

# The Foundation of All Service

by K.P. Yohannan

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*The foundation of genuine godly service is the fear of the Lord, which compels us to obey God just because He is Lord.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 22:12, Psalm 111:10, Matthew 16:24, Luke 2:40, John 15:15, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Philippians 2:7-8, Hebrews 5:7

**Topics:** "Fear Of The Lord", "Obedience"

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## Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the profound relationship between obedience and service to God, using Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac as a powerful example. He highlights that true service stems from a deep reverence and fear of the Lord, which is often lacking in contemporary Christian life. Yohannan challenges the individualistic mindset prevalent in society, urging believers to recognize their identity as servants of Christ, bought with His blood. He calls for a transformation in understanding what it means to walk in the fear of God, which leads to genuine obedience and a fruitful Christian life. Ultimately, he asserts that our service must be built on the foundation of sacrificial love and reverence for God.

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## Transcript

Imagine with me, if you will, the night before Abraham was going to sacrifice his son Isaac: After supper Isaac rolled out his blanket and, a few minutes later, was sound asleep. Not so for Abraham, who didn't close his eyes all night. In the sky over their small camp, he could see the stars shining brightly. They reminded him of the promise God had given him long ago, that one day his descendants would be just as numerous as the stars in the sky. Tears rolled down the old man's face, and he couldn't take his eyes off his beloved Isaac.

He was hurting deeply. Tomorrow he would have to lay his son on an altar and plunge a knife into his heart. How extremely difficult it would be for him to give up Isaac, but there was no complaint as he prepared to sacrifice his son to serve the Lord his God. He was willing to do it, not because he understood God's reason, but simply because the Lord had told him to. What a perfect picture of the type of intimate relationship God wants to have with us! However, this relationship is not possible without our sacrifice of true obedience to Him.

It is nearly impossible for us to picture ourselves as servants or slaves of a supreme ruler. We live in a time and culture in which we are basically the architects and masters of our own lives. Freedom of thought and speech and the right to choose our own destiny are at the very heart of our democratic constitutions.

The forefathers of many nations fought and died in order to give and preserve this freedom, and we rightfully cherish it as our greatest human inheritance. However, when it comes to our relationship with the living God, things are totally different.

The Bible declares that He not only created us for Himself, but that we were bought with a price, the blood of Jesus, and therefore, we are no longer our own! We acknowledge this fact when we repent of our sins and receive the free gift of salvation. Yet even if we declare that we have submitted to Jesus as our Lord, our confessions often have hardly any impact on or relevance to our individualistic lifestyles. Basically, we still keep on doing what we want to do. Paul's description of himself throughout his epistles as a bond servant (or freewill slave) of Jesus Christ is a totally alien concept to us.

We can't even relate to his "slave thinking" whenever he expresses convictions such as this: All that I am and do in the service of my God is because He is Lord. He is my Master, and I have given up the right to run my own life. Moreover, when we are confronted with God's call to lay down one of our own plans and follow His instead, we refuse, debate our options or demand a logical explanation for such a costly requirement. That He alone is God, and we are not, seems to be insufficient grounds for us to submit without reservation.

In fact, we frequently label the call to unconditional obedience as legalism. No wonder our Christian walk and service are so shallow and fruitless--in spite of our Ph.D.s, our extensive personal libraries and our participation in dozens of seminars. What is wrong with us? Why don't we have an intimate relationship with God like Abraham, whom God called His friend? And why are we not a blessing even to our own families, when Abraham became a blessing to all nations? After all, we are God's children and His Spirit dwells in us.

I believe our root problem is that we know nothing about the fear of the Lord that Abraham had in his life. You see, Abraham never considered God as his "buddy" or as a means to get his wishes granted. Most important, Abraham never separated his personal life from his "ministry" or service to the One who called him out of a people of idol worshipers in Ur. He willingly accepted pain, inconvenience and sacrifice in order to worship and serve the living God. When God told him, "Abraham, take your son, your only son, whom you love, and offer him as a sacrifice," he didn't tell anyone.

He hurt deeply but accepted the pain and followed God's instructions. To obey the Lord unseen--in secret--is the foundation of genuine godly service. Abraham had a reverence for His God that did not question His purpose, lordship or wisdom. He did not panic at the thought of how all this would affect the future. He responded with complete obedience, loving Him supremely even in the midst of his greatest pain. Just when Abraham was about to slaughter Isaac on the altar, God held him back and said to him, "Now I know that you fear God" (Genesis 22:12).

The literal translation of this verse actually says, "Now I know that you are a fearer of God." God definitely knew beforehand that Abraham would be willing to follow through with this ultimate sacrifice, but Abraham himself needed to know for sure how far his commitment to God would go. And it is extremely important for us to hear, from God's mouth, the bottom line of Abraham's obedience: the fear of God. For each of us to build our life, family, future and service on the correct foundation, we too must understand what it means to walk in the fear of the Lord.

Luke 2:40 says this about Jesus: "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." How did this happen? Psalm 111:10 tells us, "The fear of the LORD is

the beginning of wisdom," and Hebrews 5:7 testifies that Jesus had this godly fear during His life on earth. Furthermore, when Paul talks about authentic ministry in 2 Corinthians 7:1, he writes, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

We cannot become like Abraham or Jesus without submitting to the fear of the Lord in this manner! But how can we even begin to develop this fear of God, which compels us to obey God just because He is Lord? When God first called Abraham, he had the fear of idol and demon gods in him, but not yet the fear of the true and living God. After all, he didn't know Him or His nature of righteousness and love. Considering this, God did not tell Abraham at their first encounter that down the road He was going to ask Abraham to sacrifice his son.

You see, Abraham first had to grow in his closeness with God and come to a place in which they were very intimate friends before God could entrust to him such a request. A definite start in our quest for the fear of the Lord is walking with Him one step at a time and practicing obedience with a joyful heart and without complaints. Our thinking about our rights must drastically change as well. Actually, we need nothing short of a revelation in our spirit of what it means to be bought with a price--and I believe God will give that to us if we ask Him!

Truly recognizing our place and God's position will place in our hearts the reverence and fear of God that we so desperately need to walk in obedience as Abraham did. Our true service, that which lasts throughout eternity and brings multitudes to Jesus, originates from an Abraham-like sacrifice: a willingness to offer all we are and all we have for His purpose. This sacrifice starts with the fear of God in our hearts. It is time for us to recognize that the God we serve is also a consuming fire.

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