

JOHN BEVERE

The
Awe
of
God

A 6-WEEK SERMON SERIES

Lesson 4: Trembling at God's Word

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Outline:

1. Getting God's Attention
2. Obey God immediately.
3. Obey God even if it doesn't make sense.
4. Obey God even when you don't see a personal benefit.
5. Obey God even if it is painful.
6. Obey God to completion.
7. Close

Getting God's Attention

Let's consider a time-period when God's people drifted into a place that they selectively obeyed His Word.

Isaiah 66:1

"Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Could you build me a temple as good as that?"

If we read the first five verses of this chapter in context, we find the Almighty addressing people who have attempted to develop and maintain a relationship with Him **on their own terms**.

God makes it clear, their chosen path is offensive, but straightaway gives what's required to enter an authentic relationship:

Isaiah 66:2

"**I will bless** those who have humble and contrite hearts, who *tremble at my word*."

The term '**I will bless**' is the Hebrew verb defined as:

- "To look, to watch, to regard. It has the sense of looking somewhat intensely in a focused way at something."
- God is saying, "This is the person who I will pay close attention to."

Three virtues are listed:

1. Humility
2. A contrite heart
3. Those who, '*tremble at my word*.' (We'll focus on the third virtue)

The one who *trembles at God's Word* always exalts what He says above anything else.

Philippians 2:12 | NKJV

My beloved, as you have *always obeyed*, not as in my presence only, but now *much more in my absence*, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Think of this statement not as Paul writing to the believers in Philippi, but as God speaking directly to us.

- Focus on the words, 'always obeyed;' it means unconditional.
- This would apply to whether you sense His presence or don't, whether you see Him moving on your behalf or don't, whether your prayer is answered in your expected time frame or not.

It is easy to obey God when . . .

- You are in a conference setting and the presence of God is strong.
- When things are going your way, life is good, and people are nice to you.

But what about when . . .

- a 'trusted' team member lies about you, and you're fired from your position. Will you forgive according to His word or retaliate to get even?
- What if you're on a business trip, feeling lonely because your spouse has been critical. Your team member, who's the opposite sex and good looking, compliments you, speaks to your need, then seductively offers to spend the evening together in the hotel room. No one will find out. Will you flee or accept?
- What if you're working late on your computer surfing the web for needed information for your job, but you run across porn? Do you engage?

These are incidents when God's presence seems absent. If you tremble at His Word, you will obey no matter the circumstances because there is no greater precedence.

The person who fears God always obeys.

This person, **at the core** of his or her being, is unmovable from **the following foundational truths**:

1. God is the one who knows what's right for me.
2. God is pure love, and I am the focus of His love.

3. God will never tell me to do anything that is detrimental. Whatever He says will always end up best.
4. No matter what He says, I gladly choose to obey.

The 5 Proofs of a Person Who Trembles at God's Word

1. Obey God immediately.
2. Obey God even if it doesn't make sense.
3. Obey God even when you don't see a personal benefit.
4. Obey God even if it is painful.
5. Obey God to completion.

1. Obey God Immediately

There are numerous Scriptures we could look at, but to set a precedence we'll look at two statements from Jesus:

Many missed opportunities are recorded in Scripture resulting from delayed obedience, in fact, too many to list, but I'll select one more that's riveting.

Jesus says to a man:

Luke 9:59a

“Come, follow me.”

The man's response:

Luke 9:59b

But he said, “Lord, let me *first* go and bury my father.”

Wow, what an invitation, the Lord of all creation invites you to walk with Him!

- The man *agreed*, but with a condition, he said, ‘Lord *first* let me...’
- The man *agreed* to follow Jesus, but he *delayed* it by putting his personal interests *first*.
- **He needed to go and bury his father.** Scholars tell us in those times when a first-born son buried his father he received a double portion of the inheritance, while the other sons received a single portion. However, if he didn't fulfill his duty, it would fall to the second-born. His excuse seemed legitimate, and the delay didn't fall under the category of ‘sin.’
- **Money was more important than instant obedience to God.**
- He missed his opportunity.

Another was given the same invitation. This man responded,

Luke 9:57-62

“Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but *first* let me say good-bye to my family.”

- Again, we hear the word *first*; and again, his reason for delay didn't fall under the category of 'sin.'

Then we read:

Luke 10:1 | NKJV

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face.”

These two men would have been included in the seventy. But they delayed their obedience from a lack of godly fear.

When we are slow, or neglect, to obey God for any person (including ourselves) or purpose, we honor that person or purpose above honoring God. It's a lack of holy fear.

When what is not sin takes precedence over the word of the Lord, it becomes sin.

In my years of ministering to God's people . . .

- I often hear people share, “God has been dealing with me about this matter for a couple months,” and laugh it off as if it's trivial or comical. They lack holy fear!

What if . . .

- **Moses** delayed turning aside from his busy activities of tending the flocks to see the great sight of the burning bush (see Exodus 3)?
- What if **Noah** delayed building the ark?
- What if **Abram** delayed going to Canaan? His dad did, for he was the first called to go to Canaan. What his dad missed in his delay; Abraham fulfilled (see Genesis 11:31).

The bottom line is:

When we tremble at His Word, we obey God immediately.

If I delay my obedience to God's Word for personal excuses, I communicate that His will is secondary in importance.

2. Obey God Even if it Doesn't Makes Sense

Has the Holy Spirit led you to do something that didn't make sense?

- Most who've walked closely with God for any length of time would answer, "Yes."

Did it make sense after you obeyed; sometimes immediately, or even, a while later?

- The answer is almost always 'yes.'

It's not a common occurrence that God asks us to do something that doesn't make sense to our understanding. But it does happen!

Let's ask questions...

- **Did it make sense to spit into the dirt and put the mud on a blind man's eye and then tell him to go wash it off?**
- **Did it make sense to pour water into wine containers in the middle of a wedding when what was needed was more wine?**
- **Did it make sense to instruct experienced sailors to go against their instinct and training; to not abandon a sinking ship when lifeboats were readily available?**
- **Did it make sense for a man to leave a city-wide revival meeting, one that God used him to initiate, and obey the command to go out in the middle of the desert?**
- **Did it make sense to walk around towering and fortified walls of a large city quietly for six days, and then on the seventh day, do the same seven**
- **Does it make sense to forgive those who have hurt you, your family, or someone close to you? -- Shouldn't they pay?**
- **Does it make sense to love those who hate you? -- Shouldn't they be given the cold shoulder?**

- **Does it make sense to do good to those who have mistreated you? --**
Shouldn't you 'get even' with them?
- **Does it make sense to honor those who treat you dishonorably? --**
Shouldn't they be told off?

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; *do not depend on your own understanding*.
Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

The person who fears God obeys, even when it doesn't make sense.

There are times God will tell us to do something that just doesn't make sense to our own understanding.

Matthew 11:19

“*Wisdom* is shown to be *right* by its *results*.”

The Lord's wisdom far exceeds ours. The person who fears God obeys, even when it doesn't make sense.

3. Obey God Even When You Don't See a Personal Benefit

Here's a sad reality, especially in the Western Church:

To get believers interested in **obedience**, **benefits** must be emphasized.

Think about it.

1. Would we come 30 minutes early for a front row seat to hear a message on holiness?
2. Are book titles emphasizing obedience making the best-sellers lists?
3. Has leadership strayed from confrontational truth to accommodate this trend?
4. Have numerous ministers succumbed to the pressure of gratifying itching ears with inspiring stories, rather than calling God's people to deny themselves to follow Jesus?

In shunning God's wisdom, we actually hurt ourselves.

Psalm 19:11

There is “a great reward for those who obey” God’s Word.

It’s dangerous to be motivated by incentives.

- Why? If the benefit isn’t obvious, will we have the same resolve to obey God’s instructions?
- Most likely it will be swallowed up by personal interests.

Esther Story

Esther 4:15-16

“Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I **will go** in to see the king. *If I must die, I must die.*”

This is why the fear of the Lord is so crucial, it motivates obedience, whether a reward is obvious or not.

4. Obey God Even if it is Painful

Jesus is a great example of obeying God, even if it is painful.

- He willingly obeyed the Father’s request even though it would necessitate tremendous suffering.

The night before the crucifixion, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus cried out in anguish...

Matthew 26:39

“My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

The conflict between **obedience** and **self-preservation** was so intense that Jesus sweat great drops of blood.

What motivated his degree of obedience?

Hebrews 5:7

While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears...And God heard his prayers because of *his deep reverence for God*.

His deep holy fear empowered Him to face and endure what human nature would run from.

In the same way we are told:

1 Peter 4:1 | NKJV

Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, *arm yourselves* also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

An Important Point

False religion will seek out suffering for the sake of pleasing the ‘god’ it serves. True Christianity seeks to obey God, and in the process faces a fallen world’s resistance, and in turn, suffers from it. This is what pleases God, not seeking out hardship. Suffering can occur physically or mentally, the pain of either is very real.

Peter instructs us to *arm ourselves*.

- Can you imagine **a military going to war** without any planes, ships, tanks, guns, bullets, knives - without any arms? Just the thought of it seems Ludacris.
- It’s just as crazy for a believer to be unprepared to suffer, yet many are.

An unarmed believer can easily bypass hardship for the sake of self-preservation. The fear of the Lord is what arms us; it maintains a deep resolve in our will to obey God no matter what suffering it may entail.

5. Obey God to Completion

Let’s return to Jesus’ example,

Matthew 26:53-34

“Don’t you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?”

Obedience to completion was paramount to Jesus.

- My High School Locker Room, I wasn't a believer, but there was a poster in our locker-room that riveted me. I'd see it every afternoon after basketball practice. It had an athlete sitting with his head hung low saying, "I quit." Below that image was a picture of Jesus hanging on the cross saying, "I didn't quit."
- As an unbeliever that left an indelible impression on me. Now that I understand that Jesus could have avoided the gruesome treatment and brutal death, but rather **chose to continue in obedience**, until He could finally say, "It is finished," it carries much more weight.

He set the example for us to fully obey - to the finish whatever God entrusts to us.

Now we can better understand His instructions to the disciples when they cried out for their faith to be increased:

Luke 17:10

“When you have done *all those things* which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”

His words “all those things” take on a whole new level of meaning.

Let's always obey to completion.

Close

Let's recap...

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