered that during those times when we don't believe God, it becomes that much more difficult to obey God. This is why the hymn writer, in seeking to keep this connection as clear and simple as possible for all of us, wrote the following:

“Trust and obey, for there's no other way,
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.”

**THERE WILL BE A BONUS POST ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1
IT IS ENTITLED: “THE THREE PROHIBITIONS FOR JUDGING OTHERS”**