

TO PRAY OR OBEY?

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

1 Samuel 15:22

Matthew 5:6

John 14:21

Introduction: If anyone ever visits a christian bookstore, there will be found a book on about any situation a christian might ever encounter in his/her christian life and not only that, but somewhere some church or religious institution will be offering a seminar, study course, retreat or program. If a person feels spiritually weak then buy a book, attend a seminar or pray all day and night and God will fix it. Prayer is not all that is necessary or needed to have a strong spiritual life or to be blessed.

1. There is something that must accompany prayer before God will answer.

- "...to obey is better than sacrifice..." "...leave thy gift at the altar and go makes things right..."
- God will not hear one's prayer unless what is asked for is accompanied with obedience.

2. Faith in Jesus takes care of one's sins but not the obligation to obey what God says.

- One is free from the penalty of sin but not from obedience to the one who did it all.

3. Many are mistaken about the Bible. It is not a book of advice and encouragement.

- The only advice in the Bible is what Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 7 and he says it's **his** opinion.
- The words in the Bible are to be obeyed, not bits of good advice to listen to or not.
- What God says to do or not do in the Bible is to be obeyed. No questions asked!

4. Judgment never comes unless there's been a violation of God's laws, nor do blessings come apart from obedience to God's laws.

- One cannot ignore God's will as revealed in the Bible and expect to get blessings from God in his/her life. Obedience is a must, it is primary.
- God's will expressed in His Word is very clear and He requires 100% obedience.

5. What's the "secret" to getting God to answer one's prayers? How can a person really walk with God?

- OBEDIENCE !
- Communication between a person and God is through prayer according to what God's Word says even though God already knows one's thoughts.
- Prayer is not all that is necessary to secure blessings from God, no matter how long or often one prays. Obedience must come FIRST.

6. What God requires to getting one's prayers answered, blessings, having a spirit filled life is that one thing most christians will do about anything to avoid having to do - OBEDIENCE.

- It is sad and just about unbelievable to see how far God's own children will go to avoid doing what He wants.
- Jesus is called "Lord" and is begged to do this or that, but most don't want to do what He says.
- One had rather pray all night and day than just simply OBEY God.
- Most christians have done this. Pray, pray, pray but not obey, obey, obey.

7. There are some things to do if you want to walk with God, have answered prayers, live a spirit filled life:

- Make yourself aware of how complacent you have been. You cannot stay that way and be where God wants you to be.
- Determine to firmly, solidly, continuously move toward a complete transformation of your normal, usual daily life. Want only what God wants for you.
- Put yourself where God is, not where you want Him to be. Get into His Word, it reveals what He wants. Being disobedient and asking something of God is to talk one way and walk the opposite.
- Spend some time in repenting. You committed your sins one by one, repent of them one by one. Get a pad, begin to make a list, ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember and point out those you never knew about. Then repent of them, one by one. Get rid of all your unrepented of sins.
- Repenting may bring on the need of restitution or an apology. Take care of the debt, settle those hard feelings. Get clean and clear of everything wrong between you and anybody.
- Get serious for a change. Turn off the t.v. Some permanent changes will have to be made to give God the time He wants if you want any permanent spiritual improvements.
- Narrow your interests. Stop "spreading yourself too thin." Let God focus your interests.
- Get out of the house or office, find something to do for God and others. Make yourself available to God and start at the lowest place you can and stay there and let God do the moving.
- Most of all, obey all that God says to do or not do. In faith expect God's presence to be known and prayers to be answered.

8. *"...to obey is better than sacrifice..." "...Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." "...Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I, too, will love him and show myself to him..."*

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Obey and Pray is the proper order to get God to hear.**
- 2. Obedience is first in one's relationship with God.**
- 3. Obedience is one of the hardest things for a Christian to do.**
- 4. Want to be what God wants? Want to live as God wants? Want to honor God? Then OBEY.**