

The Lord's Way Is Best

Joe Slater

Words like submit and obey rub many people's fur the wrong way. Let's face it – the fleshly part of us balks at the idea of yielding to the will of another. No wonder Frank Sinatra's best-seller "My Way" is one of the most often-requested songs at funerals!

Even we who have pledged our obedience to God sometimes object when His word tells us to submit and obey other people. For example, when Colossians 3:18 instructs wives to "*submit to your own husbands,*" what picture comes to your mind? Is it the stereotypical cave man with a club in one hand, dragging around his poor, bedraggled, passive wife by her hair with his other hand? That's not Biblical submission! Just look at the rest of the sentence and the one following. A wife's submission to her husband is "*fitting in the Lord.*" And husbands are to love their wives and not be bitter toward them (3:18-19).

The same pattern holds true for children and parents (vv. 20-21). Children are to obey their parents. Why? Because "*this is well-pleasing to the Lord.*" But fathers are commanded not to provoke their children, lest they become discouraged.

Paul also told slaves to obey their fleshly masters in all things (3:22-24). Why? Because by doing so, "*you serve the Lord Christ*" (v. 24). Therefore they were to serve with heart-felt sincerity and reverence for God at all times, not just when the master was looking. And masters were also commanded to be just and fair with their servants, knowing that the Heavenly Master will punish those earthly masters who are abusive (3:25 – 4:1).

Let us abandon false, stereotypical ideas about submission and obedience. The Lord's way is best!

MOVING ON

There is a Peanuts comic strip where Linus says, "Maybe we should only think about today." Charlie Brown disagrees. "No, that's giving up. I'm still hoping yesterday will get better." There might be a little bit of truth in both of their perspectives. We know that we can't change what happened yesterday, but we can learn from yesterday's sins and mistakes, and – with God's help – we can use that knowledge to make a better tomorrow.

Think of all the examples we have from the Bible. Many of them made bad mistakes, but did not let it keep them down, and they went on to do great things. Paul started out persecuting the church, yet he became one of the greatest servants the church has ever known. Moses doubted God when he was first being called, but went on to lead God's people out of Egypt. Peter walked on water only to take his eyes off of Jesus and begin to sink. He often stuck his foot on his mouth and denied three times that He was one of Jesus' disciples or even knew Him. But he went on to preach on the day of Pentecost and was a great leader in the church.

The question for us is not whether or not we have made mistakes – we all have. The question is, "What have we done with those mistakes?" Have we learned from them and moved on, or do we let them continue to drag us down? It is not the mistake that will define us – it is what we decide to do with it afterwards.

Embrace God's grace, move on, and become the person God has called you to be!

--Luke Bower (Abilene, TX) via *Old Paths* (adapted)

THE BEAUTY OF REST

People need rest from time to time. After a long day of work, or school, or traveling, the body and the mind needs a good rest. When we get sick, or are in chronic pain, one of the doctor's prescriptions is typically rest. Even though some vacations can end up being exhausting, the idea is that they are to be a time of rest and relaxation. We have all heard the old principle "a body in motion stays in motion, and a body at rest tends to stay at rest," but sometimes taking a break from the rigors of everyday life is needed. Rest can be a beautiful thing.

There is an eye-opening illustration given to us by the writer of Hebrews in chapters 3 and 4 concerning rest. He describes the Israelites' exodus out of Egypt and their journey through the wilderness. Also included, is the description of entering the Promised Land with "rest." After such hardship from their time in slavery, as well as their arduous journey after being set free, such a rest would have been a wonderful thing. However, while all were given the promise of this rest, not all received it. We read that some did not enter God's rest because they were "disobedient," in addition to their "unbelief" (3:18-19). How sad they must have felt!

Such an example is given to encourage the Christian readers to remain faithful and obedient to God. He says that we have had "good news preached to us," and that a "promise remains of entering His rest" (4:1-2). This rest for us is the eternal Promised Land. What a beautiful rest that will be! No more pain, sickness, or suffering. Just a never-ending rest in the presence of our Lord and Savior. However, we cannot forget that there are contingencies concerning our promised rest. That is why the writer says for us to "be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience" (4:11). We must not make the same mistake as the Israelites did! May we all continue to trust in God, remaining faithful no matter what happens, and obey His commands. In so doing we will enter into our beautiful and eternal rest.

--Jesse LeMay (Augusta, KS)