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# Love and Obedience

## Two necessary ingredients in the process called recovery



**Note:** All Bible scripture is written in *Italics*.

### 1 John 2:1

*My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if you do sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who pleases God completely. <sup>2</sup>He is the sacrifice for our sins. He takes away not only our sins but the sins of all the world.*

*<sup>3</sup>And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By obeying His commandments. <sup>4</sup>If someone says, "I belong to God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth. <sup>5</sup>But those who obey God's word really do love him. That is the way to know whether or not we live in him. <sup>6</sup>Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Christ did.*

## Living Like Christ

How could any man possibly live like Christ lived? How would a person go about trying to live as another person lived for that matter? I would imagine the best approach would be to watch that person, and then follow suite. Children do this all the time. They watch their parents and then they mimic them. Sad but true, they even do things such as picking cigarette butts off the ground and sticking them in their mouth, attempting to be like the people they look up to.

Living like Christ is a lot easier then one might think. A little research will certainly help. It would help to find out how Jesus Christ lived while walking the earth approximately 2000 years ago. This can be done by reading the four Gospels and by asking the Holy Spirit to give you spiritual wisdom, knowledge, and understanding as you read. The four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, give a very good idea of how He lived. As we seek after Him through His Word, and through fellowship with Him and His people, His transforming power begins to change us into His likeness. This change, sanctification, takes place very deep within and we begin to walk as He walked, and live as He lived. This is a life-long process. We walk, we stumble, we grow, we walk, we stumble, we grow, we walk, and we stumble, and hopefully we grow. As we mature spiritually, we do more walking, less stumbling, and more growing. We eventually grow by helping others when they stumble. Walking after Him is a



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conscious choice that must be made daily. Christians can sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly make the wrong choices and end up serving Satan. Becoming a

Christian doesn't mean Satan will leave you alone. He will attempt to be a part of our life for as long as we live in our perishing physical bodies. He seeks to control the flesh we live in. If we don't make that daily conscious choice to walk "in the spirit" (with Christ), Satan's attempts to trip us up can easily be successful. He attempts to lead us astray even while we're walking with God, but as we walk with God, we have everything we need to overcome his schemes. God has given us a free will and allows us to choose our destiny. We get to make our own choice as to whom we shall serve, eventually getting to spend time with the one we choose for eternity. If we choose God, we are assured that our walk will be a victorious one. This is the catch; we must first make the choice to walk with Him, and then only in His power (by the power of His Spirit within), are we able to follow-through.

Jesus had absolute faith in God. Can we? Absolute faith (absolute trust) will take more than a lifetime of walking with Jesus through (not around) the many trials and tribulations this world has to offer. It is progress, not perfection. It is "His perfect faith" that carries us. But when knocked down, we must learn to get back up, back in the daily battle if we ever expect to grow. There are no losers or failures in God's army. We are in a battle, one that must be fought, but not in our power. If you are still breathing, there is hope for you. The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing the Word. Our faith grows by feeding on God's Word for nourishment, and is exercised through (circumstances) our daily trials and tribulations. As we continue to put our trust in Him, and He continues to faithfully come through for us, our trust in Him continues to increase. It grows, more and more, day by day, through trials and tribulations. Spiritual maturity requires exercise and, just as with physical exercise, we learn that there is no gain without some level of pain.

## A New Commandment

### 1 John 2:7

<sup>7</sup>Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment, for it is an old one you have always had, right from the beginning. This commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before. <sup>8</sup>Yet it is also new. This commandment is true in Christ and is true among you, because the darkness is disappearing and the true light is already shining.

<sup>9</sup>If anyone says, "I am living in the light" but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is still living in darkness. <sup>10</sup>Anyone who loves other Christians is living in the light and does not cause anyone to stumble. <sup>11</sup>Anyone who hates a Christian brother or sister is living and walking in darkness. Such a person is lost, having been blinded by the darkness.

There are many ways of explaining blindness. The 12 step program describes it as "denial." There is a big difference between lying and denial although, at times, they seem to be one in the same. The one living in true denial has actually been blinded to the truth about his situation. He has believed a lie long enough that his lie has actually become truth to him. The enemy living within (his head) has him convinced that the lie is truth. Most often, if not always, those around us can easily see the truth. All the evidence exists and can clearly be seen by others. When others try to point it out, we honestly believe that they have it all



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wrong. This blindness is very real and kills people every day. "We were like sheep being lead to slaughter."

We were deceived by one (if not all) of the following:

- Our sinful, lustful flesh
- The evil things of this world
- Satan's lies and schemes
- Demonic influence

It is clearly understandable why a person, not having completed a proper third step, continues to trip and fall for the same tricks over and over again.

When we see a brother or sister enslaved in blindness, we must pray because a big part of their blindness is spiritual and only God has the ability to shed light on it. Only God has the power to open the eyes of a spiritually blind person. Spiritual problems require spiritual solutions and only God is capable of doing the necessary spiritual surgery.

A proper balance of scripture, practiced daily over a period of time, will correct all of our problems. This may seem hard to believe, but it is by far true. If the situation doesn't change, He most certainly will, in His time, give us peace about it. He will either change the outcome of the situation, or change our perspective of it, moving us to a place of acceptance. Either way is victory, but which one do you think will give us the most amount of growth? Only God can answer that question because every situation is different in some way or another. We need to learn to trust Him no matter what .....!

### **1 John 2:11**

*<sup>12</sup>I am writing to you, my dear children, because your sins have been forgiven because of Jesus. <sup>13</sup>I am writing to you who are mature because you know Christ, the One who is from the beginning. I am writing to you who are young because you have won your battle with Satan. <sup>14</sup>I have written to you, children, because you have known the Father. I have written to you who are mature because you know Christ, the One who is from the beginning. I have written to you who are young because you are strong with God's word living in your hearts, and you have won your battle with Satan.*

*<sup>15</sup>Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you. <sup>16</sup>For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world. <sup>17</sup>And this world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever.*

If we want to live forever, we must do His will. How can we do the "will of God?" First, we must learn what His will is for us. His will for each of us is explained in depth, throughout His written Word. We must read it and rely on our Teacher to help us understand the spiritual meanings within. God has sent us a Teacher that travels right along with us 24/7. We do the reading, and His Spirit does the teaching, guiding and directing of our lives. He has promised to teach us and remind us of all things.



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### **1 John 2:18**

<sup>18</sup>Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the end of the world has come. <sup>19</sup>These people left our churches because they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left us, it proved that they do not belong with us. <sup>20</sup>But you are not like that, for the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and all of you know the truth. <sup>21</sup>So I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and falsehood. <sup>22</sup>And who is the great liar? The one who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Such people are antichrists, for they have denied the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup>Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father either. But anyone who confesses the Son has the Father also.

<sup>24</sup>So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will continue to live in fellowship with the Son and with the Father. <sup>25</sup>And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us.

<sup>26</sup>I have written these things to you because you need to be aware of those who want to lead you astray. <sup>27</sup>But you have received the Holy Spirit, and He lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you all things, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So continue in what he has taught you, and continue to live in Christ.

<sup>28</sup>And now, dear children, continue to live in fellowship with Christ so that when He returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame. <sup>29</sup>Since we know that God is always right, we also know that all who do what is right are his children.

### **1 John 3**

<sup>1</sup>See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for He allows us to be called His children, and we really are! But the people who belong to this world don't know God, so they don't understand that we are his children. <sup>2</sup>Yes, dear friends, we are already God's children, and we can't even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when He comes we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He really is. <sup>3</sup>And all who believe this will keep themselves pure, just as Christ is pure.

<sup>4</sup>Those who sin are opposed to the law of God, for all sin opposes the law of God. <sup>5</sup>And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, for there is no sin in him. <sup>6</sup>So if we continue to live in Him, we won't sin either. But those who keep on sinning have never known him or understood who He is.

<sup>7</sup>Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it is because they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. <sup>8</sup>But when people keep on sinning, it shows they belong to the Devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy these works of the Devil. <sup>9</sup>Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they have been born of God. <sup>10</sup>So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the Devil. Anyone who does not obey God's commands and does not love other Christians does not belong to God.

The scripture above really doesn't leave much room for excuse. The way the apostle John puts it, either we belong or we don't, by which is determined by our obedience to God. The



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old saying; “Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven” can be easily taken out of context. Struggling with obedience is something we all experience, but the deciding factor is whether or not we reach out to God for the help He has offered all His children. He has promised that He will always leave us a way out of sinful situations, but it is our choice to take Him up on His offer. He also promised that He will never leave us or forsake us so we can clearly see we have a choice along with the power to carry it out. Choosing to live in “active sin” is, without question, disobedience to God.

A more effective way to guarantee victory in our daily struggles is to be prepared in advance. Men and women in recovery can’t afford to lose even one of these battles. It could cost us our lives. One bad choice can turn our whole life around, and in less than a minute, we are heading down a path of destruction. For most of us, the only way to stop what has started is to ride it out, all the way to the bottom, in hopes of making it out alive. Many sit behind prison walls with a realization of what happened (after the fact) some destined to never return to the streets again, while others end up 6’ in the ground. Open one wrong doorway, and we are back in bondage again. We can’t afford the (world’s) luxury of playing with un-righteousness.

## Love One Another

### 1 John 3:11

*This is the message we have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. <sup>12</sup>We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was right. <sup>13</sup>So don’t be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.*

The world hates because it can’t possibly love without God. Why? Because “God is love.” The only love the world knows is called conditional love. Conditional love is selfish and self centered rather than Christ centered. When we don’t have Christ in our life, we see ourselves as god and the conditions we set on situations are focused around; what’s in it for me? When we truly have Christ in our life, it is His love that radiates through us. We can’t help but love our brothers and sisters and, as we mature spiritually, we even learn to willingly and obediently love our enemies.

### 1 John 3:14

*<sup>14</sup>If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to eternal life. But a person who doesn’t love them is still dead. <sup>15</sup>Anyone who hates another Christian is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don’t have eternal life within them. <sup>16</sup>We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>But if anyone has enough money to live well, and sees a brother or sister in need and refuses to help—how can God’s love be in that person?*

*<sup>18</sup>Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions. <sup>19</sup>It is by our actions that we know we are living in the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before the Lord, <sup>20</sup>even if our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*



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<sup>21</sup>Dear friends, if our conscience is clear, we can come to God with bold confidence. <sup>22</sup>And we will receive whatever we request because we obey Him and do the things that please Him. <sup>23</sup>And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. <sup>24</sup>Those who obey God's commandments live in fellowship with Him, and He with them. And we know He lives in us because the Holy Spirit lives in us.

God did not ask us to love one another. He actually commanded us to. If we have chosen to be obedient to Him, we have no other choice but to love each other. We must love each other "unconditionally."

## **With His help, we can love one another!**

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