

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 461

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will feature this beautiful benediction: **"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." (Rom 16:25-27)**

I am indebted to the late Given Blakely for reminding me of these inspired words and pointing out the obvious. The power to live the Christian life comes through Jesus, and we access that power by the "obedience of faith".

Please consider! Faith = obedience. Disobedience = lack of faith.

There is an obvious connection between what you "believe" and what you "do". For example, the New American Standard Bible translates John 3:36 as: **"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."** The KJV translates the same verse as **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."** Note that the Greek verb "apeitheo" has been translated in two different ways. In the ASV it has been translated as "not obey" and in the KJV it has been translated as "believeth not". Both translations are correct for "disobedience" equals "unbelief". That's why Paul spoke of "the obedience of faith"!

The Scriptures remind us that Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Rom. 4:3.) The Bible also emphasizes that Abraham obeyed God and kept His charge, commandments, statutes, and laws (Gen. 26:5.) To say that Abraham believed God, and that Abraham obeyed God is to say the same thing. Faith = obedience!

Even more explicit are the inspired words of James, the brother of our Lord: **"Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone."** (James 2:21-24)

Obviously, there are degrees of faith. The Scriptures refer to little faith (Matt. 6:30,) great faith (Matt. 8:10,) the increase of faith (Lk. 17:5,) faith as a grain of mustard seed (Lk., 17:6,) men full of faith (Acts 6:8,) all faith that can move mountains ( I Cor. 13:2,) etc. This does not negate the fact that faith equals obedience. When the Scriptures teach that faith without works is dead (James 2:24,) it refers to the same kind of "faith" the demons have. Faith without obedience is too deficient to be a saving faith. Peter had some faith, but denied the Lord three times, obviously, his faith at that time was deficient. Please ponder these words: **"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."** (Luke 22:31-34)

It is important to understand that it is possible to have some obedience without faith. An animal, for example, can be trained to obey, but can never have a saving faith. God does not want us to be like a horse or a mule who are forcibly controlled by bit and bridle. He wants to guide us with His eye

(Ps.32:8-9). Ezekiel predicted the “obedience of faith” with these words: **“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”** (Ezek 36:26-27)

Since the more faith we have, the more obedient we are, it behoves each of us to pray: “Lord, increase our faith.” Faith, however, comes by hearing, and not by law. The Scriptures categorically declare that the “law is not of faith” (Gal. 3:12.) The emphasis of law is “doing” not “believing.” What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God has accomplished through the obedience of faith and the indwelling Spirit. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith (1 John 5:4).

Hebrews 11 is called the “faith chapter of the Bible”. Please note how many times we are told in this chapter what these believers “did”. Their faith caused them to be obedient! In this chapter is a list of some of the great heroes and heroines of the faith **“who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.”** (Heb. 11:33-34)

Yes! **“This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”** (1 John 5:4) Please do not put any limits on the obedience of your faith!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce