



OBEDIENCE

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Recently we've been asking the question, "What does God specifically want in your life?" We rejoice in the fact that we are saved. We rejoice that by His Spirit God has made us holy and that by our daily decisions we line our lives up with the holiness He has given us. Thank God for our salvation and our sanctification.

But beyond that, what does God want? Have you been praying about that? Do you have clarity on what God wants from you?

The question is often asked, "How can I know what God wants in my life? I ask Him but still don't seem to find out."

There are some conditions that must be fulfilled in our lives for God to continue revealing to us the next steps.

Obey what He has already shown you

He has already spoken to you in His word. You must soak yourself in His word to know His mind, will and desires for you. At times when you read or hear the word, something will jump out at you. Something will particularly strike you. That is often God speaking to you personally. Are you obeying what He has shown you generally and specifically in His word?

When we preach and teach, we highlight elements of God's word that He is speaking to us as a body and individually. Are you faithfully taking what is being shared and putting it into practice in your life? Are you making it your own? Are you obeying what God is saying through it? Or are you a forgetful hearer? (James 1:22-25)

In addition to His word, but never contradictory to it, God speaks things directly to your heart. This may be through the counsel of another believer, through circumstances, or in your own quiet time with Him. Are you believing and obeying what He has shown you in your heart?

Did you know that if you are not obeying the light you have already received, God will not give you more? Sometimes there is some resistance in our hearts to things God is showing us. You must deal with that resistance.

If you are faithful over a little, He will give you more. You may feel that God has only shown you a few things. Are you being obedient in those things?

Cultivate your communion with Jesus

In order to hear God's voice, you must be in communion with Him. We're like sheep, and Jesus is the shepherd. The Bible says we already know His voice. But how will the sheep hear the shepherd's voice if they are not close to Him? How will we hear Jesus' voice if we are not in communion with Him?

*But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and **he calleth his own sheep by name**, and leadeth them out. ⁴And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and **the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.** ⁵And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. (John 10:2-5 KJV)*

THE TINIEST
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God speaks to you individually, by name. You already have the ability to hear His voice, because you're one of His sheep. But you must spend time with him individually and as part of the body of believers, in order to get to know Him better and expose yourself to His voice. You won't hear Him if you're not listening. Sure, He can speak to you any time, but **He chooses to work through relationship**. As we open our hearts to Him and give time to Him, He shows Himself to us. Cultivate your communion with Jesus. Spend time with Him, alone and with His body of believers.

Have a willing spirit

Sometimes we don't hear what God is saying to us because we don't **want** to hear what He might say to us. In our hearts we are saying, "Not me Lord!" or "anything but that, Lord!" We are not willing and so we close our ears. We may continually be asking God to show us His will, and He is seeking to do so, but we are deaf to His voice because we are not willing in that area. **You won't hear God if you're not willing to obey Him**. Instead you'll hear the voice of your own thoughts and desires.

David prayed that God would give him a willing spirit. *Grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.* (Psalm 51:12 NIV)

It is God who gives us a willing spirit. But we must choose to live according to that willing spirit.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye 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. ¹³For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)

God is the one who works in us to give us both the desire and ability to do His will; therefore we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling. God does His part, we must do ours.

Similarly, we must choose to love the truth rather than to hear only what we want to hear. Paul speaks of people who *received not the **love of the truth**, that they might be saved.* (2 Thessalonians 2:10 KJV)

Paul instructed Timothy to *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴And **they shall turn away their ears from the truth**, and shall be turned unto fables* (2 Timothy 4:2-4 KJV)

In our old nature we have a natural tendency to only listen to what we want to hear. But in Christ we have received the love of the truth. So **we have to choose to love the truth, whatever it costs us personally**.

If we have a willing spirit and love the truth, we will be better placed to hear God's voice and His will for us. If in an area you are aware that you are shrinking from the truth, ask God to give you the willingness to hear and obey Him. And then choose to do so, whatever it costs you. Love the truth.

Be willing to be found wrong, open to correction

Let's say we are seeking to know God's specific will for us, and we think we are discovering it. Is it possible that we may be wrong?

Yes.

So we have to be open for God to correct us, at times using other brothers in Christ to do so. Don't be discouraged if you find you're wrong in your assessment of what God wants.

Finding out God's will is not a competition in which failure is shameful. It is part of our glorious relationship with Him.

Open rebuke is better than secret love. ⁶Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. (Proverbs 27:5-6)

*For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who **because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.** (Hebrews 5:13-14 NASB) Do you want to move beyond the milk of the Word onto solid food? Then you must be willing to have your senses trained to discern God's will through practice. And **practice necessarily involves mistakes and correction at times.** Be open and willing to be corrected.*

Obey, obey, and obey some more

*Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. ¹⁵And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? ¹⁶Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. ¹⁷**If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.** ¹⁸He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him (John 7:14-18 KJV)*

Jesus was teaching people God's will. He had never studied in a college of Scripture. This amazed the learned Jews. Yet Jesus knew God's will. Why? Because He was in communion with His Father, and because He obeyed His Father. He said, *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* He loved truth and sought truth rather than His own desires. *He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.*

Jesus took this opportunity to make it clear that just like He knew His Father's will through obedience, so if we want to know God's will, we must obey God. ***If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.***

If we want to know God more, we must first obey. To discover His will, we must first obey.

All God's revelations are sealed until they are opened to us by obedience. You will never get them open by philosophy or thinking. Immediately you obey, a flash of light comes... Obey God in the thing He shows you, and instantly the next thing is opened up. One reads tomes on the work of the Holy Spirit, when one five minutes of drastic obedience would make things as clear as a sunbeam.

"I suppose I shall understand these things some day!" You can understand them now. It is not study that does it, but obedience. The tiniest fragment of obedience, and heaven opens and the profoundest truths of God are yours straight away. God will never reveal more truth about Himself until you have obeyed what you know already. (Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest, Oct 10)

So, God wants more from us. What does He want from you?

Are you obeying what He has already shown us? Are you cultivating your communion with Him? Do you love the truth? Are you willing to be corrected?

I'm going to leave you with the same question, "What does God want specifically in your life?" This week, take some time to write down the things God has shown you up to this point. Things He wants you to believe, and things He wants you to do. See if you are being obedient in these areas.

If you are not, start obeying. And if you are obeying, stay open to what He wants next. Let's go further with God!

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**"IF ANYONE THIRST, LET THEM COME TO ME AND DRINK"- JESUS
(JOHN 7:37)**