

Lesson #6 Obedience

The Christian life is a very simple life to lead. This does not mean that Christians won't encounter any trials or difficulties. In fact, we encounter them all of the time. But the basic principles of our faith in Jesus can be boiled down to this passage of scripture: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength" ([Deuteronomy 6:5](#)).

Obeying Jesus is a simple matter of expressing our love for him and expressing our love for others. God is not interested in us keeping rituals as much as he is concerned about our love relationship with him.

If we love Jesus we will seek to obey him in every area of life. We can tell if we love him by whether or not we obey him.

- "If you love me, you will keep My commandments" ([John 14:15](#)).
- "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not burdensome" ([I John 5:3](#)).

In this study we will learn the basics of obeying God's commands and how obeying God brings changes to the way we think, feel, and behave. It is impossible to have an encounter with the Living God and not have it change us in fundamental ways. By obeying God you will become more like him in your character. You will begin to learn how to think what he thinks, feel what he feels, and even do what he does—just as he designed us to be.

Let's begin our study by looking at obedience and the mind.

Obedience Changes The Mind

Believing in Jesus changes our minds.

“And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us” ([I John 3:23](#)).

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him” ([Romans 8:5-9](#)).

Believing in Jesus is the first part of obedience. When we come into agreement with God about who Jesus is and what he did for us, then we are exercising our first instance of obedience to God’s commands. Our first assent to Jesus is to change our minds from disbelief to belief.

Have you decided that you want to obey Jesus? The first part is to believe in him. Have you done that yet?

Dwelling on the things of God changes our minds.

“Brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” ([Philippians 4:8-9](#)).

“My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge” ([Proverbs 5:1-2](#)).

At the most basic level, changing our lives begins when we change our thinking. To change our thinking we must dwell on things that God approves of. This is especially true when we dwell upon the things of God’s word. The

more we dwell upon God's word and the things he approves of, the more we will experience change in our thinking. Our minds will change.

Write down a list of the things you find yourself thinking about the most. Next to it write a second list of things to think about that please God. How are these different? What will you do with what you think about?

Doing what Jesus did changes our minds.

"Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us" ([Philippians 3:17](#)).

It is impossible to dwell upon the things of Christ and not have our lives changed in some way. When we change our thinking our acts and behavior should naturally follow.

Since you have come to Christ how has your thinking changed? How is that reflected in how you live your life from day-to-day?

Obedience Changes The Heart

Believing in Jesus changes our hearts.

"I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" ([Ezekiel 36:26](#)).

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" ([II Corinthians 5:17](#)).

One of the first things that happens when we receive Jesus is that we are given a new heart. The center of our affection changes. Jesus changes our hearts, just as he promised in the scripture.

What occupies the center of your affections? As you grow in your faith are you finding your attention drawn to God more and more? How can you express your love to Jesus?

Dwelling on the things of God changes our hearts.

“Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” ([Philippians 4:8](#)).

Don't just think about good things. Dwell on them. It's one thing to think something and then move on. But it's another thing to dwell upon it and think deeply on something over time. It is by dwelling that we will experience more and more of our hearts changing.

Set aside some time to read the scripture and then think about what it means. Explore the meaning of passages of scripture and think upon its ramifications. As you do you will find your heart changing.

Doing what Jesus did changes our hearts.

“What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” ([Philippians 4:9](#)).

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you” ([John 15:13-14](#)).

Thinking and dwelling to change our hearts isn't enough. We must also do the things that Jesus did. In other words, what we think and dwell upon should naturally work themselves out in our behaviors. What did Jesus do? He loved those who came to him. He lived his life for his disciples. He even died for them.

Are you prepared to do what Jesus did with your life? Pray and ask God to help you think, feel, and act like Jesus. Make a commitment to be like him.

Obedience Changes Lives

Believing in Jesus changes our lives.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit” ([Galatians 5:22-25](#)).

Since we have come to Jesus our lives can never be the same. The more we follow and obey Jesus the more he will change us over time. Believing in Jesus is just the first step to a radical transformation wrought in God’s love.

Name some ways that your life has begun to change because of believing in Jesus. Take a moment to pray right now and thank God for those changes. Then ask him to change you even more according to his love and will.

Dwelling on the things of God changes our lives.

“Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” ([Philippians 4:8-9](#)).

Look at this passage of scripture very carefully. Do you want to have the kind of mind that thinks on these things all of the time? You can, by starting to build new habits of what you think about. No person who encounters Jesus this way can help but be changed.

Take each descriptive word in this passage, like “lovely,” and “pure,” and “honorable,” and thank God for things in your life that these words describe. Do this for the whole passage, thanking God for all he has done for you.

Doing what Jesus did changes our lives—and it changes the lives of others.

“Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment – what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me” ([John 12:44-50](#)).

“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” ([John 14:23](#)).

When our lives are changed we cannot help but have an impact on the others around us—our families, friends, and co-workers. Let your obedience to God in these matters influence the people around you.

One part of obedience is to tell others about Jesus. Who do you want to talk to about Jesus today?

For more information or help please write to info@twrafrica.org or our WhatsApp number +27 72 641 4475.