God has always been at work in our world. He is now at work where you are. God always will take the initiative to come to you and reveal what He is doing, or what He is about to do. When He does, this will be His invitation for you to join Him.

Joining Him will require major adjustments of your life to Him, so He can accomplish His will through you. When you know what God has said, what He is about to do, and have adjusted your life to Him, there is yet one remaining necessary response to God.

To experience Him at work in and through you, you must obey Him. When you obey Him, He will accomplish His work through you; and you will come to know Him by experience.

For review, see if you can write the seven realities in your own words using the “hints” below.

1. Work—
2. Love relationship—
3. Invitation—
4. Speaks—
5. Crisis—
6. Adjust—
7. Obey—

Check your answers against the Introduction Lesson.
I have listed three actions from reality 7. Number them in the order that they occur as you follow God’s will. 1=first, 2=second, 3=third.

_____a. You come to know God by experience.
_____b. You obey Him.
_____c. He accomplishes His work through you.

After God has taken the initiative to involve you in His work, you believe Him and adjust your life to Him. Only then do you get to the place of obedience. You must obey Him first. Then, He will accomplish His work through you. When God does a God-sized work through your life, you come to know Him intimately by experience. The answer to the last question is a-3, b-1, c-2. Let’s consider each of these aspects of God’s work more fully.

According to John 14:15, 24 and the other Scriptures we have covered in our study, we can draw some conclusions about loving God and obedience.

- Obedience is the outward expression of your love of God.
- The reward for obedience and love is that He will reveal Himself to you.
- If you have an obedience problem, you have a love problem.
- God is love. His will is always best.
- God is all knowing. His directions are always right.
- God is all powerful. He can enable you to do His will.
- If you love Him, you will obey Him!

**Obedience**

Jesus said that the one who is in intimate relationship with Him (“brother,” “sister,” “mother”) is the one who does the will of the Heavenly Father (Matt. 12:50). Jesus clearly said that by obedience a person indicates his love relationship with God (John 14:15-21).

James in his letter to the believers went to great lengths to indicate that faith that does not obey in actions is dead, or has no life. When the disciples obeyed Jesus, they saw and experienced God’s mighty power working in and around them. When they did not act in faith and do His will, they did not experience His mighty work.
In many ways, obedience is your moment of truth. What you DO will:
1. reveal what you believe about Him.
2. determine whether you will experience His mighty work in and through you.
3. determine whether you will come to know Him more intimately.

Read 1 John 2:3-6. Count the number of times the word know appears. Pay attention to the words keeping His commands or keeps His word.

**1 John 2:3-6 (Holman CSB)**

“This is how we are sure that we have come to know Him: by keeping His commands. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” without keeping His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly in him the love of God is perfected. This is how we know we are in Him: the one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked.”

1. How can you know that you have come to know God in Jesus Christ?

2. What is one clear indication that a person does not know Him?

3. What does God do in the life of anyone who obeys His Word?

When you come to a moment of truth when you must choose whether to obey God, you cannot obey Him unless you believe and trust Him. You cannot believe and trust Him, unless you love Him. You cannot love Him, unless you know Him.

Each “new” command of Jesus will require a new knowledge and understanding of Him. The Holy Spirit will teach you about Jesus, so you can trust Him and obey Him. Then you will experience Him in new ways. This is how you grow in Him. As 1 John 2:3-6 says when you come to know Him you will obey Him. If you do not obey Him, that indicates that you do not know Him.

Jesus stated it a different way when He said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ didn’t we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?’ Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!’ ” (Matt. 7:21-23). Obedience is very important.
The Importance of Obedience

If you know that God loves you, you should never question a directive from Him. It will always be right and best. When He gives you a directive, you are not to observe it, discuss it, or debate it. You are to obey it.

Read the following Scriptures and note the word obey in each. Answer the question that follows.

Deuteronomy 28:1, 8 “Now if you faithfully obey the Lord your God and are careful to follow all His commands I am giving you today, the Lord your God will put you far above all the nations of the earth... The Lord will grant you a blessing on your storehouses and on everything you do.”

Deuteronomy 28:15, 20 “If you do not obey the Lord your God by carefully following all His commands and statutes I am giving you today, ... The Lord will send against you curses, confusion, and rebuke in everything you do until you are destroyed and quickly perish because of the wickedness of your actions in abandoning Me.”

How important is obedience? _____________________________________
_______________________________________________________________

List some of the benefits of obedience found in the following Scriptures.

Jeremiah 7:23 “Obey Me, and then I will be your God, and you will be My people. You must walk every way I command you so that it may go well with you.”

Benefit of obedience: ___________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________

Luke 6:46-49 “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do the things I say? I will show you what someone is like who comes to Me and hears my words and acts on them: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. When the flood came, the river crashed against that house and couldn’t shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The river crashed against it, and immediately it collapsed. And the destruction of that house great!”
Benefit of obedience: ___________________________________________

John 7:16-17 “Jesus answered them, ‘My teaching isn’t Mine but is from the One who sent Me. If anyone wants to do His will, he will understand whether the teaching is from God or if I am speaking on My own.’ ”

Benefit of obedience: ___________________________________________

God blesses those who are obedient to Him (Deut. 28:1-14). The benefits of obedience are beyond our imagination; but they include being God’s people (Jer. 7:23), having a solid foundation when the storms of life come against you (Luke 6:46-49), and knowing spiritual truth (John 7:16-17).

Rebellion against God is the opposite of obedience. Disobedience is a serious rejection of God’s will. Deuteronomy 28:15-68 speaks of some of the costs of disobedience. (For further study on the results of obedience and disobedience see Deut. 30 and 32.)

How do you think God would describe your level of obedience?

What (if anything) do you know God wants you to do that you are not doing?

Consider this prayer for your own life:

Teach me, Lord, the meaning of Your statutes,
and I will always keep them.
Help me understand Your instruction, and I will obey it
and follow it with all my heart.
Help me stay on the path of Your commands,
for I take pleasure in it.
—Psalm 119:33-35
Disobedience is Costly

Disobedience is never taken lightly by God. Jonah’s disobedience almost cost him his life. Moses’ murder of the Egyptian cost him 40 years in the wilderness. David’s sin with Bathsheba cost the life of his son. Paul’s early ministry was greatly hindered because of his disobedience. Many people were afraid to get near him because of his reputation as a persecutor of Christians.

God is interested in developing your character. At times He lets you proceed, but He will never let you go too far without discipline to bring you back. In your relationship with God, He may let you make a wrong decision. Then the Spirit of God causes you to recognize that it is not God’s will. He guides you back to the right path. He will clarify what He wants. He will even take the circumstance of your disobedience and work that together for good (Rom. 8:28) as He corrects you and teaches you His ways.

Even though God forgives and often gives second chances, you must not take disobedience lightly. Sometimes He does not give a second chance. Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu, were disobedient in offering unholy incense to the Lord; and God struck them dead (Lev. 10).

Moses stole God’s glory in front of all Israel and struck the rock saying, “Listen, you rebels! Must we bring water out of this rock for you?” (Num. 20:10). Notice the word “we.” God was the One who would bring water from the rock. Moses took God’s glory, and God refused to take away the consequences of that disobedience. He refused to allow Moses to go with Israel into the Promised Land.

God loves you. He wants what is the very best for you. That is why He gives you the commands and instructions He does. His commands are not to limit or restrict you but to free you to experience the most meaningful life possible.

What examples have you seen in your life or those of others you know that you would add to these instances?

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Take time to pray for someone you know who is suffering because of their own or another person’s disobedience.
Affirmation After Obedience

When we hear God invite us to join Him, we often want a sign: “Lord, prove to me this is you, and then I will obey.” When Moses stood before the burning bush and received his invitation to join God, God told him that he would receive a sign that God sent him. God told Moses, “This will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain” (Ex. 3:12). In other words: “Moses, you obey me. I will deliver Israel through you. You will come to know me as your Deliverer, and you will stand on this Mountain and worship Me.” God’s affirmation that He had sent Moses was going to come after Moses obeyed, not before. This is most frequently the case in Scripture. The affirmation comes after the obedience.

Only in the act of obedience did Moses begin to experience the full nature of God. What he began to know about God grew out of his obedience to God. In Moses’ life we can see this pattern of God speaking, Moses obeying, and God accomplishing what He purposed to do.

Read Exodus 7:1-6 and answer the questions for each.

1. What was Moses commanded to do? (v. 2) ______________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

2. What did God say He was going to do? (v. 4) _____________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

3. What would be the result when Moses obeyed and God did what He said? (v. 5)
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

4. What practical lessons do you get from this example from Scripture?
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
Questions and Answers

Let’s end our time together with a couple of practical questions I am commonly asked. Perhaps these are questions you, too, have been asking.

Q: Why does God seem to be working so slowly in my life?

Jesus had been with His disciples about three years when He said, “I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears. He will also declare to you what is to come” (John 16:12-13). He had more He needed to teach them, but they were not ready to receive it. Jesus knew, however, that the Holy Spirit would continue to guide these disciples into truth on God’s time table.

You may be saying, “God, hurry up and make me mature.”

And God is saying, “I’m moving just as fast in your life as you will allow me. When you are ready for your next lesson, I will bring a new truth into your life.” Grass that is here today and gone tomorrow does not require much time to mature. A big oak tree that lasts for generations requires much more time to grow and mature. God is concerned about your life through eternity. Allow Him to take all the time He needs to shape you for His purposes. Larger assignments will require longer periods of preparation.

Q: Why doesn’t God give me a big assignment?

God might say to you, “You are asking Me to involve you in my great movements, but I am trying to get you simply to understand how to believe Me. I can’t give you that assignment yet.” God has to lay some basic foundations in your life before He can prepare you for the larger tasks.

On the night before Jesus’ crucifixion Peter said, “Lord, . . . I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!” Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, . . . the rooster will not crow today until you deny three times that you know Me!” (Luke 22:33-34). Is it possible that He also knows exactly what you would do? Trust Him. Do not insist that God give you something that you think you are ready for. That could lead to your ruin.

God is far more interested in accomplishing His kingdom purposes than you are. He will move you into every assignment that He knows you are ready for.
Let God orient you to Himself. The servant does not tell the Master what kind of assignment he needs. The servant waits on his Master for the assignment. So be patient and wait. Waiting on the Lord should not be an idle time for you. Let God use times of waiting to mold and shape your character. Let God use those times to purify your life and make you into a clean vessel for His service.

As you obey Him, God will prepare you for the assignment that is just right for you. Any assignment, however, that comes from the Maker of the universe is an important assignment. Don’t use human standards to measure the importance or value of an assignment.

Write a summary prayer expressing to God your desires for what you have learned in this study.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________