



**WOMEN'S BIBLE
STUDY
FALL 2023**

WEEK 1: WHY OBEY GOD?

LUKE 5

**WEEK 2: OBEYING GOD WHEN
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE**

I KINGS 17

**WEEK 3: OBEYING GOD IN A
GODLESS CULTURE**

GENESIS 6

**WEEK 4: THE TESTIMONY OF
OBEDIENCE**

PSALM 1



**UNLOCKING
THE
PROMISES
OF GOD'S
WORD**



Fall Women's Bible Study
Unlocking the Promises of God's Word
Fall 2023

Week 1: What is obedience, and why obey God?

- Peter and the Miraculous Catch of Fish
- Luke 5

Week 2: Obeying God When It Doesn't Make Sense.

- The Widow at Zarephath
- I Kings 17

Week 3: Obeying God in a Godless Culture

- Noah
- Genesis 6

Week 4: The Testimony of Obedience

- Psalm 1

Collaborated Resources:

- *Kingdom Heroes*, Dr. Tony Evans (Noah)
- *A Woman God Can Use*, Dr. Alice Matthews (The Widow at Zarephath)

Week 1: What is obedience and why obey God?

Summary: Obedience is an attitude of heart toward a higher authority. As Christians, that higher authority is God Himself. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. **Legalism**, on the other hand, places the commandment above the commander. It places the emphasis on the law itself, and the keeping of it for law's sake, rather than to the glory of its Giver. **Conformity** deals with the outside of a man. Many conform to laws outwardly in fear of reprisal; however, their attitude is certainly not one of obedience. I obey the speed limit not because my heart is in it – but because I don't want a speeding ticket. I love the way I John 2: 3-6 expresses why we obey God's word, "When we obey God, we are sure we know him. But if we claim to know him and don't obey him, we are lying, and the truth isn't in our hearts. We truly love God only when we obey him as we should, and then we know we belong to him. If we say we are his, we must follow the example of Christ." Why do we obey God, because we love Him, it demonstrates our trust and faith in him, and we are following the example of Christ.

Memory Verse: I John 2: 3-6 "When we obey God, we are sure we know him. But if we claim to know him and don't obey him, we are lying, and the truth isn't in our hearts. We truly love God only when we obey him as we should, and then we know we belong to him. If we say we are his, we must follow the example of Christ."

I. The Love of God is Unconditional. His Promises Are Not.

A. God's Love is Unconditional.

1. 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord does not delay [as though He were unable to act] *and* is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is [extraordinarily] patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
2. Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
3. Romans 5:10, For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

- B. God gives you his promises by grace.
1. You enjoy his promises when you follow his instructions.
 2. God's Promises are tied to God's Processes.
 - a. See Duet 28
 - b. Matthew 22:36-40
- C. Christianity is not a set of rules. You cannot "win" at being a Christian by keeping a bunch of rules.
1. Obedience is not about achieving "salvation".
 2. Obedience is about demonstrating our trust and love of God.
- D. The Gospel is 3 things according to I Cor 15:1-4:
1. Christ died for our sins according to our scriptures.
 2. Christ was buried according to the scriptures.
 3. He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures.
 - a. **I Cor 15:1-4** Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word, I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.**3** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance[a]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
 4. We are saved by faith, not by works. Romans 4
 - a. Romans 4:1-8: What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? **2** If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. **3** What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."**4** Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation.**5** However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. **6** David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them."

5. Living faith produces appropriate works.
- a. James 2:14-24, “**14** What good is it, my brothers, and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? **15** Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. **16** If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? **17** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**18** But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.**19** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.**20** You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless[d]?**21** Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? **22** You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. **23** And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,”[e] and he was called God’s friend. **24** You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

E. Conclusion:

1. Grace says, Jesus lives in me. Evidence of his residency is reflected in my decisions and choices
 - I Cor 1:30, “It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”
 - I John 3:6, “No one who loves in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

II. Obedience Can Change the Trajectory of Your Life

A. Peter and the Miraculous Catch of Fish.

1. Luke 5:1-11 "One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret,[a] the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. **2** He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. **3** He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.**4** When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."**5** Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."**6** When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. **7** So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.**8** When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" **9** For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, **10** and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."**11** So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him."

B. Peter chose to do what was right, despite not feeling like doing what Jesus asked.

1. Obedience is a choice, not a feeling.

- a. Joyce Meyer writes, "If we will do what's right and do what God says, with the help of the Holy Spirit no matter what we think, how we feel, or what we want, God is going to fill our boat and our nets so full we will have enough to fill our boat and help the people around us."

1. There are three things that will always try to talk us out of being obedient to God, "I don't want to", "I don't feel like it", "I don't think that's a good idea."

A. **"Want to" is a matter of will.**

- i. When you "don't want to" always ask yourself, why?

- ii. The Holy Spirit will not talk you out of obeying the Word of God.

B. I don't feel like it.

- i. Feelings/Emotions always originate in the flesh, the flesh will never lead you to obey Spirit.
- ii. Galatians 5:16-25, "**16** So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **17** For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever[c]you want. **18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **19** The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery;**20** idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions **21** and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.**22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.
- iii. Faithfulness is the antidote to feelings. Faithfulness is a mark of maturity.

C. I don't think it's a good idea.

- i. James reminds us there are two wisdoms:
- ii. **James 3:13-18 13** Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. **14** But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.**15** Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. **16** For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. **17** But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

iii. Is your idea wiser, stronger, more secure than God's word?

C. Here's the one thing that will change the trajectory of our lives:

1. "BUT....because you said to do it, I'll do it."

- When your feet match your faith – powerful things happen.
- God is up to something great with you! He saw Peter's potential, and he sees your potential. The question on the table is whether we will obey Him and open our lives up to God's why for our lives.

Week 1 Discussion Questions:

1. We've all read the story of the miraculous catch of fish in our Bible – what part of the tonight's Bible study spoke to your heart?
2. Can you think back to a critical moment where like Peter, you had a "because you said so, I'll do it" moment and it changed the trajectory of your life?
3. Do you feel like you obey God out of love or fear? What's your response to reading that God's love is unconditional and his promises are offered by grace?

Week 2: The Widow of Zarephath: Obeying God, When It Doesn't Make Sense

Summary: "When you trust someone, you do what they say. If you don't do what someone tells you to do, it means you don't trust them. In the Bible, God links faith and obedience over and over again. The promises of God are conditioned on you following the directions he gives you."

- Pastor Rick Warren

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 5:33 says, "Follow all the directions the Lord your God has given you. Life will go well for you." (GW).

Life Lesson: The Widow at Zarephath (I Kings 17:7-16).

I Kings 17:8-16

8 Then the word of the LORD came to him: **9** "Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food." **10** So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" **11** As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread." **12** "As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die." **13** Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son." **14** For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: "The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land." **15** She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So, there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. **16** For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.

I. **You have one SOURCE: God Himself. He provides you with different RESOURCES.**

A. Let's establish a little historical context for the scene we just read in scripture:

1. Everyone has heard of a woman name Jezebel. She was an idol worshipper, an evil woman married to a King of Israel named Ahab. She led the Ahab and the nation of Israel into idolatry.
 2. Jezebel's hometown is Sidon. Zarephath is 8 miles from Sidon (Region is Modern Day Lebanon). Texas has been called the buckle of the Bible belt – well, Sidon is the buckle of the Baal belt.
 3. In general, Baal was a fertility god who was believed to enable the earth to produce crops and people to produce children. The Israelites are looking to Baal as their source.
 - a. Beelzebub: The word has two parts: *Baal*, which was the name for the Canaanite fertility gods in the Old Testament; and *Zebul*, which means “exalted dwelling.” Putting the two parts together, they formed a name for Satan himself, the prince of demons.
 4. At the height of Israel's Baal worship, God tells his prophet Elijah to confront the people and tell them, there will be no rain for 3.5 years.
 - a. First, God showed that He, not Baal, controlled the rain (1 Kings 17:1). He alone was their source.
 - b. It's after this pronouncement no rain that we meet the Widow at Zarephath. The drought is taking effect. The Brook of Cherith has dried up, the ravens that were feeding the prophet have stopped, he's been commanded by God to go find this widow. She's down to the last of her flour, the last of her oil and she's gathering firewood.
- B. Every command in scripture is aimed at protecting you, providing for you, or propelling you into a God designed future. Every single one.
1. When you choose to obey scripture, understand you are sowing into one of those three areas of your life.
 2. **God has made some incredible, specific promises in his Word about obedience.** (From Pastor Rick Warren – *Obedience is the Key to God's Promises*)

a. In fact, there are so many promises that I can't list them all here. But here are a few:

- *"God blesses those who obey him"* (Proverbs 16:20 TLB).
- *"He saves those who obey him"* (Psalm 7:10 GNT).
- *"The Lord watches over those who obey him"* (Psalm 33:18 GNT).
- *"The Lord takes care of those who obey him"* (Psalm 37:18 GNT).
- *"God gives us what we ask for because we obey God's commands"* (1 John 3:22 NCV).
- *"Always obey the Lord and you will be happy"* (Proverbs 28:14 GNT).
- *"Keep God's laws and you will live longer"* (Proverbs 19:16 GNT).
- *"Those who obey him have all they need . . . Those who obey the Lord lack nothing good"* (Psalm 34:9-10 GNT).

C. Worry is the act of imagining a future without God. Worry opens the door to a spirit of fear.

1. The prophet addressed the woman's fear by telling her, if you put God first, you will have what you need.
 - i. **V 13** Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son." **14** For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.'"
2. God does not tell you and I not to fear because the situation isn't scary, he tells us not to fear because **HE is WITH US.**
 - ii. Isaiah 43:1-3".... Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, **I will be with you**; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, the flames will not

set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, you God, the holy One of Israel, your Savior.”

- iii. Isaiah 41:10 “So do not fear, for **I am with you**; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
- iv. Psalm 46:1 -- “God is our refuge and strength, **a very present help** in trouble.”

II. Understanding can wait, but obedience cannot.

A. Do you want peace or understanding?

1. Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

B. The Word of God is always in your best interest.

C. Some of God’s commands might sound confusing. Some may seem unfair.

1. Why is God using a WIDOW to provide for the prophet? She has nothing – isn't there a rich pagan he can tap?

- God sees the widow’s future as much as the prophets and he wants to provide for them both.

2. The Bible says to take the first 10 percent of your income and give it back to him. This is called the tithe.

- Why does God want my money?

a. Spirit of Mammon: (From Pastor Robert Morris, *The Blessed Life*)

- The word "mammon" is in the Bible four times, and three of those times Jesus said it. But what does it mean?

- "Mammon" is an Aramaic word that essentially means "riches." At its heart there's an attitude that says: Man doesn't need God—we're self-sufficient. This is what the spirit of mammon tries to tell us: You don't need God. Trust in riches!

- It originated as a false deity in Babylon, which was established after the Tower of Babel.

- You may recognize "mammon" from the New Testament. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus clearly suggests it's possible to serve mammon instead of serving God, but He goes even further: Jesus states it is *impossible* to serve both at the same time. He says you will love one and hate the other. According to Jesus, there is no middle ground—no half-and-half.

b. The Spirit of Mammon always counsels you to preserve self over obedience to God.

1. What it sounds like: You need a bunch of money – or for God to come through.
2. If you didn't tithe, you'd have the money you need for X
3. God is going to understand your situation is unique.

D. It says that when people do evil to you, you are to do good back to them.

1. These things don't always make sense from a human standpoint. But the things that don't make sense to us are the things God asks us to do by faith. He wants us to trust him and obey anyway.

IV. Application

- A. Faith is the step between promise and assurance.

1. Second Corinthians 5:7, “for we walk by faith, not by sight [living our lives in a manner consistent with our confident belief in God’s promises]” (AMP)
- B. Every miracle, large or small, begins with an act of obedience.
1. The Widow of Zarephath served the man of God a drink of water in a drought, then baked him a loaf. When her son died, the man of God prayed and restored him to her (I Kings 17:23-24)

Discussion Questions Week 2:

1. In what ways can you personally relate to the Widow at Zarephath?
2. Are there any of God's commands have you not been obeying because you don't understand His reasoning? How does the widow's story build your faith to commit to obeying, even if you don't understand?
3. The widow responded in fear to the prophet – why do you think fear is our first response to a challenging command from God?

Week 3: Noah: Obedience in a Godless Culture

Summary: “What the Bible says about Noah is what we all wish was true about us. It tells us that Noah “found favor in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8). Noah was a trustworthy man in an untrustworthy world. In a world that had rejected God, Noah stood fast in his faith. Noah’s story demonstrates to us the promise of obedient faith.” - Dr. Tony Evans

Memory Verse: Genesis 6:22, “Noah did everything just as God commanded him.”

Life Lesson: Noah and the Ark (Genesis Chapters 6 –9)

Genesis 6:5-22 **5** The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. **6** The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. **7** So the LORD said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” **8** But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. **9** This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. **10** Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. **11** Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. **12** God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. **13** So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. **14** So make yourself an ark of cypress[c] wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. **15** This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high.[d] **16** Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit[e] high all around.[f] Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. **17** I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. **18** But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. **19** You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. **20** Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. **21** You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.” **22** Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

- I. **Noah didn’t listen to the other voices that questioned his actions. He obeyed God who commanded his actions.**

A. Noah was walking with God when nobody else was.

1. When you walk with God, you'll understand things nobody else understands. God will tell you things he doesn't tell other people.
 - i. Notice, God is speaking to himself in Genesis 6:7, he is telling Noah what he will do in verse 13.
 - ii. "I will tell you things you do not know." Jeremiah 33:3

2. The reason why your walk with God is going to be a lot tougher today than maybe last year, what your grandmother faced is we're dealing with a demonized environment.
 - i. It's the evil infiltrating mankind so that demonic activity dominates the environment. And you know when it's dominating environment because people are not only doing evil, but they're also coming up with new ways to proliferate it.

 - ii. Luke 17:26, Jesus reminds us, that as it was in the Days of Noah so it shall be when the Son of Man returns.

 - iii. Everyone in Noah's day was convinced they were right, and Noah was weird up until the rain fell.

 - iv. God will never ask you to do something that violates or contradicts his word. He will never make an exception for something Jesus had to die for.

II. God will invite us, challenging us to believe in things we've never seen before; things we don't fully understand.

- A. Like Noah, we must begin acting based on what God says vs what we understand.
 - a. Noah lives 100 miles inland.
 - b. No one has seen rain fall.
 - c. No one has seen a vessel the likes of which he is building.

- B. Obedience is a demonstration of faith.

1. Disobedience – is typically not the result of ignorance. Disobedience at its heart is a grasp at control. 'I know better than God.'

 2. You will obey something – whether it's the god of self or the God of the universe. Your decisions reflect who you trust. Obedience is a reflection of trust.
- C. Noah demonstrated obedience in every area of his life:
1. Noah was financially obedient to God's command.
 - i. Wood and tools cost something.

 2. Noah was spiritually obedient to God's command.
 - i. He preached righteousness and led his family.

 3. Noah was vocationally obedient to God's command.
 - i. He submitted his labor to God.

 4. Noah surrendered his future and his will to God's protection.
- D. Protection, provision, favor is the result of total surrender. You can't obey in part.
- Examples:
- King Saul and the Prophet Samuel, allowing the evil Amalekites to live.
 - Moses struck the rock when the Lord said speak to it.
 - Aaron's son offered strange fire in the tent of meeting.
 - Ananias and Saphira, offering part of their profits.

III. **Pleasing God is simply the challenge of obedience, regardless of the timetable.**

- A. Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) and built the ark for 120 years until the flood waters came upon the earth.

1. Imagine staying faithful to the call of God without a SINGLE convert to show for it. (Scripture states only Noah's family, 8 people got in the ark.)
- B. After we make a choice to obey – sometimes we get immediate confirmation and sometimes we don't.
1. There is one evidence in scripture other than Noah's walk with God, that shows confirmation he heard God.
 - a. Genesis 7:8, "Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female CAME TO NOAH and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. And AFTER seven days floodwaters came on the earth."
 2. We must obey during our uncertainty and all our questions. When we do, we'll see Him intervene in our circumstances, both for our benefit and for the benefit of those we love.

Discussion Question:

1. Noah didn't listen to the other voices that questioned his actions. He obeyed God. Have you faced a situation where you had to obey God and tune out the voices around you?
2. It took 120 years to build the ark. How long have you had to wait on God to fulfill a promise to you? How did you stay encouraged in that season?
3. Hebrews 11:7 reminds us that, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house...." In what ways do you feel like God is prompting you to prepare a spiritual ark for your family today?

Week 4: The Promise of Obedience

Summary and Memory Verse:

Psalm 1:1-3,

“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither -- whatever they do prospers.”

As you hear each woman’s testimony on how obedience to God’s voice and His word changed her life, make a note below on what you feel like God is building your faith to trust him in!