

The Precepts of God's Word

by J.C. Philpot

J.C. Philpot's sermon explores the vital connection between God's precepts and promises, emphasizing the necessity of the Holy Spirit for true obedience rooted in love.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:1, John 14:15, Galatians 5:22, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 John 5:3

Topics: "Gospel Obedience", "Holy Spirit"

Description

J.C. Philpot emphasizes the importance of both precept and promise in God's Word, highlighting that they are equally part of the gospel when experienced under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He warns against legalizing precepts or using them to enforce obedience through fear, as true obedience should flow from love and gospel motives. Philpot stresses that ministers must handle precepts with care, being filled with humility, love, and the Spirit, to lead others to genuine obedience and righteousness.

Transcript

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Some ministers neglect the precept almost as if it did not form as much a part of God's revealed word as the promise; and others legalize it. But precept and promise are alike gospel, when the soul is under the sweet and blessed operations and influences of the Holy Spirit. Without his divine, and sanctifying, and softening influences, what is promise, or what is precept? The first distills no sweetness; the last constrains to no holy obedience. The first little touches the heart; the last little moves the conscience. Each, indeed, remains the same in the word of truth; the one, still full of grace, the other still full of direction; the one pointing to the life of Jesus above, the other to the life of Jesus below; the one tending to produce fruit within, the other to produce fruit without; the one encouraging us to believe, and the other to obey. They are not dissociated in the word of God; nor are they ever separated in experience.

When we feel the sweetness of the promise, we feel the power of the precept; when we love we can obey. And when our obedience to the precept flows from gospel motives, under divine influences, and towards heavenly ends, then and then only do we obey the precept aright. All other obedience ends in self-righteousness. How careful, then, should ministers be to handle the precept aright! And this they only can do when they themselves are under the influences of the Holy Spirit, filling their souls with humility and love, softening and melting their hearts into a conformity to the image of Christ, and breathing into

them the tenderest affection for the people of God.

But to take the precepts and make them up into a scourge, to flog therewith bleeding consciences, will never bring glory to God. It may produce a monkish obedience, a fleshly holiness; but it will never raise up the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Good men sometimes have erred here. Seeing the low state of the churches and the carnal lives of many professors, they have been stirred up as with holy zeal to scourge them into obedience by the precepts. But they have usually toiled in vain; carnal professors will remain carnal still. Chaff was never yet threshed into wheat, nor goats beaten into sheep; and while every stroke tells upon tender consciences, it falls upon seared ones like the snow-flake or the eiderdown.

But admitting that the children of God can be forced into obedience, thereby, is that obedience acceptable? Does Jesus want the service of the slave, or the obedience of the son; the duty of the servant, or the affection of the bride? "If you love me, keep my commandments." "The love of Christ constrains us." "Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, affections of mercy." Promise and precept, love and obedience, grace and its fruits, a believing heart and a holy life, affections in heaven and separation from the world, the fear of God and a departing from evil--are all blended in the word, as they should ever be in the heart, lips, and life of every Christian minister.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jc-philpot/the-precepts-of-gods-word/>

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