

OBEDIENCE

When you decided to put Jesus on the throne of your life, you declared your trust in Him and that you would obey Him. We do not have to be afraid to obey Him because He has demonstrated such great love for us. He knows what is best for you and wants you to have an abundant life (**John 10:10**).

Genuine faith produces obedience. Paul wrote about this obedience of faith at the beginning and the end of his letter to the Romans (**Romans 1:5; 16:26**). Another Bible author says disobedience is unbelief (**Hebrews 3:18-19**). If we truly have faith in Jesus, we will obey Him. And His main command for us to obey is... walk in love.

Review and reflection:

- What was the primary topic of our last lesson?
- What are some of the ways that we can be identified with Jesus Christ?
- Have you been able to become a part of a church or a small group of believers?
- Have you been baptized? If not, what steps are you taking toward that goal?
- Have you been enjoying a regular time with God in the Bible and in prayer this week?
- Do you have any questions about what you read?

CHRISTIANITY IS ABOUT LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

Read **1 Corinthians 13:1-13** (Paul's description of love in the life of a follower of Jesus)

- List the characteristics of love listed in verses 4-7.
- Which of these characteristics would you find most difficult to practice in your life?
- How is it possible for us to have that kind of love in our lives?!

Read **Galatians 5:22-23**

Here Paul lists fruit that the Holy Spirit will produce in our lives as we allow Him to lead and to empower our lives.

- How do the characteristics of love listed in 1 Corinthians 13 relate to the Fruit of the Spirit in this passage?
- Which of these characteristics are most lacking in your life?
- What do we need to do to allow the Holy Spirit to produce this fruit in our lives? (Review Lesson 4 on Empowerment if necessary.)

Read **1 Timothy 1:5; Romans 5:8; John 3:16; 13:34-35; 14:15, 21; 15:9-13**

Jesus demonstrated His love for the Father by obeying Him, even to the point of death on the cross. If we truly love Jesus, we will certainly want to obey Him. Two important commands He gave in order for us to enjoy a fulfilled life, be well-pleasing to God, and be a blessing to others are known as the "Great Commandment" and the "Great Commission".

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT: LOVE GOD AND LOVE OTHERS

Read **Matthew 22:35-39**

- What was the question that Jesus was asked?
- What was his reply? How many commandments did He give?
- Why do you think Jesus gave two commandments when He was only asked for one?
- Do you think the order in which Jesus gave the commandments is important? Why?
- What does He mean by "with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind"?

Read **1 John 4:9-10, 19-21**

- According to verses 9-10 what should motivate us to love God?
- How do verses 19-21 explain the importance of Jesus' second commandment?
- How will loving God affect our lives as followers of Jesus?

• Read **Luke 10:25-37**

- What question was Jesus asked? How did Jesus answer this question?
- In light of the story Jesus told, who is my neighbor?

Jesus instructs us to love three groups of people in the following passages. List them:

- Matthew 22:39
- John 13:34–35
- Matthew 5:43–48

Is there any person you know who does not have a place on one of these lists?

THE GREAT COMMISSION: LOVE OTHERS ENOUGH TO HELP THEM BECOME FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

Between Christ's resurrection from the dead and His ascension to heaven, He gave His disciples important instructions about what they were to do from the time He left this earth until He comes back again. These instructions, found at the end of each of the four Gospels and at the beginning of the book of Acts, have been called the "Great Commission". The passage in Matthew is often referred to as the Great Commission—a summary of the other passages.

Read **Matthew 28:18–20**

- What is the importance of what Jesus says in verse 18?
- Is there anyone with enough authority who can ever command us to disregard what Jesus commanded here?
- Has anyone ever given you as important a command as this?

The major command in the original language of the passage is "**make disciples**." The three expressions—"Go," "baptizing them," and "teaching them to obey"—are descriptions of what to do in the process of making disciples. A disciple is a person who follows the teaching of another. Jesus called disciples to imitate Him and to learn and obey His teachings.

- What do think Jesus means when He commands us to make disciples?
- When we make disciples, whose teachings do we instruct our disciples to follow?
- What are baptized disciples to be taught? Are we simply passing down information?
- What things mentioned in the Great Commission make it clear that this command is for us as believers today, not just for the eleven apostles to whom it was originally given?

It is the responsibility of **every** believer, not just professionals—pastors, priests, missionaries—to fulfill this important task.

LIVING IN LOVING OBEDIENCE TO JESUS

We are to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. This includes our individual worship, prayer, Bible study, and obedience to His word, allowing Him to live in and through us by His Holy Spirit. Our love for God is also expressed as we show love to our fellow believers, encouraging one another in the love of Christ as we share in fellowship together. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. This starts with our closest neighbors: our family members, relatives, friends, fellow-workers or schoolmates, people who live near us, acquaintances, people we come into contact with, and even our enemies.

One way to obey both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission is through a ministry of "Prayer, Care, Share." Make a list of some of your "neighbors", whom God lays on your heart. Go to them, explaining that you would like to **pray** for them, and ask them to give you their specific requests. As you pray, look for ways to **care** for them by doing things that demonstrate love. You might help them with a project, give them a gift of food or something else they need or would appreciate. As you care for them, look for ways to **share** your life's story: (1) before you knew Christ, (2) how you came to know Him, and (3) how He has changed your life. As they show interest, **share** the Gospel with them, explaining who Jesus is, the significance of His death for our sins, and how to receive Him as Lord and Savior. If they receive Jesus into their lives, you can take them through this same series of Bible lessons to help them become disciples of Jesus.

LEARNING AND GROWING IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

- Make sure every day that Jesus is on the throne of your life. Trust Him, follow His example, obey Him, and love Him.
- Keep developing your personal relationship with God, reading His Word and talking to Him in prayer.
- Remember to keep being filled with the Holy Spirit to empower your life and to see God's love grow in you.
- Confess any sins as you become aware of them, and thank God for His forgiveness.
- Spend time with other believers in a local church, a small group, or class where you can practice loving one another while you continue to discuss and learn more about what it means to grow in your relationship with God.
- Practice identifying with Jesus (have you been baptized yet?) and talking with others about the new life you are now experiencing as a result of your love relationship with God through the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ.