

Law vs Good - Do & Live vs Live & Do

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of grace in producing true obedience in the life of a believer.

Duration: 35:37

Scripture: John 14:15, John 15:5, Romans 8:1-2, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:8-10, Philippians 2:13, Colossians 3:1-3, Hebrews 12:1-2, 2 Peter 1:3-9, 1 John 5:3

Topics: "Christian Life", "Obedience", "Grace vs. Law"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the distinction between law and grace in the context of obedience, explaining that the law demands obedience to achieve life, while grace offers life that naturally leads to obedience. He highlights that true obedience stems from a relationship with Christ, where the Holy Spirit empowers believers to align their hearts with God's will. Beach encourages the congregation to seek the life of Christ in areas of disobedience, asserting that genuine transformation comes from a heart in communion with God. He concludes by urging believers to feed their souls with the Word of God and remain filled with the Spirit to experience a life of obedience.

Transcript

minister from the Word of God tonight, shortly, and trust that God's blessing will be with us. I would like to be able, this evening, to just possibly shed some light on a subject that is talked about very much. It's one that we've all heard.

Jesus talked about it quite a bit. It's the subject of obedience. And I would just like to make a few remarks that I have written down, and then go to the Word of God and share some scripture with you, and hopefully, as a result, the Holy Spirit could possibly give us some more insight into obedience.

How many here desire to have an obedient heart before the Lord? Peter exhorts the Christians that he wrote to, as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former desire. So, Jesus spoke of obedience as being a chief sign, one of the results that would occur in the life of those who love him. He said, if you love me, you'll keep my commandments.

But there's a great struggle today, and I believe that the entire struggle that plagues the Christian heart today in relation to obedience can be very simply understood by identifying the root cause of struggle. Now, listen closely. The root cause of struggle regarding obedience is not a clear understanding between law and grace.

Law and grace. Now, I just want to make two comments that I recently heard, which made a lot of sense. And I don't want this to be some teaching up here.

I want it to be something that you could bring into your lives, something that you can work with, something that could shed hope in your heart regarding that disobedient attitude that you have towards your husband or your wife or your children, or that rebellion in your heart toward a certain person. Don't get filled with theology tonight and then go home and not find the practical expression of that theology in your struggle. That's why we preach and teach the Word of God.

Not so that you can grow in spiritual plateaus of theological understanding, but so you could take it into the real world and make it work. And this will work because it's the Word. So let's just pray a quick prayer.

Let's ask God to help us. We're so dependent on Him. Father, we acknowledge tonight that You have provided in Jesus Christ all things that are necessary for life and godliness.

Lord, we know that You have provided a great redemption that doesn't lack in any good thing. Not only have You provided a redemption, but You have shed Your blood which provides perfect, continual, and eternal forgiveness to all those that have been purchased by it. But not only have You provided redemption in the person of Jesus and the shedding of that incorruptible blood, but You've also given to us the precious Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to stand with us and impart to us the power that we need.

The very life of Christ Himself. Lord, we are dependent tonight upon Your quickening power. We ask that You would take the Word of God and cause it to fall upon good soil that it may bring forth a harvest of righteousness.

For Your sake, Amen. Now, the law says, Do and you shall live. Isn't that basically what the law is summed up as? Now, when I say the law, I mean the commandments in the Old Testament.

God said to Israel, If you will obey these commandments, you will live. Okay? So, the way to life was obedience in the Old Testament. If I failed to obey one of the jot or tittles of the law, I was threatened by an angry God who possibly would wipe my name off the face of the earth.

Obey and you will live. That's law. But beloved, the problem today is that many Christians are caught in that concept and they take this idea into their Christian experience and they attempt to obey God that they may live.

And I would like to suggest tonight that this is a error that has plagued the hearts of so many of God's people and as a result, they don't obey what they're setting to obey. They're constantly failing and they don't know what to do. Now, take this into your experience.

Take this into your life. Take this into your relationship with God. How many have experienced this dilemma of being unable to obey that you may supposedly live? Okay, now watch this.

The law says, do and you shall live. Grace comes along. Jesus comes along and he turns that statement right around and says, live and you will obey.

Got it? The law says, obey and you will live. Jesus comes and introduces grace and grace comes and says live and the result of life in Jesus Christ will produce obedience. So consequently, this is what we learn regarding obedience.

Obedience cannot be realized in practical experience apart from life in Christ. It is the very life of Christ that is working through us and flowing through us that produces the obedience that God commands. Beloved, don't ever, ever suppose that you can somehow find yourself in the state of being obedient to God apart from being in union with Christ, being in fellowship with Christ, being infiltrated in your inner heart and in your inner life with the very life of Jesus himself.

Away with this phony religion that has put great burdens upon God's people of obeying the Bible and obeying the Word of God without offering life in the Son. I suggest to you that such teaching is alienated people from life in the Son. Now, as a result of these statements that I've just made regarding law says obey and you shall live, grace comes along and says what? Live and you shall obey.

In light of these two statements, here are some conclusions that I've drawn which I feel will be helpful to you because I don't know what your experience is, but my experience is this. The closer God draws me to himself, the more I long to be obedient to him. The more I long to be obedient to God, the more I see how disobedient I am.

What a paradox. Who shall deliver me? Thanks be unto God. Through Jesus, there is the secret of obtaining the desire in my heart and your heart.

If so be your desire is indeed to please God. Now, here's some conclusions that we have come to as a result of the statements that we just made. Wherever we fail or fall short in obeying God's commandments.

Now stop right there. The Bible, particularly the New Testament because the New Testament is the interpretation of the Old Testament. So we'll stick to the New Testament now.

It is a very clear teaching in the Bible that Christ came in order to give us the power to obey him. The Bible says in 1 John, we know this scripture. We know this scripture very well.

1 John 5. 1 John 5, verse 3. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous. That's 1 John 5, verse number 3. Now also in John 15. Beloved, John chapter 15, John chapter 14, John chapter 16.

I have seen in my own life and I also observe in the life of others that the central purpose of the Holy Spirit when people become acquainted with him in a close intimate way. The central purpose, here it is. It is to align or may I use another word, readjust.

Align, readjust. Everything in my inner heart that is presently opposed to the will of God which is his commandments. Everything that's opposed to the will of God and bring it into agreement with God.

Now that's not done through my power. That's done through the working of the Holy Spirit. Christ came in order to produce in us the ability to do what we can't do independent of him.

So it is a central theme in the Bible. John chapter 15, or I'm sorry, John chapter 14, verse 15. If you love me, keep my commandments.

Verse 21. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. This is a theme throughout the entire New Testament.

It's a teaching of the apostles. It's a teaching of Jesus. Loving God means keeping his commandments.

Now getting back to our conclusions. Wherever we fail or fall short in obeying God's commandments, we need to seek his life in that area of our heart and then shall we obey. I'll say that again.

Wherever we fail in obeying God's commandments, we need to seek his life in that area of our heart and then shall we obey. Failure to obey God's commandments, in other words, the presence of bitterness or the presence of a gossiping tongue or whatever God says not to do as children of God. The root cause, the root.

Let's not get into trying to analyze the psychological reasons why I'm telling you people are going off on a dead end street because they are missing the root cause to the problem and that is sin, disobedience to God, a heart that is not in agreement with God. And then what they do is they sort of try and hype up the desire to want to obey God. You can't hype yourself up to obey God.

The only thing you could do is touch the Savior, receive of his life and the very life of Christ produces obedience, you see. So, the absence of obedience in my heart means that as I search the word of God and as I allow God to search me, I'm going to discover that the root cause of that disobedience in my life, whatever it may be, unkindness to Colette, harshness to her, impatience, an attitude of being unkind, not reflecting the love of Christ that he has for his church. Husbands, we are commanded.

It's not an option, it's a commandment. God's word isn't an option where well, today I'm going to do it, tomorrow I won't. God says, husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the church.

That's a solemn responsibility. So, if I find myself on occasions being harsh with Colette and impatient, if I'm close to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is going to first of all convict me I'm in disobedience. I'm in disobedience because Jesus came in order to produce in me an obedient heart.

I'm in disobedience. The Bible says you're not supposed to be harsh with your wife. So what I have to do is I have to come to God in contrition and humility and recognize and confess, God, I'm not going to play this religious game and pretend that my heart isn't right with you.

If God shows me that I'm being harsh or impatient, I have sin. I need to get right with God. So I confess my sin to God.

But here's the thing, confessing my sin is not going to make me kind to Colette. How many have found that to be true? You confess your sin, you acknowledge it before God and then two days later what happens? You do the same thing over again. See, we're lacking there's a fundamental error.

We're lacking something. Not only does God call his church to confess their sin and to admit their wrong, but then he calls them to come unto him and receive life. So I'm trying to walk this through for you right down where you live so this doesn't turn into a theology lesson because I don't want to be a theology teacher when it comes to practical things.

See, so I'm harsh with my wife and I recognize that this harshness is creating a lot of overt struggles in our relationship. Norman helped me to understand overt and covert. Probably no one else has the problem I do but I always get them mixed up.

No, I even use the wrong word. See that? Covert, cover. That means it's hidden.

Overt is open. So I like that. I need those kind of things.

So there's a lot of covert struggles in my relationship all because there is a sin in my life. I'm harsh. I'm harsh.

I'm impatient. I'll snap, put my hand down, walk out. Well, praise God.

I'm saved by grace. God understands. Is that the right attitude? No, it's not.

That's what Paul meant when he said, listen, shall I continue to sin that grace may abound? No, beloved. God didn't redeem us in order to just be thankful that God forgives us of our sin but he redeemed us in order to deliver us from the dominion of it so that it doesn't dictate our actions. See? Okay.

God, I realize that because of this one area of disobedience to the Word of God, aren't you glad for the Word? See, this is a mirror. This is a whole other teaching I wanted to get into but I can't do it all. But see, the Word of God is a mirror.

You see, if you get into the world with an open heart, the Word of God will be a mirror and just like a natural mirror will show you what you really look like, guess what the world will do? It will show you your heart. And if I come before God, if I have any kind of a relationship with the Holy Spirit, let me tell you something. If you can look at somebody, your wife, your kids, or even someone in the world, and you can willfully be a real turkey and do something and you can walk away and not feel anything about it, I would really be concerned.

First of all, the Bible says that the love of many shall wax cold in the last days. We've got to be careful that we don't allow our conscience to become seared. Isn't it easy to have a seared conscience in this generation? So easy.

Beloved, you should pray and ask God to give you such a sensitive conscience so that if you would become aware of anything that you did that was wrong, that hurt somebody, it would so break you and so melt you and so bring you down to your knees as to say, Oh God, forgive me and Lord, I'm going to ask the person to forgive me and Lord, I'm going to pray and get my heart changed. That's what the Lord wants to see in his children. Heartfelt contrition.

So this one sin created all these problems and not only does this sin hurt my wife, but guess what I'm teaching my children? I'm teaching my children how to be harsh. Let me tell you something, as young as two years old, they're learning a lot more than you think. Children learn by watching and particularly when it's the role models of mom and dad.

And I've already wept many times because of certain things that my daughters do that they learned from watching their father. And I have to be very careful when I see an attitude that I don't like. When I know from the Holy Spirit it's there because they got it from me.

It sort of discourages me from wanting to spank them. You get that feeling? Your kid have a terrible anger problem and temper? Well, where'd they learn it from? They watch you blow up? They watch you scream? So you see, this is what it means. See, when God reveals our sin to us and the word convicts us, we need to deal with it because the Lord knows it can create all kinds of problems.

So here's one area of harshness and here's what it's doing. It's affecting my wife. It's affecting my children.

What about the church life? What about when you come to church? Can it affect the saints? You sure bet it can. Sure it can affect the saints. So here one little sin and we find that it's affecting our whole world that we live in.

Wow. We need to really understand this matter of obedience to God, but we need to understand it biblically and stop trying to find the power within ourselves to rectify problems that only Jesus can rectify. Forget about this self-help psychology that's infiltrating the Christian church.

Forget about it. You can't get a grip on your rebellion and on your disobedience and on your sin apart from a tangible participation in the life of Jesus. You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

What's Jesus talking about? You shall know theology? No. He was truth. Jesus was truth.

The Son shall set you free. Liberation and freedom and deliverance from the wretched heart is life in the Son. Oh, I like this.

This is good. This gives me encouragement. I don't know about you.

Do you have a sinful heart? Do you have a heart that is bent toward doing what is wrong? If you don't walk in the Holy Ghost and keep yourself in the Word, sure you do. That's why I thank God for the Word of God. Okay.

This is just a case example. You, I believe, can have your own case example. What are we going to do now with this disobedience? Remember what the law says.

Do and you shall live. Grace says live and you shall do. So what's the salute? What's the practical salute? This is good for counseling too.

You know, Christians need to be, they need to be disciplined. God's changing some of my convictions. I was at one time so opposed to sitting down and talking to people.

And the reason why is because the stereotype that was created was the counselor, the counselee picking their brain, trying to get psychology in there. But the Lord is changing my heart. And He's showing me that it's a commandment in the Scripture to make disciples, make disciples of people.

So there's a whole new concept now that's unfolding in my heart regarding the opportunity to be able to sit down with people and show them the Word of God, teach them the Word of God. And that's an incredible privilege. Jesus taught the Word of God.

The early church abided in the apostles' doctrine. So, we've got this problem. What do we do? Jesus taught that if you love Him, you will obey.

Now listen, obedience, that is, a lifestyle of action and behavior that is in agreement with the Word of God. That's what obedience is, to obey. Obedience is the product of life in Christ.

Obedying God's commands suggests an outpouring of God's love and life being daily fulfilled in the believer's life. Therefore, here's our conclusion, therefore, our present disobedience, wherever it is, wherever it is, to any of God's holy commandments which are not grievous, simply reveal an area within our heart that yet lacks the dominion of Christ's life and is still bent towards self-love and the fulfillment of the old man rather than Christ's life. Now, if we, as God's children, could understand that as God deals

with us in relation to areas of our life that He wants to continue to change, if we could confront this dealing in light of this simple biblical teaching and principle, we would find victory after victory after victory and enjoy the beautiful growth that God could give to each and every one of us.

God's word shows us that disobedience is rooted in the heart. Jesus came to change hearts. So, therefore, as we tackle the problem of disobedience at the root rather than on superficial levels... You know, lots of times Christians try to change through reformation or they change their environment.

I know one person just a few nights ago said he wants to go to Alaska. He's just tired of all the things that are happening. He's sure that Alaska will be the answer.

All of my problems I'll leave behind. I'll go to Alaska. And with tears running down my face, I said, Brother, if you went to Alaska, you would bring all of your troubles with you because your troubles are not the things happening to you externally.

Your troubles are the things happening to you internally. You see? So, let us ask God to help us learn the lesson that when there's a problem in our life, it is always traced to a heart problem. Less is due and you shall live.

But when you have a heart problem, you can't do, you can't obey no matter how hard you try. But you can come to God with a humble, a broken, and a contrite spirit and pray for grace and life in the Son. And when life and grace begins to flood that area of your heart where you are opposed to God, which is the result of that fruit of disobedience, when that grace begins to shine in that area of your life, grace does something.

Grace rearranges. Grace readjusts. And suddenly the life of Christ being shed abroad into our hearts by the Holy Ghost begins to affect us and bring us into union with His life.

And then His life begins to take over that area of our life. And where there's harshness and impatience, suddenly the fruit of patience and gentleness and kindness begins to grow. And God is glorified in a most incredible way.

In closing, short teaching. I could go on, but that's enough. We've got time.

We're not going anywhere. We'll be here Sunday and Wednesday and Sunday. But in closing, this is a perfect Scripture.

2 Peter, one of my favorites, 2 Peter. Let's just read chapter 1, verses 1 through 9. In closing. Now here's the Word of God.

And the Word of God agrees with this process of life. 2 Peter, chapter 1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

According as His divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him. You see, as the soul grows in the knowledge of Him, we then appropriate the life and power from Him to obey His commands. See, it's an ongoing thing.

It's an initial knowledge that we receive when we're born again, but then it's a continued knowledge. Philippians chapter 3, that I may know Him. We've already taught that Paul knew Jesus already.

He'd been saved for 30 years. But the soul, the man, the man Paul was still desiring to know Him because as he knew Him more fully, his life was more formed in him, which resulted in a greater experience in union with Christ. So, He's given us through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that is, in the knowledge of Him, that by these we might be partakers of divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And beside this, giving all diligent, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love or charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind or nearsighted and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Beloved, this progression of Christ's virtues being manifest in the believer's life is raw in this exact manner. Not as we do, then we grow and become filled with faith and knowledge and temperance. No, it's not as we do, but it's as we live, as we touch him more and more, as the soul more and more enters into a communion with him that results in the putting down of the old and the rising up of the new.

And this is just a description of the new man who is in Christ Jesus. So, be encouraged tonight, beloved. And remember, your doing God's commandments will be in direct relation to your living in Christ.

So, may I encourage you to feed your soul with the rich Word of God and to be filled with the Spirit daily. And the result will be a life of blessed obedience to God and there's no other life that's better. Amen? Any questions?

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