

# (Guidelines) Obey the Bible

by J. Vernon McGee

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience to the Bible and living a life worthy of the gospel.*

**Duration:** 13:50

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 17:34

**Topics:** "Biblical Obedience", "Gospel Living"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's commands and teachings. He highlights the significance of living a life that reflects the Gospel and proves the authenticity of the Bible. The speaker shares a jingle that reminds listeners that their actions and words are like writing a chapter in the Gospel each day. He also mentions a poem that encourages reading the Bible with the intention of learning and applying its teachings, rather than for personal gain or to find contradictions. The sermon concludes with a story about four clergymen discussing their preferred Bible translations, with one minister expressing his preference for his mother's translation.

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## Transcript

Now we come to the sixth guideline for the understanding and the study of the Scripture. Obey the Bible. Obedience is rather essential, by the way, and I personally think that it's all important.

You will recall the incident in the life of Abraham that God called him to go to the land He would show him, and God brought him into that land. And then a famine came, and this man Abraham, God had appeared to him in early Chaldees, then appeared to him when he got in the land. But Abraham ran off down to Egypt when the famine came.

God never told him to do that. He's certainly being disobedient. Somebody said, well, after all, he wants to be very sensible.

There's a famine, and everybody else was going to Egypt. Well, the point is, I think God would have kept Abraham there had he remained, but Abraham didn't, and as a result, why, when he was down in the land of Egypt, God did not appear to him, and it was not until after he returned back into that land. And why? Well, because of a lack of obedience.

And that's very important to see, that obedience is essential to an understanding of the Bible. In other words, until that man Abraham obeyed what God had already revealed to him, God was not prepared to

give to him any new truth. But the minute that we obey, then God opens up new truth for us.

And after all, even the gospel which is given to save our souls, the gospel is also given for the very definite purpose of obedience. I wonder if you've ever noticed that the greatest document that's ever been written on the gospel is the Epistle to the Romans. And Paul put a parenthesis around it, or I almost think he put it in quotation marks.

And he put around the gospel this matter of obedience. Will you listen? In the very first chapter, verse 5, Paul says, "...by whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name." Obedience to the faith. And that was where Adam and Eve went off.

You see, she not only listened to this enemy of God, the serpent, but she also disobeyed God. Obedience is very important to God. She disobeyed.

Now you'll find at the end of Romans that again Paul comes back to this, and next to the last verse of the Epistle says, "...but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." That's the last thing Paul says in this Epistle, the obedience of faith. And what is between? Why, he sets before us the greatest document on what the gospel is, that great doctrinal section, that great practical section. And you find that the last part is duty, what we're to do.

And the important thing today is to recognize that God will not continue to reveal truth to you if you become disobedient. You see, sin will separate us from God and from the Bible. It is something that if we permit it in our lives, either the Bible will keep us from sin, or sin is going to keep us from the Bible.

You see, disobedience is something that is a very terrible thing, and we're to obey the Bible if we are to profit from its reading. And it's given to us, Paul says, this is given for the obedience of faith, and how important that is. It is said that Hamilcar, the famous Carthaginian general of the Punic Wars, he once said to his own son, Hannibal, he said this, My son Hannibal will be a great general, because of all my soldiers he best knows how to obey.

Well, may I say to you, Hamilcar's statement certainly proved true, because this man, Hannibal, is a great figure in the history of the world. His army was composed of paid mercenaries of many nations, Africans, Spaniards, Gauls, and Italians, yet he retained their confidence during 16 years of hardship and privation in a foreign land. Never having a single mutiny in the camp.

What was his ability? Well, he was an extraordinary organizer. He trained these mixed bands into a most efficient whole. And what was it that he did? He taught them to be obedient.

Obedient to the orders, obedient to the commands. And you remember that Lord Jesus says, You'll know the doctrine if you keep it. You'll know of the doctrine.

And the Old Testament says, Taste of the Lord and see if he's good. Try this thing out. And that's the real test.

By the way, many years ago there were four clergymen, they were discussing the merits of the various translations of the Bible. And one of the clergymen, he said he liked the King James Version best because of its simple, beautiful English. And another expressed himself as liking the American Revised Version because it is more literal and comes nearer to the Hebrew and Greek texts.

And still another, the third one, he said he liked the Moffat translation because it had an up-to-date vocabulary. And the fourth minister was silent. And finally they asked him, they wanted to know his opinion.

Well, he said, to tell the truth, I like my mother's translation best. She translated it into her life. And it was the most convincing translation I've ever seen.

And may I say to you, that is exactly the thing that needs to be done today. Best argument for the Bible. In fact, it was Cowan who said the best way to defend the gospel is to live a life worthy of the gospel.

That's the way that you prove that it is the Word of God. How important that is. And the little jingle that goes, you are writing a gospel, a chapter each day by things that you do and words that you say.

Men read what you write, whether faithful or true. And by the way, what is the gospel according to you? That is true, by the way. That little jingle is very important.

And someone else has written a little poem entitled, Reading the Bible. It's one thing to read the Bible through, another thing to read to learn and do. Some read it as their duty once a week, but no instruction from the Bible seat.

Some read to bring themselves into repute by showing others how they can dispute. And then it goes on to say, while others read because their neighbors do, to see how long it will take to read it through. Some read it for the wonders that are there, how David killed a lion and a bear, while others read it with uncommon care, hoping to find some contradiction there.

And then I drop down there quite a few stanzas to this little poem, and the final one says, But read it prayerfully, and you will see, Although men contradict God's words, Agree, for what the early Bible prophets wrote, We find that Christ and his apostles, So trust no creed that trembles to recall What has been penned by one and verified by all. And you verified, of course, in your life. And you will recall, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, and this is in his second epistle to the Corinthians, the third chapter.

He says this, in verse 2, Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ Godward, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything is of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.

Oh, how important it is to see, friends, that the important thing is to obey the Word of God, obedience to the Word of God, to obey the Bible. I believe that today Christianity is being hurt more by those that are church members than by any other group. That is one of the reasons today that you have all this rebellion on the outside, rebellion against the establishment, rebellion against the church, for it's the establishment.

And so many preachers are trying to get on the bandwagon, and they're not doing very well by doing it, because they are not calling men and women to God at all, but are trying to become popular again, because actually we find that this group have turned their backs on the Bible and on the church and the Word of God. Up at Berkeley, California, doing a great deal of the protest marches up there, and I want to say that I'm not in sympathy with them, but there was one placard that was carried that interested me a great deal. The placard had four words on it.

Church, no. Jesus, yes. May I say to you that I personally believe that the church has many, many faults.

I recognize that. And I know that a great many enemies can hide back of that today in criticizing the church. But very candidly, there's no question about it that the lives of a great many in the church are turning people away from the church today.

There was a barrister in England years ago was asked about why he didn't become a Christian. And he made this statement. He said, I too might have become a Christian if I had not met so many who said they were Christians.

How unfortunate that is. And we need to examine our own lives in that connection. How well do you and I represent the cause of Christ today? The world we're told is not reading the Bible.

I'm trying to get them to, by the way, and get them to the scripture, and get them to bypass some of us because we are not a very attractive advertisement. But regardless of that, we cannot escape. There are people who measure Christianity by you and by me.

And they look at us today. May I say it's important in this program to obey the Bible. Obey it.

How tremendous that is. And the scripture has a great deal to say about that. That great Bible reading that we referred to, led by Ezra, recorded by Nehemiah.

And you will find out that the people wept when they heard the word. And they went out and attempted to obey the word of God. How important it is to do that.

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