

# **WHY BOTHER TO OBEY GOD?**

## **John 14:15-24**

“Robert Kupferschmid was an 81-year-old with no flying experience. However, due to a tragic emergency, he was forced to fly an airplane. On June 17, 1998, he and his 52-year-old pilot friend, Wesley Sickle, were flying from Indianapolis to Muncie, Indiana. During the flight, the pilot slumped over and died at the controls. The Cessna 172 single-engine plane began to nose-dive and Kupferschmid grabbed the controls. He got on the radio and pleaded for help.

“Nearby were two pilots who heard the call. Mount Comfort was the closest airport, and the two pilots gave Kupferschmid a steady stream of instructions of climbing, steering, and—the scariest part—landing. The two experienced pilots circled the runway three times before this somewhat frantic and totally inexperienced pilot was ready to attempt the landing.

“Emergency vehicles were called out and ready for what seemed like an approaching disaster. Witnesses said the plane's nose nudged the center line

and bounced a few times before the tail hit the ground. The Cessna ended up in a patch of soggy grass next to the runway. Amazingly, Kupferschmid was not injured.

“This pilot listened and followed those instructions as if his life depended on it—and it did. Imagine what would take place in the lives of believers if we listened to and obeyed the Word of God with the same earnestness.”<sup>1</sup>

As we read the passage for today from John 14:15-31, listen carefully and see if you detect any similarity between what Jesus says and the story we have just read.

John 14:15-31 NAS:

<sup>15</sup> *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*

<sup>16</sup> *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;*

<sup>17</sup> *that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.*

<sup>18</sup> *"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

<sup>19</sup> *"After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.*

<sup>20</sup> *"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*

<sup>21</sup> *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."*

<sup>22</sup> *Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"*

<sup>23</sup> *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.*

<sup>24</sup> *"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.*

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<sup>1</sup> "Citation: Gregg Donnelly, Maple Plain, Minnesota," in – *Perfect Illustrations: For Every Topic and Occasion*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2002), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "O".

<sup>25</sup> *"These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you.*

<sup>26</sup> *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

<sup>27</sup> *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.*

<sup>28</sup> *"You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.*

<sup>29</sup> *"Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.*

<sup>30</sup> *"I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;*

<sup>31</sup> *but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.*

Well, what do you think? Do you see any similarities between the story

about the inexperienced pilot and what Jesus' is teaching everyone who reads this passage?

If you were to count the number of times Christ refers to “*you*” in this passage, you would find that the total would come to thirty-six. Thirty-six times in just seventeen verses Christ addresses His comments to you (I also included the times “him“ was used to refer to you). This might lead you to believe that Jesus thinks that life is all about you, and in so many ways you would be right. Of course Jesus is more aware than anybody that all of life is all about God and that we should structure our lives to be all about God as well. Jesus was the perfect example of this and when I read about how He conducted His life and that He was completely obedient to God, I am always overcome by a wave of shame and guilt for how often I disobey Him and sometimes I do it willingly. Someone said to me the other day when referring to Himself: “*God is probably up there kicking a cloud saying, ‘He did it again! He did it again! What is wrong with him.’*” When the truth is that God is probably sitting on His throne looking down at so many of His children with a tear in His eye and an ache in His heart thinking:

- There’s John, my son, drinking again. He’s ruining the fine body I gave

him; he's ruining the lives of his wife and children; and he's preventing Me from blessing him in the way I would like. Of course I'll forgive Him because that sin has been covered by Jesus' blood, but I sure would be a lot happier and I could do a lot more for him if he would just be **obedient to my commands**.

- There's Martha, my daughter, making trouble again among the women in her church. She thrives on gossip and half-truths and thinks only of herself. If she doesn't stop, she is going to be the cause of a church split that will cause the pastor and many others a lot of heartache. I wish she'd have the good sense and the faith to come to Me and confess the things she knows she's doing wrong, but she won't even do that. How much better a life she would have if she just **obeyed My commands**.
- There's Fred. He says he's a Unitarian. He believes in himself and his abilities to reason and make the best rational decisions. Who does he think gave him the ability to think at all? What a pity he takes his God-given talents and puts them to use serving Satan. He is breaking My heart because one day I'll be forced by his behavior to send him to Hell. If only he would investigate the truth that is found in the Bible. If only he would

ask Me to reveal the truth to him. But he isn't even willing to do that. His pride is going to prevent Him from going to Heaven. If only he would **obey my commands**. If only he would start attending Village Church, as they've invited him to do. Then he would learn the truth and the truth would set him free.

- There's George. He claims to believe in God. He prays to him, talks about him to his friends, and claims a personal relationship with him. Unfortunately it's a god that he has created in his own mind, a god that will not require him to be obedient. George sets his own standards and that is no better than making yourself your own god, and that is the sin of idolatry (worshipping false gods). What a waste of time. If he only knew that he is worshipping a god that is going to lead him straight to Hell, even though he doesn't believe that could happen. For the most part he's a good man, he's honest, he's fair, he treats his employees well, and he is considerate of others. But Satan has a lot of servants like that and they are all fools. Neither does he realize that he is leading his family and friends down that road to Hell as well because they respect him and therefore accept the views he promotes. And when the blind follow the blind, they both fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14). He's another one that

is breaking my heart because one day I will have to send him, his family, and his friends to Hell because of pride that leads to ignorance. If only he'd listen to that pastor at Village Church that has laid out the truth before him and invited him to attend services. What a pity!

Do you recognize any of those lifestyles? Are any of you living those lifestyles? If you are, you can do better. Do you know why? Because Jesus loves you and wants to give you peace. Look back at the passage and read it again if you would like to have peace. Look at all the things Jesus wants to give you if only you will obey His commands. There is not one of the four people we have just described whose life would not be better if they laid down their personal pride and/or fears and simply obeyed God's commands. But do not stop reading at this passage. If you want to know more about how to receive God's blessings read the list on the sheet in your bulletin. We suggest that you use the list in your daily devotions.

God blesses those:

1. Whom God chooses. Psalm 65:4; Ephesians 1:3,4.
2. Whom God calls. Isaiah 51:2; Revelation 19:9.
3. Who know Christ. Matthew 16:16,17.
4. Who know the gospel. Psalm 89:15.
5. Who are not offended at Christ. Matthew 11:6.
6. Who believe. Luke 1:45; Galatians 3:9.



7. Whose sins are forgiven. Psalm 32:1,2; Romans 4:7.
8. To whom God imputes righteousness without works. Romans 4:6-9.
9. Whom God chastens. Job 5:17; Psalm 94:12.
10. Who suffer for Christ. Luke 6:22.
11. Who have the Lord for their God. Psalm 144:15.
12. Who trust in God. Ps 2:12; 34:8; 40:4; 84:12; Jeremiah 17:7.
13. Who fear God. Psalm 112:1; 128:1,4.
14. Who hear and keep the word of God. Psalm 119:2; James 1:24; Matthew 13:16; Luke 11:28; Revelation 1:3; 22:7.
15. Who delight in the commandments of God. Psalm 112:1.
16. Who keep the commandments of God. Revelation 22:14.
17. Who wait for the Lord. Isaiah 30:18.
18. Whose strength is in the Lord. Psalm 84:5.
19. Who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Matthew 5:6.
20. Who frequent the house of God. Psalm 65:4; 84:5.
21. Who avoid the wicked. Psalm 1:1.
22. Who endure temptation. James 1:12.
23. Who watch against sin. Revelation 16:15.
24. Who rebuke sinners. Proverbs 24:25.
25. Who watch for the Lord. Luke 12:37.
26. Who die in the Lord. Revelation 14:13.
27. Who have part in the first resurrection. Revelation 20:6.
28. Who favor saints. Genesis 12:3; Ruth 2:10.
29. The undefiled. Psalm 119:1.
30. The pure in heart. Matthew 5:8.
31. The just. Psalm 106:3; 10:6.
32. The children of the just. Proverbs 20:7.
33. The righteous. Psalm 5:12.
34. The generation of the upright. Psalm 112:2.
35. The faithful. Proverbs 28:20.
36. The poor in spirit. Matthew 5:3.
37. The meek. Matthew 5:5.
38. The merciful. Matthew 5:7.
39. The bountiful. Deuteronomy 15:10; Psalm 41:1; Proverbs 22:9; Luke 14:13,14.
40. The peace-makers. Matthew 5:9.
41. Holy mourners. Matthew 5:4; Luke 6:21.
42. Saints at the judgment day. Matthew 25:34.
43. Who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Luke 14:15; Revelation

19:9.<sup>2</sup>

Now we will examine the text of today's passage from John 14:15-24 NAS.

John 14:15-17 NAS:

<sup>15</sup> *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*

<sup>16</sup> *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**,  
that He may be with you forever;*

<sup>17</sup> *that is the **Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive,  
because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him  
because He abides with you and will be in you.*

If you love an authority figure, such as a parent, a teacher, a coach, or perhaps a pastor, it is only natural for you to want to do what they tell you to do. The kind of love Jesus is referring to is a love based on the kind of trust that He has shown to His disciples over and over again for the three years they had been with Him. These disciples should know by now the kind of love that Jesus has demonstrated for them and that because He has been their

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<sup>2</sup> Torrey, R.A.: *The New Topical Text Book: A Scriptural Text Book for the Use of Ministers, Teachers, and All Christian Workers.* Oak Harbor, WA: 1995, c1897.

trusted servant they can trust and obey Him. So out of love for Jesus they should do what He commands because those things are for their own best interests.

Prior to this, Jesus had urged the disciples to love one another. Then He spoke of their love for Him. Truly loving Jesus requires that we do what He commands. Listen to what John wrote in his first epistle, 1 John 5:3

*NAS: For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.* This is so important that we can also turn it around, as Christ does in verse 24. That is, if we are not obedient to God's commands, it shows we do not really love Him, no matter how many times we say it or how many praise songs we sing. In Matthew 15 Christ quoted the prophet Isaiah, saying,

Matthew 15:7-9 NIV

<sup>7</sup> *You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:*

<sup>8</sup> *"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

<sup>9</sup> *They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."*

It is interesting that, in John 14:15 and 16, after saying that if we love Him we will keep His commandments, then without elaboration Christ goes on immediately to speak of the Holy Spirit, and calls Him a Helper. This is not a sudden change of subject, but an elaboration of the same subject. Christ knows we weak humans cannot be totally obedient on our own. So Christ promised help to achieve obedience.

Now we see different translations using different words to describe the Greek word used to refer to the Holy Spirit (*parakletos*). In some He is called *Counselor*, in others *Advocate*, *Helper*, or *Comforter*. All of these words, however, mean the same thing. The Holy Spirit is present in all believers to provide help and encouragement in time of need. Did you know that? When you are depressed, do you immediately turn to the Holy Spirit for help, or do you seek help elsewhere? When you do not have enough money to pay your bills, do you turn immediately to the Holy Spirit for help? Or do you perhaps complain about how unfair life is, or drink or eat too much, or go to the porn site on the Internet to find some kind of pleasure that will dull the pain that you are feeling from life? If you know what it is like to look for answers in such things, you know that they only make things

worse, not better. If you are a believer, no matter what comes at you in life, we want you to first ask the Holy Spirit for help. You do not have to go far if you are a believer, because He is always right there with you. God will not ignore your request for help. He will ease the burden of whatever is worrying you so that you never have to handle more than you can bear. If you are not a believer, do not bother asking for help because God will not listen. The first thing you must do is to ask Him to reveal the truth to you about who He is. That is the one request He will listen to from an unbeliever, and He will reveal the truth to you. The question then will be, do you have sense enough to receive it?

Just as Jesus was His Father's *Representative*, the Holy Spirit is Jesus' *Representative* who will live in all believers. Jesus did nothing on His own, but allowed the Father to use Him as the earthly vessel through which He accomplished His will. With us it is very much the same. We are to submit our lives to the Holy Spirit so that Jesus may work His will through us. It is in this way that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are One. They have exactly the same will and purpose. They can perform individually, but they are of one mind and one essence. Pretty amazing!

The world at large cannot receive the Holy Spirit because of its sin and disobedience. The world, that is unbelievers in the world, cannot receive the Holy Spirit of truth because the world is not looking for Him and does not recognize Him. The Holy Spirit would, however, come to live in the disciples as well as all other believers, helping them understand and empowering them to do great works for God.

Anyone, no matter how terrible their sin, will receive the Holy Spirit as soon as they express their faith in Jesus as their Savior, the One who died to pay the penalty for their sins. At salvation the Holy Spirit comes to live inside the believer. However, Christians can decide how much they are going to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In other words, at salvation the Holy Spirit moves in, but from day to day you can decide whether you keep the Holy Spirit in one small room of your inner house, or whether to let Him have full run of your house. That is, will you let Him have full control of you, your thoughts, and your actions? Or are you going to insist on running the show?

Without the help of the Holy Spirit of God, we cannot live the Christian life as God wants us to live it, and for the most part the Holy Spirit will not do

anything without our cooperation. In order for the Holy Spirit to help us we must ask for the help and then be willing to put into action whatever He guides us to do. That is being submissive to the Spirit. Speaking from personal experience, it can be the hardest thing in the world to do sometimes. But if you do not follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, that is known as “*Quenching the Spirit*” and means that you are not allowing the Holy Spirit to accomplish what He knows is best for you. More simply it means that you go ahead and do what you want to do and prevent the Spirit from helping you to do the right thing.

As “*the Spirit of Truth*,” the **Holy Spirit** is related to Jesus who is the Truth and, as the representative of God, He brings and speaks the truth of the Word of God. Skipping ahead a few chapters listen to what John records Jesus as saying in John 17:13,14,17:NAS:

*13 "But now I come to You [God]<sup>3</sup>; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.*

Jesus is speaking to His Father about His disciples

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<sup>3</sup> Brackets added.

*14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them in the truth; **Your word is truth.***

Jesus is the Word and the Truth and the Life. The Holy Spirit makes the truth of God's Word come alive in the believer so that he/she might understand it. The Holy Spirit is also the only One who can lead an unbeliever to faith. The Spirit inspired the Word and also illumines the Word so we may understand it. By the way, do you understand what truth means relating to the Triune God? It means no lying. Everything that comes from God is one-hundred-percent reliable. **God has never lied and never will.** He would not give us a Bible, which I often refer to as a **manual for living**, that was not one-hundred-percent truthful. We can believe everything written in the Bible and anyone who alters what the Bible says is going to be in for a very, very uncomfortable eternity. Do you know what happens when you buy something at the store that requires assembly and you do not follow the directions? Well the same thing happens with a person's life when they do not follow the directions of Him who created them. Not following directions is most often the response of a fool.



You probably often hear people pray that they be filled with the Holy Spirit or that someone else be filled with the Holy Spirit. That is a very nice thought but the truth is that every believer has as much of the Holy Spirit in them as they are ever going to get. It is up to the believer to allow the Holy Spirit to fill them. Is he or she going to allow the Spirit to guide them in every way? Or are they going to push Him into the background, thinking they can manage their own lives, and only call on Him in emergencies? To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Word of God. You must allow the Word of God to control your life in order to be filled with the Spirit. So this is the great power that Jesus was leaving His followers as He left this world. It is just as if Jesus is walking next to you every second of every day, and He will be there with you forever. The Spirit of God is not any different from the Son of God, for both are God. The Spirit of God had lived with the disciples in the person of Jesus Christ. Now He would live **in them** in the power of the Holy Spirit. Wherever we might go, the Spirit goes with us, so there is no need to ever feel alone. There is no need to worry about anything when you have the Spirit of God living within you.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Jn 14:16.

John 14:18-20 NAS:

<sup>18</sup> *"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

<sup>19</sup> *"After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you  
will see Me; because I live, you will live also.*

<sup>20</sup> *"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in  
Me, and I in you.*

In verse 18 Jesus is telling His disciples that there is no way He is going to abandon them and leave them alone. He tells them that He will come to them. They must have wondered how. If He was going to be crucified, how could He come to them? How could He bring them comfort? Jesus was going to come to them in two ways. First He would come to show them that His physical body had been resurrected from the dead, that He had conquered death. Secondly He would come to them in the form of the Holy Spirit.

The world would no longer be able to see Jesus because His physical body would be in Heaven. But now a new aspect of God and Christ would be given to them in the presence of the Holy Spirit of Christ, and the Holy Spirit would actually live within them and be capable of making the full

power of God available to them at all times, providing them comfort, counsel, wisdom, understanding, and so many other wonderful things.

As a matter of fact the Bible says that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. That means that if you submit your life to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will produce these things in you. You cannot attain them by seeking after them, but they will be a gift from the Holy Spirit if you live according to God's commands. All of these things will be evidence of Christ actively alive and working in your lives.

Verse 19 has reference to Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and the weeks He spent on earth with His disciples and other believers after His resurrection. But the world's last glimpse of Jesus was when He was removed from the cross after His crucifixion. The world will not see Him again until His Second Coming when He comes in judgment and triumph. Then Jesus gives us the promise that because He was raised from the dead and is now alive in Heaven, we will also live in the same manner after death.

*"In that day,"* in verse 20 refers to the day that the Holy Spirit comes upon

them. In that day, at that time, all believers will know that Jesus and the Father are one and that they are one with Christ. The specific reference here is most likely to the day of **Pentecost** when the Holy Spirit came upon thousands of people. But it also applies to each individual believer who receives the Holy Spirit the moment they believe. Today we too are united with Christ through the Holy Spirit.

“One of the best ways to ease a troubled heart is to bathe it in the love of God. When you feel like an ‘orphan,’ let the Spirit of God reveal God’s love to you in a deeper way. Charles Spurgeon said, ‘Little faith will take your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul.’ Your heart can become a ‘heaven on earth’ as you commune with the Lord and worship Him.”<sup>5</sup>

John 14:21-24 NAS:

<sup>21</sup> "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

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<sup>5</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S.

<sup>22</sup> *Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"*

<sup>23</sup> *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.*

<sup>24</sup> *"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.*

Verse 21 is speaking of a close personal relationship between you and God. Two people cannot have a solid, trusting relationship if they do not agree. Jesus was in perfect relationship with His Father because He knew His Father was perfect. Now there are not too many children in this world who will admit their father is perfect.

But because Jesus knew that His Father was perfect He did what His Father commanded Him to do knowing that it was always the right thing to do and it would be for everyone's benefit. That is the same kind of relationship that a believer should have with Jesus. If the believer lives in obedience he/she

will feel the presence of Jesus and thus the presence of God as well.<sup>6</sup> By the way, that is the kind of relationship that each parent and child should have. Parents should conduct themselves as Jesus conducted Himself and the child should obey the parents.

A believer's love is made evident when the believer obeys the Word of God as specified in the Bible. You cannot claim to be a believer in God and/or Jesus if you do not intend to obey what they have written in their Holy Word.

As Judas listens to Jesus, it seems that he was having some difficulty understanding why Jesus would reveal Himself to them and not the rest of the world. Now this was not the Judas who betrayed Jesus. He had left by now and Christ was addressing the eleven disciples. The disciples still didn't realize that crucifixion and resurrection were the next items on the agenda. After that the whole truth would be available for the entire world within God's Holy Bible. Neither God nor Jesus are about to waste their time on anyone who makes it quite clear that they have no intention of obeying the Word of God.

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<sup>6</sup> *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, John 14:21.

So exactly what is the benefit for you if you obey the Word? Just look at the passage again.

John 14:23-24 ESV

<sup>23</sup> *Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.*

<sup>24</sup> *Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.*

God will love you and demonstrate that love to you (verse 23). Our obedience shows that we love God. God in turn bestows His love on the obedient servant. Verse 24 tells us the opposite is true for those who do not love and obey the Lord. But when you obey, both God and Jesus will come to live within you and make their presence known to you so that you may turn to them whenever you need help. You can be assured that help will come. When you love Jesus and obey His commands, He makes you aware of His Father and the love they both have for you.

It is our desire that you not miss out on this great opportunity, so why not begin today to obey God's commands and turn to the Holy Spirit whenever you need help? You will never regret it if you do.