

The Obedient Lifestyle

**Volume VIII
The Way Of Enoch**

by
Thomas M. Mitchell

The Obedient Lifestyle - The Way of Enoch Volume VIII
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Walk With God Ministries adopted these Chinese characters that are part of a course created by Pastor Archie Parish as a symbol of the message that is at the heart of our vision. Over the years these characters have been used by many believers to introduce the Gospel.

2500 years before the birth of Christ and 2100 years before the first recorded crucifixion, the Chinese language gave us the secret of how to live forever... *the secret to eternal life.*

Cross The first character depicted is a cross.



Man Next is a man placed on a cross... a great man dying.



Two Men Two men are crucified along side of this great man. The full character depicts Jesus dying on the cross with the two thieves crucified alongside Him. One thief rejected Him (Luke 23:39) and the other one believed Him (Luke 23:40-42). This is the character Lai, which means *Come*.



Mouth

言

The second character begins with a man's word coming out of his mouth.

Standing

信

This character represents a man standing by his word. Combined this is the character Xin, which means *Believe*.

Lai Xin

來信

When these two characters are taken together they represent *Come and Believe*. The circle surrounding them represents eternity.

2500 years before the birth of Jesus the Chinese language clearly stated the Gospel message and depicted the only road to eternal life... Jesus. Come to Jesus and Believe that He died for your sins, that you might have eternal life. Here we are some 4,500 years later and His Word is still true:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

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INTRODUCTION

It is not what we do that matters, But what a sovereign God chooses to do through us. God doesn't want our success; He wants us. He doesn't demand our achievements; He demands our obedience.

Charles Colson

Matthew 4:4 But Jesus told him, "No! For the Scriptures tell us that bread won't feed men's souls: obedience to every word of God is what we need."

Every time Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness the response was always immediate and by the Word of God. Here Jesus quoted the Old Testament verse in which the people of Israel were admonished to do the same thing:

*Deut 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but **by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.***

Jesus was being tempted in the midst of suffering and He chose to be obedient to the Word. That, in a nutshell, is the secret ingredient of a successful Walk With God. Taking all that we have learned in the previous seven books in this series and applying it in

a submitted lifestyle. Putting our hands of faith to the plow of obedience just like Jesus. As James so eloquently put the secret to giving life to our Walk:

Jas 1:22 be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS OBEDIENCE?

WHAT IS OBEDIENCE?

Our Walk With God is comprised of many elements. Some are obvious and some more subtle, but they all are integral parts of the whole. Now, at the end of the day, we run straight into the glue that holds all the other parts together; obedience. To understand obedience we first need to examine what it's made of.

Obedience Is Agreement With The Spirit

*Gal 5:16-17 This I say then, **Walk** in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are **contrary** the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

The word obedience can be encapsulated in two of the words in these verses. First we have the word *walk* that is translated from the word *peripateo*, which means to live with, be occupied with, or to follow as a companion. Second we have the word *contrary* that

comes from *antikeimai*, which means to lie opposite or an adversary. In other words, living with the Spirit as a companion is the direct opposite and an adversary of our old soulish nature that doesn't like obedience to the Spirit of God. A relationship like that can't continue unless one of the participants changes; guess who? We can't Walk With God and carry on an alternate lifestyle, they won't mix. When our *flesh lusteth against the Spirit* we can only prevail against it by the grace of God through the power of His Spirit, and that only by being obedient.

Rom 7:15-19 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

I have always identified with these verses, but was also confused by it. It left me with the feeling that I would always be doing what I didn't want to do and that I couldn't do anything about. After all, if this was Paul talking, what chance did I have? The answer is just three verses away:

*Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after **the inward man**.*

I have the new creation within me, the new man—*the inward man*. It's the inner man that chooses to be obedient to the Spirit and the Word because they are both centered in Jesus.

Obedience Is Centered On Christ

John 16:13-14 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

If we're being obedient to the Spirit in our walk, He will lead us into all truth; truth in the things of God. If the spirit in you is talking and teaching about anything other than Jesus you need a serious spirit checkup. The Holy Spirit is always consistent in calling us to be obedient to Christ. An example of would be:

*1 Thess 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for **ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.***

Here the Spirit is the One who teaches us to love one another, the very words of Jesus:

Mark 12:31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

In this example the choice to be obedient to the voice of the Spirit is to love one another, which is keeping the commandment that Jesus gave us. Now Paul would be correct in saying that my old nature doesn't want to do that at all and he would be absolutely correct. However, the choice is mine, and I have my *inward man* to lean on in order to choose the path of obedience. That's the path that is always illuminated by the Word of God.

Obedience Is Founded On The Word

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Word is described as “quick” (*zao; to live, life*) because life is what brings about change. It’s the Word of God that looks into the deepest part of our heart and reveals our attitude toward the things of God. Our lifestyle is directly reflected in that light, whether it’s obedient or not. Obedience is founded upon the Word and it’s the Word that encourages us to live an obedient and holy life and to attain a believing faith. This thought goes all the way back to the early history of the Israel:

Deut 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

We are told in *Heb 4:12* that the Word is two edged, which literally translated means a “two mouthed sword.” It devours everything it encounters because it has tremendous penetrating power (*Eccl 12:11*). Therefore, if the Word is the basis for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, it will do the job of piercing us and dividing our spirit from our old soulish nature. Another way to look at it is the difference between joints (bone) and marrow (soft tissue within the bone). The marrow is deep within and represents the inner depths of our thoughts and motives. The Word is the only

thing that can pierce deeply enough to bring change to the heart, and when that occurs there's no hiding from any revealed disobedience. Thank God that He has given us *1 John 1:9* in order to deal with sin and keep us well grounded in an obedient walk.

Obedience Is Developed In Prayer

Rom 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

We've all experienced those times when it's very clear what we're to pray for and when we're obedient it all falls in place. The opposite seems to come at those times when we're overwhelmed with worldly pressures and spiritual attacks by the enemy. Isn't it always the case that obedience is much easier when everything seems to be going right? When the world seems to be sitting on my shoulders the temptation to become disobedient is very strong. That's when we really need to lean on the Holy Spirit to lead us into communion with the Lord.

He is the one who has been tempted in every way and fully understands what we're dealing with. He knows how easy it would be to turn to the flesh for the answer or reason, which generally results in an action that is disobedient to the Word of God. This is where the Holy Spirit is a great facilitator of our obedient lifestyle.

If we submit to the prayers of the Spirit we can rest assured that His response in any situation will always be perfect. Even in those times when we simply don't know what to do or say He will always show us the obedient path, and through prayer He will lead us along it. His mind is the mind of the Father and of the Son, and

He is always focused on the straight path. Our part is submission, and the key to staying submitted is a strong prayer life and fellowship with our fellow members of the bride of Christ.

Obedience Is Surrounded In Fellowship

Acts 2:42-44 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

We need to put this into action in our own lives. Look at what they were doing in verse 42 on the day of Pentecost. *And they* (those who heard the Gospel) continued being constantly diligent in the teachings of the apostles. Note that they continued in *fellowship*, which is translated from the Greek word *koinonia* that means to be in partnership with or have social intercourse with. In other words, this was not a casual relationship, it was a strong bond in the Holy Spirit; spiritual unity. When the bride gets a firm grip on the power of agreement (unity) in fellowship with one another we are going to see many signs and wonders, one of which will be an obedient bride. There is something about being around obedient brothers and sisters that fosters one of two reactions: run to the Lord or run away.

Look at verse 44 and note that in being obedient to the commandment to love one another they *had all things common*. That meant that no one went without and all the needs of the body were met. The first century church practiced this, but as the faith spread the practice slipped away until today we really do have a separation in most churches of the haves and have-nots. Now this

ought not to be, but until the bride becomes obedient to the Word it will continue. But, let me suggest that it goes beyond just material things to the littlest of things such as a kind word.

How many times have we all been so busy that we never heard the voice of the Spirit asking us to take time for someone, let alone being obedient to the request? I might suggest, and I start with myself, that as the bride of Christ we all need to become encouragers. Being obedient in the small things is just as important as submitting to the larger things. If we don't start there we'll never be successful in becoming completely obedient to the Word of the Lord.

Throughout the Bible we see God changing peoples' lives in direct proportion to the obedience they reflect in their present circumstances. Take a moment and think about the Old Testament Saints, Daniel, David, and Elijah to mention a few. Each one of them progressed through a lifetime of learning obedience, and if you look closely that obedience more often than not involved someone else. Yes, obedience is surrounded with fellowship and it also presents a strong witness.

It's Purposed To Witness

*Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and **ye shall be witnesses unto me** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

When the Holy Spirit comes we get our power and we also get our marching orders; *ye shall be witnesses*. The word "witnesses" is *martus* in the Greek, from which we get our word martyr. It means giving up our life for His, or being obedient to His Word to

our own death. In parts of the world that is literally what is happening to some of our brothers and sisters. Here in the West it's something else, we face death in a different way every day, the death of self.

Part of the obedient lifestyle is to deny our flesh and be obedient to the Spirit. This has been the struggle since the very first time it was tested in the Garden of Eden. We have been struggling with our old nature ever since and, speaking for myself, I've lost the battle more times than not. But if we're to become a believable witness, or one who rings of truth, we're going to have to become obedient to all the commandments contained in the Word. Fortunately, Jesus made it very simple for us, but unfortunately it's also very difficult for us to do. As we saw previously, He boiled it all down to two elements: love God and love your neighbor as yourself. If we're looking for place to start becoming obedient it should be right there.

Jesus told us that *all the law and the prophets (Matt 22:40)* hang on these two commandments; that encompasses the entire Old Testament. If the bride took this to heart and became obedient, just imagine what a witness she would present to the world. If we just started loving our own brothers and sisters that alone would be an incredible witness because the love we're talking about here is *agape* (the love of God or the God kind of love); *unconditional love*.

Our marching orders are not only for our own good, they are expected to be carried out. We'll discover that there are many benefits contained within obedience.

The Benefits Of Obedience

When we're obedient, God promises to keep us from harm (*Ex 15:26*). But within that promise is the caveat that only if we submit to His instructions on how we're to live will our life be a success in His eyes. What He told Joshua about living in the Promised Land (*Josh 1:1-18*) still holds for Jesus' bride today if we will enter into His rest.

- *A land I do give them*
- *I will be with thee*
- *I will not fail thee nor forsake thee*
- *Be strong and of good courage*
- *Be not afraid neither be thou dismayed*
- *Thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest*

We may not be a success in the eyes of the world, but in God's plan for us that doesn't matter.

Another benefit of walking in obedience is that we're going to have peace in our life. There is nothing more unsettling than being out of fellowship with the Lord because that's all it takes for the enemy to completely run wild in our life. We have successfully set ourselves up to fall for his every accusation and condemnation because we know that we're not in a right relationship with Jesus.

We may not always find that obedience will bring peace with those around us, but it will with God. In the end, isn't that all that matters? Now, before we move into learning how to live the obedient lifestyle, let's take a brief look at how it's challenged in our everyday lives.

The Challenges of Obedience

Satan uses every trick in his deceitful little book to try and pull us away from the Lord. The Word tells us that *our adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8)*. But don't forget that he is only walking about "as" a roaring lion. He is only able to devour those who fall into his way by getting out of fellowship with the Lord. I'm reminded of Christian in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. As he was walking down the narrow path he came upon some vicious lions but they were chained and couldn't reach him as long as he stayed on the narrow path... truly the wide path does lead to destruction.

When our obedience is challenged we first need to determine who is challenging it. Sometimes we suffer because we're obedient, not just because we're disobedient. Many times the world isn't in favor of our obedience to the Lord and even sometimes it's our fellow believers. It happened to Moses and Aaron when they followed God's commands concerning Pharaoh. Pharaoh doubled their work quota while at the same time reducing their raw materials (*Ex 5:4-9*). The response from the Hebrews was the same as you would expect from the world. The obedient life isn't always easy, even when you're being obedient.

The enemy, however, is more often than not at the heart of your struggles with obedience. He hates the Word and anyone being obedient to it is on his hit list. If we're going to be able to discern the difference we need to stay in constant communion with the Lord. The only relief to the pressure of the enemy is in the power of the Spirit. He is a liar and will always be found out by his lies, and the key to discovery is our obedience.

The Lord is deeply interested in our spiritual maturity and everything that impacts it, so in His plan for our life He has woven

the challenge of obedience. Why? Because it's the very act of obedience that draws us closer to Him, leading us into a deeper faith while placing a holy strain on the world's influence within us.

Matt 5:17-20 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

There are three key things that Jesus talked about in reference to obedience in these verses pointed out by Charles Draper:

1. *Obedience challenges us to go beyond mere understanding*—Some of those in the crowd were experts at telling others what to do, but they missed the central point of God's laws themselves. Jesus made it clear, however, that obeying God's law is more important than explaining it. It's much easier to study God's laws and tell others to obey them than to put them into practice. How are you doing at obeying God yourself?
2. *Obedience challenges us to go beyond mere outward conformity*—The Pharisees were exacting and scrupulous in their attempts to follow their laws. So how could Jesus reasonably call us to a greater righteousness than theirs? The Pharisees' weakness was that they were content to

obey the laws outwardly without allowing God to change their hearts (or attitudes). Jesus was saying that the quality of our goodness should be greater than that of the Pharisees. They looked pious, but they were far from the kingdom of God. God judges our hearts as well as our deeds, for it's in the heart that our real allegiance lies. Be just as concerned about your attitudes that people don't see as about your actions that are seen.

3. *Obedience challenges us to act out of love for God*—Jesus was saying that his listeners needed a different kind of righteousness—love and obedience—not just a more intense version of the Pharisees' righteousness (legal compliance). Our righteousness must (1) come from what God does in us, not what we can do by ourselves, (2) be God-centered, not self-centered, (3) be based on reverence for God, not approval from people, and (4) go beyond keeping the law to living by the principles behind the law.

The last of these three really strikes home for me. I know that God is really pleased with me when my obedience comes out of personal sacrifice. When I'm obedient in the times when it flies in the face of my selfishness, and I make that personal decision to die to myself and choose to be obedient to the Lord just because I love Him and want to please Him, I know that it coincides with His best for me. Therein lays the secret to the obedient lifestyle. If my obedience is truly out of love for Him then I have moved from obedient ritual (fear-based) to a true relationship (love-based). That's the way God wants us to live, but how do we accomplish that?

CHAPTER 2

HOW DO WE LIVE THE OBEDIENT LIFE?

DON'T STAY SEPARATED

*1 John 1:9-10 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

Paul hit the nail right on the head here. We need to immediately ask for forgiveness when we sin and not deny and hide from it. He makes a very bold statement that most Christians who hang their lifestyle on this don't consider. Look at verse 10. If we deny sin by looking the other way or thinking it of little or no consequence we're making Jesus a liar and denying His crucifixion. What do I mean? Well, haven't we all at one time or another been knowingly disobedient while holding *1John 1:9* in the back of our mind as our "get out of jail card?" Now let's back up and put some context to these two verses.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Now I have attacked this subject backwards for a purpose. You should be in agreement with me at this point that we all are all sinners or Jesus is a liar. So let's go back to what Paul addressed prior to this statement:

*1 John 1:5-7 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and **walk** in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

Now before I comment let's look at the same verses in the living translation:

1 John 1:5 This is the message God has given us to pass on to you: that God is Light and in him is no darkness at all. 6 So if we say we are his friends but go on living in spiritual darkness and sin, we are lying. 7 But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ does, then we have wonderful fellowship and joy with each other, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin.

In light of these scriptures how can we possibly walk in the light on Sunday and in the darkness of the world Monday through Saturday? The Word tells us that we're lying if we're walking this path and calling Jesus our friend, saying that we're in fellowship

with Him. But many of the bride are doing this week in and week out with the little compromises with unsaved friends, at work, or the little hidden sins they just lock up and keep to themselves. Let's get real with God—*He knows it already*.

The sad part is that many believers casually dismiss the *if* in verse 7. We must be living (residing all the time, abiding) in the light or the negative implication of this verse is in effect; we are “not” cleansed from every sin by His blood.

When we're obedient to walk in the light there are two direct results; the need for fellowship and cleansing. The fellowship referred to here is with our brothers and sisters and the cleansing comes from the blood of Jesus through our obedience to the Word. Put another way, when we walk in the light our sins are brought out and we need His cleansing in order to remain in fellowship with one another. We can't do that without being obedient and confessing our sins

Let me close this section by noting one very important distinction about the word *walk*. This is the same word (*peripateo*) we discussed earlier, which means to live with, to be occupied with, or to follow as a companion. We are in the world every day just like Jesus was, but He didn't make it His companion. The demand for obedience, resulting in purity and holiness, won't be satisfied if we don't sever the world's influences in our life. We have no hope of doing this ourselves, but thank God He sent us someone to *helpeth our infirmities* (*Rom 8:26*). When confronted with our sin, let's be quick to repent and not allow the enemy to separate us from the Lord. If we don't, we leave ourselves open to other gods that will creep into our lives.

DON'T HANG AROUND THE WORLD'S IDOLS

1 Cor 10:13-14 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

We've all heard it said that anything we place above God is an idol. We've also read verse 13, which clearly shows that God has made provision for us to escape temptation, but we need to read on. Paul finished with *wherefore*—because of what he had just said—*flee from idolatry* (image worship). It's our responsibility to flee from it (*1 Cor 10:1422*), not stay in it, and ask God to deliver us from it. Look at the action in verse 13b; *that ye are able* is both present and future tense, it's something we have to do. I find that standing there in sin and waiting on God is a mighty lonely job description. It not only makes for a lonely Maytag repairman but a miserable one to boot (I date myself with that comment). What God has given us isn't some antidote to escape temptation, it's a present and certain power to endure in the midst of temptation. He knows where we are and what we need because He's been there.

Heb 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

Now go back up to verse 14 where we have the key word; *wherefore*. The literal translation of this is *on which very account* or *because He has provided the way*. In either case the meaning is clear, it's our responsibility to flee. Paul took this deeper in *Rom 1:22-25* and *Eph 2:3* where he told us that idolatry is a sin of the mind against God, and we become slaves to the idols that these

ideas present to our minds. An idols can become the enemy's stronghold in us that is designed to disrupt and destroy our relationship with our bridegroom.

Someone once said: *show me who you run with and I'll tell you who you are*. There's a lot of truth in that. If we set things of this world up as our idols we're guaranteed to become like them and reflect their values. An obedient lifestyle will keep us out of this pitfall, but we can only develop that lifestyle through the power and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

TAKE INSTRUCTION

The best ticket to staying out of trouble in your journey through this world is to stay in the Word and receive instruction from the Holy Spirit. If you're spending time with Him you aren't out there in the way and influence of evil men. The Word is full of instruction in how to deal with the world's junk you see lying around. That trash won't fly off the pile and stick to you, you have to get down and roll around in it. If it's in your life you put it there, and most likely you did it in direct disobedience to the Word.

We have a wonderful instructor in the Holy Spirit and He is always in the classroom, ready to instruct in the ways of righteousness. But if we don't heed His instruction we'll just keep on dealing with and in all that trash.

*Pro 4:13-15 **Take fast hold of instruction**; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. 14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.*

This follows right along with the thoughts concerning idols. Entering into the world of the wicked and the ways of evil men is

just another way of referring to the world around us. We just finished taking some instruction about not walking with the world and here we see the required action (the obedient action); take what we have learned and follow it. We aren't to be like the little kid who gets a new toy and in a very short time he casts it aside in search of something new. That's why we're told to meditate on the Word day and night. That is the only way to get it down into our spirit and make it available when needed. It is past instruction in the Word that will be your defense against tomorrows attack by the enemy. Above all things, Satan desires to steal the Word from us as he knows the power of the Word against his lies.

Therefore, the lesson here is to take hold of and embrace how the Word tells us to live a Godly life. That means being responsible for the instruction we receive. If God has instructed us in some way and it requires making an appropriate change in our lifestyle, our part is to effect that instruction and the best way to do that is to yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit. All He needs to make those changes for us is our permission, and our being obedient to what He tells us. Sounds a lot like submission to me.

BE SUBMITTED TO JESUS

*Jas 4:7 **Submit yourselves** therefore to God. **Resist the devil,** and he will flee from you.*

I love this verse because it makes it all so easy. On the other hand, it takes away all the excuses doesn't it? The first step in being obedient to someone or something is to submit yourself to their or its control or influence over you. You know the devil tries every trick in the book to get us to do that day in and day out. But he is nothing more than a liar, albeit a very good one (*the father of lies; Jas 8:44*). He knows that his lies work and so he doesn't have

to come up with some deep and involved plot to get you, he just tells you what your old nature wants to hear.

From personal experience I know that's always a convenient way to try and get around being obedient to God, it's just a way to indulge or cover up sin in your life. In reality, he is trying to get you to submit to him by taking his easy way out. But you know as well as I do that he never gives you what he promises. Why don't we ever learn? Perhaps it's because the opposite of submission is resistance, and that requires action on our part that is in direct opposition to what the devil is offering. Thank God that He knew ahead of time that we were going to be in this spot. James told us that there are two actions required before the devil will flee. The first is *submitting* and that comes before the second, *resisting*.

A large part of the bride today is resisting with all their strength, but they aren't getting very far because they haven't submitted. And that brings up an interesting definition: failure to submit is rebellion (sin). I think it's a foregone conclusion that God isn't the only one who knows whether or not we're in rebellion. Who do you think got us there in the first place? He isn't going to flee from our puny power and personal authority. If we're submitted to the enemy do we really believe he will flee from himself? You know, we really don't fool anybody but ourselves. God and the devil know exactly what's going on, so why don't we just submit to the Lord and let the Holy Spirit show us the way out. Submit, resist, and take hold of the power to overcome that was bought and paid for by our bridegroom.

Now before we move on, let me add one final thought on this verse that often gets over looked. Submission involves a very powerful element; pride. John Calvin pointed this out when he said: *submission is more than obedience, it involves humility*. The world (natural man) is full of pride and envy, but the child of God

needs to set that all aside in submitting to the Master. When we do that the enemy doesn't stand a chance because the very tools he uses (pride/envy) will no longer have any effect on us. In the power of our bridegroom, Satan becomes easy to resist because if there is one thing he can't stand against it's the name and the blood of Jesus.

BY THE SPIRIT

There is one important lesson that I've painfully learned in my lifetime, and that's that every time I make a promise to change some facet of my life I have just set myself up to fail. I am simply unable to make those changes in my own power, and the resulting failure makes the next time just that much more difficult. In fact, it gives the enemy fuel for his fire of doubt: *Oh, you can't do that, remember the last time you failed the very next day.* But God knew that was the case and He has a plan in place for me.

*Zech 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, **Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.***

This is the secret to *1 Cor 10:13-14*. Just as the Lord provided a way for us to escape temptation by His Spirit, He also provided a way for us to remain obedient to His Word. It takes the Spirit of God to accomplish the tasks that He places in front of us. We are fully incapable of accomplishing them in our own power. I absolutely do not have the power to be obedient to the Word of God without the Spirit. I know that my old soulish desires are too strong, and left to my own devices I would spend my entire life in disobedience. Praise God that He loves me too much to leave me in the predicament in which I find myself. Yes, God asks us to lead

an obedient life, but He doesn't ask us without giving us all we need to get the job done.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT IS PURITY?

THE STANDARDS OF PURITY

Purity comes from the Greek word *hagneia*, which means cleanness. Unger's Bible Dictionary refers to it as: freedom from foreign mixture, but more particularly the temper directly opposite to criminal sensualities, or the ascendancy of irregular passions. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for pure is *tahowr*, which carries the meaning of clean, purged, clear, or polished. In the latter case the intent is that it is a chosen state. In other words, we must make a conscious decision to be pure. God sees us as pure through the blood of Jesus (as white as snow; Isa 12:18), but it's our daily choice, minute by minute, to walk in that purity. The problem, however, is that we tend to look on the outside and determine (judge) purity by standards that aren't the same as God's.

Prov 16:2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

It has taken me a long time to really understand that purity really does start on the inside. I've spent years trying to change things in my life in order to become more pure in God's eyes. But like everything else in life, when you're in your own authority you are only backed by your own weakness. The Lord has finally succeeded in teaching me that purity can only be developed through submission and obedience. Verse 2 above really hits to the heart of the matter; *but the LORD weigheth the spirits*. Notice that the "s" in spirits is small, and that means our own spirit. Take a case in point from Jesus:

Mt 5:27-28 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

The unfaithfulness spoken of in these verses directly relates to our position as the bride of Christ. Jesus won't share his bride with anyone, yet a part of the bride continues to commit spiritual adultery with the world every day. The bride He is coming for "will" be pure and holy, without spot or wrinkle. Adultery will not be found in her as she will not be living in sin with the world. His bride will place nothing above Him. This truly is a heart issue and not a body issue, even though the heart directly affects the body. We need to be ever mindful of all three parts of our existence; spirit, soul, and body. When we do, there are great promises ahead for each of us.

*2 Cor 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness **in the fear of God.***

To understand these promises we need to go back to *2 Cor 6*. Reviewing it in detail is for another time, but I would like to look at one promise in particular that is in keeping with this section:

*2 Cor 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and **be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; **and I will receive you**,*

Jesus promises to receive us if we will come away from the world and be separate. Yes, that refers to salvation but there is more. He wants us to “keep separate” once we get there. Look back at verse 1. Since we have that promise we need to develop holiness in our lives and live in cleanliness, being both pure and separate. How important was that to Paul? Look at the last four words of 7:1; *in the fear of God*. They mean more than we think.

Often we think of the *fear of the lord* as reverence, but there is an added meaning. The word fear used here is *phobos*, and it is translated as being exceedingly afraid, in terror, or fright. It’s where we get our word phobia. God feels so strongly about purity and its importance for us that He expresses it in the word *perfecting*, which is in the future tense and means an ongoing action. The bride can’t just play at holiness and purity because it’s far too serious to the bridegroom. It’s so serious in fact that we shouldn’t forget to whom Paul was writing; the believers at Corinth. Let’s take this a little deeper and look at a couple more examples of standards for Purity; first from Paul and then from Peter.

1 Thess 4:2-8 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus 3 For this is the will of God, even your

sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

Here we see Paul urging the church to clean up its act. He told them that they needed to know how to possess their vessel (body) in sanctification (purity) and honor (dignity). After telling them what they should do, he contrasted that with what they shouldn't do; *not in the lust of concupiscence* (passion for something hidden).

We are likewise not to submit to lustful temptations of the world, which result in sin against our brothers and sisters. We are to possess ourselves in holiness, which will express itself in love (agape). This was certainly among the commandments that Paul referred to in verse 4:2. We must walk in love because it's the foundational commandment Jesus gave us. His blood washed our vessel clean, and our walk in love and purity by the Holy Spirit will keep it that way. Peter also addressed this subject and he clearly differentiated between the physical and the spiritual.

*1 Pet 3:3-4 Whose adorning **let it not be that outward adorning** of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 **But let it be the hidden man of the heart**, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a*

meeK and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Purity isn't going to be evidenced by what we do to the outside, rather it will be seen as a radiation of what we have on the inside. One of the greatest signs of purity is your peaceful countenance. I think that is what Peter meant when he said *an ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*. Peace is a powerful witness, and it will pave more roads to testimony than all the tracts in the world put together. The Spirit courts, He convicts and, if we let Him, He will testify with our purity.

THE PRINCIPLES OF PURITY

*2 Tim 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but **follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace**, with them that call on the Lord **out of a pure heart**.*

Paul set before us in his letter to young Timothy four strong principles of purity:

1. **Righteousness** (*dikaisoune*) refers to our character and reflects the justification we've received from God by the blood of Jesus. Paul told Timothy that he was to pursue all that is good and virtuous and be just and equitable in all his dealings with others.
2. **Faith** (*pistis*) is the very conviction we have in the truthfulness of God's Word and our belief in Him. Timothy, like us, was charged with being faithful in all that he did and in all his relationships.

3. **Charity** (*agape*), as we've discussed, is the kind of love that God has for us, which He has placed within us in the form of His Holy Spirit. It's our responsibility to let that sacrificial love flow out from us in all that we do.

4. **Peace** (*eirene*) is the quietness of our spirit that comes with our faith in the Prince of Peace. If we're to walk in purity then certainly a peaceful relationship with others is important. There is nothing more disruptive to the Gospel than when we walk out of harmony with God and our brothers and sisters.

Note that we're to *follow* these principles, and as the bride we're to do it together *out of a pure heart*. He wants us running with the right people because then we'll be able to edify or build one another up in our Holy Faith. The wrong bunch will bring us down and seed strife and discontent, and that's why Paul told us to leave them behind.

The exciting of our graces will be the extinguishing of our corruptions; the more we follow that which is good the faster and the further we shall flee from that which is evil. Righteousness, and faith, and love, will be excellent antidotes against youthful lusts. Holy love will cure impure lust. Follow peace with those that call on the Lord. The keeping up of the communion of saints will take us off from all fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness.

Matthew Henry

THE IMPORTANCE OF PURITY

1 Cor 6:13-20 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for

*fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. 14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. 15 **Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. 16 What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? **know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*****

Purity affects the whole body, but most importantly it affects the spirit. We have become the Temple of the Holy Spirit and yet we can so casually move through our daily lives that it's a wonder He stays in us. This passage of scripture continues along the same path we've been traveling so far and deals with how we relate to and respond to the world and how that impacts our spirit. Our old soulish nature (lusts of the flesh) is a constant threat to the new nature we have been given; our regenerated spirit.

Paul used an interesting example to open these verses; *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.* In other words, food is for the body and body is for food as they are necessary for each other; referring to the animal appetite. But it follows that in the end that God will destroy both, so it's what affects the spirit that counts. Paul told us that while God gave us a body with an appetite for food, He did not give us an appetite for uncleanness. He has given us an appetite for Jesus, and when we lustfully substitute for that by making our bodies

subject to an intimate relationship with someone or something other than Him we will suffer. To sin in this arena is to dishonor our spiritual relationship with Jesus, but if we do we can take heart, thank God for the Holy Spirit.

Every moment of every day the Holy Spirit is speaking to our spirit with mid-course corrections, but if we're so busy and noisy in our daily lives that we can't hear Him, we're headed straight for the rocks. Let me give you another aviation example. If you're off your course just one degree it isn't very much over the first mile you travel or even the first ten miles. But after you've gone sixty miles you will miss your target by 1 mile. The danger is that if we continue in sin without immediate repentance we have no idea where that error will ultimately lead us, but we can rest assured it will get us farther and farther off course (away from the Lord) as we continue on uncorrected. It follows then that when we do repent we're going to have to pay the price to regain that lost ground and get ourselves back on course; the farther off course the higher the price.

The good news, however, is that God restores us immediately. It's just that sometimes we really have a mess to clean up before we once again begin to move forward; that's the cost. I think we've all been to that rodeo before so let's turn down the volume on the world and turn up the volume of the Spirit. We can learn to hear His voice in the midst of all the noise around us. I do it all the time in the airplane. There are many conversations going on between other planes and air traffic control and I just tune them, but when my number is called it's just like somebody tapped me on the shoulder. The same way I learned to do that in the natural I am learning to do in the spirit... practice, practice, practice.

Now, before we move on to the promises of purity, let's take one last look at what John told us to stay away from in our quest of purity:

1 John 2:15-16 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

When all is said and done, purity is a critical ingredient in our obedient lifestyle, especially when viewed in light of the world and its system.

THE PROMISES OF PURITY

Ps 24:3-5 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Mt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Here we have a promise from the Old Covenant and one from the New Covenant. The meaning is the same in both and it hasn't changed down through the centuries. Who will see God? Those who are pure in heart. It all boils down to an issue of the moral requirements set down by God and our character.

What a promise. With a clean heart we are going to stand in God's Holy Place. I can't even comprehend that. In *Ps 24:3* the

reference is to who will serve or minister in the Holy Temple. The answer is the one who:

1. *Has clean hands* – a clean conscience.
2. *A pure heart* – not just an external appearance.
3. *Hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity* – devoted to the world and set his mind on false things.
4. *Nor sworn deceitfully* – sincere and loves the truth.

They are the ones who will have His blessing (favor/friendship) and righteousness (divine approval), the ones who will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Matthew contrasted the pure heart with the heart of the Pharisees, which was full of corruption. They believed if they were clean on the outside they would see God. Jesus set the record straight in this statement that it's the inside or the spirit rather than the outside the counts. Now to fully grasp the importance of this we need to understand the Hebrew thought behind His message. To the Jew to "see" something was to possess it. Take a look at what Jesus said:

*John 3:3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, **he cannot see the kingdom of God.***

When we see it we have it, or put another way, when we have a pure heart (salvation) we shall then see God. In Israel, those who were able to stand in the King's presence were his favorites, his friends. So Jesus' promise is that we will be His favorites, His

friends. That alone is all the reason we need to desire and cling to a pure life. But some will try and stand in His presence with only an excuse for an impure heart.

INVALID EXCUSES FOR NOT BEING PURE

Here are some common excuses we hear. Let's see what God has to say about them:

Everybody does it...

Pro 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

I know what's right for me...

Eccl 11:9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

I'm not hurting anyone...

Lev 5:17 And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.

Nobody will find out...

Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Just this one time...

Gal 6:7-8 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

I didn't do it, I just thought it...

Mt 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

So then, if these excuses aren't valid, just how do we live in purity as part of our obedient lifestyle? The answers are all right there in the Word of God.

Eph 4:22-24 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Ps 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Pro 4:14-15 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

Pro 4:20-27 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. 21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them

in the midst of thine heart. 22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. 23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. 24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. 25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. 26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. 27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Rom 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

1 Pet 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

The consistent thread through each of these passages is that we must *lean on the Spirit*. Without Him it will be a hopeless chase down the yellow brick road. Our own strength and understanding (*Zech 4:6*) will utterly fail us in becoming what God has set out individually for each one of us. The end result He has in store for us is so good we can't afford not to pay the price. It's a heavy price to pay but not as dear as the one Jesus paid for us so that we can become all He created us to be.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT IS INTEGRITY

In the Old Testament the word integrity (*tummah*) carries a number of meanings: whole, full, perfect, upright, honest, singleness of purpose, soundness, simplicity, and sincerity of the heart and intent. It's interesting that a derivative of the word (*tummim*) was written on the High Priest's Breastplate (*Ex 28:30*) as it was one of the sacred lots Israel used in determining the will of God (Urim and Thummim); it infers innocence or integrity.

In the New Testament we don't find the word integrity but in one place we find the word "honesty" (*1 Tim 2:2*), wherein Paul requested prayer for all men that they should *lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*. In another place we find the related word "sincere" (*Phil 1:10*), with the implied meaning of being tested to see if it's genuine by the sunlight or by the sun's rays; holding it up to the light. Perhaps we can infer that the light of the Son tests our sincerity.

When taken collectively, we get a clear picture of just what integrity stands for. Perhaps our brother in the Lord, Daniel Webster, had the Hebrew and Greek in mind when he published his definition: *An unimpaired condition; soundness; adherence to*

a code of moral values; the quality or state of being complete or undivided; synonyms: honesty/unity.

For me, it all comes down to something my father told me a long time ago: *Nobody can take your honesty (integrity) away from you; you have to give it away.* Hold that thought and consider what can't be taken away from us: uprightness, singleness of purpose, simplicity, sincerity, honesty, and our state of being undivided or in unity... but we can give them away. So let's see how integrity fits into our obedient lifestyle.

IT'S FOUNDATIONAL TO A PURE HEART

Lev 19:11 Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

These two scriptures speak directly to the issue. First we're told not to steal or lie, and then we're told that the heart is a liar by nature. What? Yes, that's a true statement, but now we have the saving blood of Jesus and the desires of *Lev 19:11* are overcome by a rebirth of that very same heart. In anticipation of this look at what Ezekiel prophesied to the house of Israel:

Ezek 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

This is why David cried out: *create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me (Ps 51:10).* It should be our cry as well, because the heart is really the center of our new integrity

in the Lord. We are told that the *old things are passed away... all things are become new (2 Cor 5:17)*. So if we have given away our integrity we can thank God that He has given us another chance in Jesus. It's His integrity within us that manifests itself in the adjectives we discussed in opening this chapter. Through His Spirit within us we are able to maintain our integrity in a world that pulls and presses us to compromise. Our integrity reflects our heart, and don't think for one moment that the world isn't aware of it, no matter how we may try to deceive ourselves or others.

DECEPTION (OUR OLD NATURE)

We Deceive Ourselves

Jas 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

We Deceive Others

Rom 16:17-18 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

The biggest problem with deception is that it not only separates us from God, it causes us to become unstable and can separate us from our fellow believers. It's trying to balance between who we are and who we're trying to be.

Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Now where do you think all this comes from? Just like most of our struggles in life it comes directly from master deceiver himself.

2 Cor 11:3-4 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another Gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was subtler than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Satan has been deceiving man ever since *Genesis*, and he will continue right up to *Rev 20:10*. We need to remember that because deception is his only weapon, it's what he uses to try and bring about the loss of our integrity (truth), if we'll let him. He is the master of deception—the father of lies—but we serve The Master and are no longer subject to his lies and temptations that can compromise our integrity; we have a new spirit.

In a way that's what this book is all about, *the simplicity that is in Christ*. The devil uses religion to blind and deceive us into thinking about the deep, deep things of God, and we miss the simple message of the Gospel that He wants us to spread: *Jesus and him crucified*. Paul has admonished us to beware and not

receive anyone who is preaching anything else, lest we be deceived. Our Walk With God is one that is based upon a simple and sincere relationship with Jesus that is reflected in our integrity.

HOW DO WE KNOW IF WE'VE LOST OUR INTEGRITY?

Ps 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Here we have the answer in both Old and the New Covenants. David asked God to show him and Paul said, God show me by your Word. Both asked God to lead them into truth, and there hasn't been an improvement on that method to date. God will always be faithful to use His Word to cut to the heart of any matter we bring before Him in genuine sincerity.

Yes, the Word and the Spirit will convict us concerning sin and the loss of integrity, but more importantly God is interested in what we do about it. The bad news is that when our integrity has been compromised in some way it's going to hurt when we finally face the facts. But the good news is, that the same Lord who brought us salvation can also restore our integrity (*1 John 1:9*).

In this chapter we have focused on integrity in a personal way. We need to be aware, however, that it affects those unbelievers who are observing us each and every day. If we preach one thing and live another we're sending a mixed message to them and in

their lost state it's only going to be fuel for the enemy... *see, they are all just a bunch of hypocrites!*

THE HYPOCRISY OF RELIGION

Mk 7:6-8 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

Rom 2:23-24 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

Traditional “religion” has turned off more unbelievers than anything else. Sadly, many in the body of Christ are living a life that is far from holy and pure, and it’s glaringly evident to the world at large. Religion, like the Pharisees, is only concerned with the outside or the superficial because that is what men see. But the world sees it and judges it for what it is, a lie. Integrity is real and, whether we have it or not, the evidence is there for all to see, sooner or later.

Christ’s answer to legalism is that external obedience to the moral law must be coupled with a corresponding inner attitude of love and honesty. Christ’s teaching was not intended to abrogate obedience to the moral law, but to add to its intended spirit.

Erwin Lutzer

When we bring ourselves to the place where we're obedient to the Father, the world will be drawn to Him like a magnet. When our vessels become transparent and the true nature and image of Jesus (His righteousness in us) begins to manifest, we will truly be the light the world is looking for. We haven't been bought and paid for to stumble around in darkness with a basket over our candle. As Jesus' candle we have the potential to light every dark corner into which the Spirit leads us. And because of that potential we can't continue to chase the world and play at church, embracing the world's values and showing up in church on Sunday to ask for forgiveness. Our integrity needs to be found in the brightness of our candle, it needs to reflect the Son's rays.

These are truly the last of the last times, and things in the Spirit are accelerating ever more rapidly. We can't just hang on for the ride anymore because the train is headed where only those who are firmly established will be able to go. It's headed to a place where purity and integrity are required.

SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS ON OBEDIENCE

In this book we've taken but a brief look at obedience and the blessings of leading an obedient lifestyle. In the process we've also looked at some of the results of leading a disobedient one. In closing I want to look at someone in the Bible who started out being obedient and wound up being disobedient; King Saul. I would invite you to take a few quiet moments and read *1 Sam 15:10-30* and get the picture of disobedience it paints firmly implanted in your mind. Saul's failings were many but we're only going to focus on four.

Firstly, Saul disobeyed God and kept the animals he was supposed to destroy. Secondly, he lied and said that what he did with his own hands and in his own authority was for a sacrifice to God. Thirdly, he blamed the people for his own personal greed and thereby placed himself in further rebellion against God. And fourthly, he tried to hide his sin from the people and the elders by getting Samuel to privately agree with him regarding his sin.

The point I want to make is that Saul let Satan use pride and selfish interests to cloud and deceive him. His disobedience went uncorrected and it got so bad that God had to take his kingdom from him. But even then he was more interested in how he looked to the elders and the people and he didn't repent with Godly sorrow, he was only sorry that he got caught. His integrity was completely compromised. We have seen a lot of this in the bride of Christ, and unless we set aside this lifestyle we're headed for the same result as Saul.

I began this book with a quote from Charles Colson, and I think it's appropriate that we reflect on it once again as we close:

It is not what we do that matters, But what a sovereign God chooses to do through us. God doesn't want our success; He wants us. He doesn't demand our achievements; He demands our obedience.

The obedient bride of Christ really does fit squarely into these very truth-filled words. What she wants in life only matters as long as it squares with what her bridegroom wants. It's so central to her Walk that Jesus even promises her that if she will delight (be pliable) in Him, He will cause His desires to become her desires, locked up in her heart (*Ps 37*). Without His guidance and continual

presence in her life she has no hope of ever walking in obedience to His Word.

I can tell you from experience that it can't be done. But thank God that He had it all worked out before I got my sticky fingers into things. The moment we became "born again" He filled us with His Holy Spirit, and through Him we are led into all truth. Everything we need to live an obedient lifestyle has already been given to us. It's just like salvation, it was free but we had to ask for it. So it is with becoming obedient in the way we walk out our daily life:

Matt 7:7 ask and it will be given... seek and ye shall find... knock and it shall be opened.

3 John 1:2 I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

John used the word prosper here to mean, "lead in a good way or to prosper in one's journey." He was saying, *I know you are prospering in your soul but I want you to prosper as well in your body.* But this can only happen if we're walking in obedience to the Spirit of God. He is the only One who is going to lead us into prosperity for our spirit, soul, and body. And it's only by His gentle and sometimes firm urging that we will become aware of those twists and turns in life that can cause us harm. It's only by our individual decision to listen for His voice that we will take that all important first step to the obedient lifestyle, and all the steps that follow are accomplished the same way, one step at a time.

Obedience is true preparation for the coming of our bridegroom, but in the interim it keeps our relationship with Him

open and free. After all, isn't true obedience really the essence of true freedom? The restrictions God gives us are always for our own good and never meant to cause us harm; obedience is always in our best interest. In my case, the hardest part was just simply deciding to start. The enemy will always give you a thousand reasons to put it off and they are all reasonable to our flesh. On the other hand, the true answers to God's instructions are always fed to us through our spirit. When we spend time in the Word we are always be rewarded with instruction that is designed to build us up and bring us into a closer and more obedient relationship with Jesus. As God only has good plans for His wife (*Jer 29:11*), so Jesus only has good plans for His Bride, all we need to do is be obedient to His voice and follow after His heart.

The Obedient Lifestyle is emblematic of our commitment to Walk With God in love. It is made by choice and continues to grow each time we choose Him over ourselves.

The life of obedience to Jesus Christ means living moment by moment in the Spirit of God, and it will be so different from your former life that you will often be considered strange. In fact, the life in the Spirit is such a different life that some of your former associates will probably discuss the question of whether or not you are mentally disturbed.

A.W. Tozer

I have had some (believers and non-believers) suggest to me that my commitment to God is excessive and even compulsive. They have even suggested that I need to "get a life." For me it's better to be obedient for eternity than disobedient for a lifetime. Should we have it any other way?

THE WAY OF ENOCH

We began this series with a discussion of Enoch and who and what He represents in the Bible. While you may or may not agree that Enoch is Old Testament prophetic look at the Rapture of the Church, we can certainly all agree that our bridegroom is coming back for His bride, just as He promised. So the question at hand is what kind of bride will He find when He arrives?

That's the challenge of *The Way of Enoch*. This series of books was written with the express desire of encouraging the bride of Christ to take a long hard look at her life and take inventory of just where she stands in relationship to her bridegroom. The path has been clearly laid out for her and the rules of the road have been inscribed in her heart. The only question is what is she going to do about it. And that's the critical question because everything from the moment she accepted His marriage proposal on the Cross depends upon it. In this series we've explored eight of the key considerations involved in our Walk With God:

Volume 1: *Your Life In Christ*—In this book we attempted to gain an understanding of who God is and how we can relate to Him. We discovered His creative power throughout His Word, through His prophets, apostles, disciples, and most importantly His Son. God created us for His pleasure and as such He showered us with all His blessings through His Son's sacrifice. He has gone above and beyond to provide us with every opportunity to acknowledge His acts of grace and mercy on our behalf. Not only has He once and for all resolved the issue of sin, He has provided us the way to be free from its grip on our lives. All of this He holds together with a love for us that is, in itself, beyond measure; Jesus.

Volume 2: *The Spirit-Filled Christian*—In the Old Testament the Spirit “came upon” man, when Jesus walked on the earth the Spirit “dwelled with” man, but after the Day of Pentecost the Spirit now “dwells within” believers. And this is quite often where some of the bride get confused when they hear the term “filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Let’s be clear that when you made the decision to give your life to Jesus, the Holy Spirit immediately came to live “within” you; He became resident and began the work of drawing you ever closer to Jesus. But there is a difference between His just residing within you and His leading and controlling you. There is an old expression that says when you became born again you made the Holy Spirit “resident” but when you totally yield your will to Him you make Him “president.”

That’s what being “filled” with the Spirit really means. You have made the commitment to allow Him to release His power within you to empower you to walk out the “sanctification” process. If you want to be “filled” then that is going to require action on your part. That is what this book is all about, and there’s no way you can really be filled with the Holy Spirit unless you know what He is, who He is, why He is here, and what He wants to do in your life.

Volume 3: *Foundations of Faith*—As the bride of Christ it’s incumbent upon each one of us to not only know the ground that we stand on, we need to firmly stand on it moment-by-moment. Faith is cornerstone upon which Christ built His church and certainly it’s the key to the advancement of His Kingdom. Without a strong faith we are potential pawns in the hands of the enemy in the world around us.

Faith is the foundational part of our Christian life, and it undergirds our journey from beginning to end. As the instrument by which the gift of salvation is received, faith is therefore separate from the basis of salvation, which is grace, and from the working out of salvation, which is good works. The apostle Paul declared that salvation is through faith, not through keeping the works of the law.

Volume 4: *The Word of God*—There wouldn't be a *Walk With God* were it not for His Word—Jesus, the Word of God. The Word was there in the beginning and it's certainly the foundation of anything God is doing today. It's therefore critical for us to understand what God has to say about His Word and how it impacts our daily life. It truly is our owner's manual and there isn't anything in our life that it doesn't cover. But like any manual, it must first be read and understood before it can be of any value to the person holding it. Too often, however, it just sits on a coffee table in plain sight for all to see and to gather dust.

God's Word is all around us and when we reflect on the detail within it we can't help but be awed at His plan. His Word is everywhere we look, we need to open up our thinking, challenge ourselves to go deeper, and let it change us and draw us closer and closer to Jesus, slowly conforming us into His image.

Volume 5: *Principles of Prayer*—As human beings we were created with the ability to communicate, and when we don't we become frustrated and tend to crawl into a shell. It's almost impossible for us to be with someone for an extended period of time without talking because there are so many things that we want to share with them; whether they want to hear them or not. And yet isn't it ironic that we have the immediate ear of the One who really

cares, and we don't often think about talking to Him? We want to pour out everything to those nearest to us and, more often than not, they aren't really interested in hearing us because they want to tell us what's important to them.

Prayer is an integral part of building up and strengthening our faith. Without a strong prayer life we're handicapping ourselves and hindering the Holy Spirit in His job of moving us deeper into the realm of spiritual maturity. Without communicating with God we're isolating ourselves from the very source of all that we need to fully enter into His rest and become all that we were created to be.

Volume 6: *Authority of the Bride of Christ*—Authority is a term that many have a very difficult time dealing with. To some it causes an immediate bristling of the hair on the back of their necks, and yet to others it causes a feeling of helplessness. To the Christian it should mean both being in authority and being submitted to authority. Jesus built His Church on these principles and they haven't gone out of style in the past 2000 years. While we need to understand both sides of authority, the main focus of this book is to examine the authority that we, as believers, have over our enemy; Satan and his army.

The source of our authority resides within each of us and it's always there, ready to be used to the obedience of God's word and the exercising of our faith. We have a perfect example to follow in Jesus: Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus on the Cross, and Jesus out of the grave. The authority He has over the enemy He now freely shares with us. We need to know our authority, seize our authority, exercise our authority, and walk in our authority, all the time remembering in whose authority we walk in.

Volume 7: *Walk The Walk*—The old axiom regarding Walking the Walk rather than just Talking the Talk certainly applies in the church today. We have a lot of the bride of Christ running around going through the motions but never really getting anywhere. In my opinion, this is one of the biggest challenges facing the bride. If each and every believer were to get in his or her place and start walking out God’s perfect plan for their life there would be such an overwhelming change in the bride that those on the outside couldn’t resist finding out what it was all about.

God has all the assets in heaven ready to assist each one of us as we take that step of committed faith and release it all to Him. And that’s where it all starts, with a solid commitment. We come by faith, we walk by faith, and we die by faith, but our old man (our old soulish nature) doesn’t like it, and that’s what makes it tough. For the bride of Christ, it’s imperative that she move on from settling for an unfulfilled, nominal (carnal) Christian life. It’s time for her to leave the Holy Place, the place of salvation, and move into the Holiest Place. It’s only there that she will find the path to a victorious and abundant life; the Spirit-filled Life, the Life of Christ. That is the Perfect Will of God, that as His Son’s bride we enter into His Rest—the Rest of Christ—and Walk the Walk.

Volume 8: *The Obedient Lifestyle*—And here in this volume we explored obedience and what it means as a key ingredient in our Walk With God. Without obedience it is impossible for us to even approach living out the purity that resides in us. If we fail in our obedience to the direction of the Holy Spirit, those ugly spots and blemishes—the sin in our life—on our wedding dress will never be cleansed. And as the bride of Christ, the last thing we want is to walk down the aisle to meet our bridegroom with

anything less than Jesus' righteousness reflected in us by a pure white wedding dress.

IT'S ALL ABOUT BEING CHRIST-CENTERED

The encouragement and challenges found in each of these books is designed to get us all thinking about just what is important in our life, what the Word is telling us to do about it, and making the commitment to be obedient to the One who has been charged with counseling us along the way.

The Holy Spirit is our resident counselor but His advice only becomes valuable to us if we heed it. To walk through this life trying to both listen for His voice and that of the world is what makes that task impossible. Far too often the bride of Christ finds herself walking down the wrong path because she has deluded herself through her self-centric approach to life. She has only given lip service to living and walking the Christ-centered life that leads to a true and living relationship.

As His bride we need to answer the challenge of moving on from just being "in" Christ—saved—to being "of" Christ—spiritually mature. That means living in the Holiest Place, sitting at His feet where, like Mary, we do the "better thing." Unlike Martha, we are devoting ourselves to serving Him by loving Him and not by serving for Him. There is a big difference, and when we serve Him as a result of time spent in His presence and the love we have for Him, our life becomes incredibly rich and rewarding.

It's true, Jesus will give us just as much of Him as we desire. Are we happy with just being in His presence or do we want to sit at His feet and learn of Him? Therein is the challenge for the bride of Christ, to move on beyond the Cross and enter into Spirit-filled life in Jesus' Rest.

The choice is up to each of us. I've made mine and it's my prayer that these books have helped you to either make yours or cement the one you've already made to follow Him with all your heart. Walking With Jesus is the greatest blessing we will ever have this side of heaven, and in the process we have absolutely no idea of the incredible things He is preparing for us that He wants to give us on our wedding day. But all those rewards are dependent upon what we do down here with what He has given us. And the key to accomplishing that lies in developing a deeply personal relationship with the One who paid heaven's highest price so we could.

May your walk be a blessed one as you listen to the voice of the Spirit and obediently move up the road that will bring you ever closer to That Day. It's high time as the bride of Christ that we all wake up and become all that we were created to be. There is a role for each of us in His Kingdom, and it begins here and now.

It's The Way of Enoch

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pastor Tom Mitchell has spent the better part of his ministry years exhorting, challenging, and encouraging the bride of Christ to move ever deeper into her relationship with her bridegroom. Over the past 30 years through Walk With God Ministries he has authored 13 books, written numerous articles, and has taught the Word of God from the pulpit, in the classroom, and through his weekly blog at: <http://WalkWithGod.org>.

His published works include *Wake Up And Rest – The Bride of Christ Sleeps at Her Own Peril*, along with its four companion books, *The Doorway to Rest*; *The Pathway to Rest*; *The Dangers to Rest*; and *The Battle For Rest* that challenge Jesus' bride to wake up and fulfill the role He has given her in preparing the way for His Kingdom. By anyone's clock, the time until His return is growing very short. *Wake Up And Rest* is a timely challenge the bride can ill afford to ignore, for if she does she does so at her own peril. This series reflects the urgency of the message the Lord has impressed upon Tom for His bride, to wake up and remember to whom she has committed herself and make herself ready for His soon return. The hour grows short and there is much at stake, both here and now and for all eternity. The question is... *will she wake up?*

His most recent work is the eight volume series, *The Way of Enoch*, that explores the foundation and sound scriptural doctrine that underlies God's plan for our lives. It is a journey that begins with learning who God really is and culminates in discovering how we are to walk out a loving and obedient relationship with our bridegroom. *The Way of Enoch* is a great resource for both the

bride of Christ and for those who have just begun their walk with Jesus. Each book is solidly based on the Word of God, looking at how it to be applied in the Christian life. The message is presented in a straightforward look at eight key areas of our Walk With God.

Volume 1—Your Life In Christ

Volume 2—The Spirit-Filled Christian

Volume 3—Foundations of Faith

Volume 4—The Word of God

Volume 5—Principles of Prayer

Volume 6—Authority of the Bride of Christ

Volume 7—Walk The Walk

Volume 8—The Obedient Lifestyle

OTHER BOOKS BY THOMAS M. MITCHELL

www.WalkWithGod.org

Wake Up and Rest Series

The Bride of Christ Sleeps at Her Own Peril... This book is a wakeup call to those who have made their personal commitment to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They are the ones who hold the key to survival the world is looking for and they cannot fail to share it. But to do so they have to overcome their human side and allow their spirit to take charge and lead them through this “wilderness” we find ourselves in. And the key to that is to stop and take a long hard look at their relationship with the One to whom they’re engaged to be married. Do we really know Him? What is He expecting of us? How can we find the answers? These questions and many more have to be answered if we’re going to be able to step up and become all that He created us to be. *Wake Up and Rest* is a guidepost to a fruitful walk with our bridegroom as we prepare ourselves for our wedding day.

The Doorway To Rest—The Brides’ Invitation... When we consider Solomon’s Song we can easily see the relationship between Christ and His bride portrayed in many ways. Think of the “sun’s” relationship with the moon being like our relationship with the “Son.” This book is a detailed, verse-by-verse study of the *Song of Solomon*, revealing the true view of bride of Christ through

His eyes and a life changing view of the bridegroom through the eyes of the bride as she opens *The Doorway to Rest*.

The Pathway To Rest—The Brides’ Purpose... As we looked at the message of the *Song of Solomon* we were given a clear picture of not only who our bridegroom is, but equally important how He sees us and how we should see Him. His invitation opened the doorway to His Rest and now, as we walk out the days of our *ketubah*—our betrothal—we need to find out what that means and what it entails along *The Pathway To Rest*. For that we turn to the book of *Hebrews*, where we learn through each verse what sewing our wedding dress means and how important it is for us to be ready and watching for His soon return as we move up the path to spiritual maturity.

The Dangers To Rest—The Brides’ Warning... We have been inundated with not the shout of triumph but the incessant worldly scream of pending disaster. The country’s economics have been turned upside down and fear and panic have grabbed the headlines as the Middle East falls into chaos. The news is full of rampant pandemics, meteorological disasters, hopeless individuals committing tragic acts and families destroyed. And sadly, the majority of the bride of Christ is not prepared for His return. We have allowed the world and its supreme ruler to distract us from the path the lies in front of us. Now He has finally released me to write this verse-by-verse study—*The Dangers To Rest*—out of the book of *Revelation* that He put on my heart 18 years ago concerning His letters that not only deal with why He is coming back but also what we, His bride, are supposed to be doing and not doing as we wait and watch.

The Battle For Rest—The Brides’ Armor... Spiritual warfare is a war between the forces of God and the forces of rebellion led by Satan. And the bride is engaged in this spiritual war between light

and darkness, good and evil, heaven and hell and Christ and Satan. But sadly, many aren't even aware of the fact that they are in a spiritual battle every day of their life. As believing Christians we're in a grim conflict and we're not on a worldly cruise ship or a showboat; it's a battleship. It's a fight to the finish with no holds barred and we can't be neutral and we can't call a truce. This war is a personal one; very personal. In *The Battle For Rest* I have taken a detailed verse-by-verse study of the part of the book of *Ephesians* that deals with the enemy, his strategies and his goals and most importantly the battle orders we have been given to ensure victory over those personal strongholds.

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