

Essentials: Stability of Obedience

Christian stability: What gives us stability in our faith?

Paul writes “in this way stand firm in the Lord...” (:1)

Philippians 4:4-9

²Live in harmony in the Lord...

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, **rejoice!**

⁵Let your **gentle spirit be known** to all men.

The Lord is near.

⁶Be anxious for nothing,

but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.

⁷And the **peace of God**,

which surpasses all comprehension,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally brethren,

whatever is true,
whatever is honorable,
whatever is right,
whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely,
whatever is of good repute,
if there is any excellence
and if anything **worthy of praise**,
 dwell on these things.

⁹The things you have learned
and received
and heard
and seen in me,

practice these things,
and the **God of peace** will be with you.

I. Paul's teaching

❖ Essential Attitudes:

1. Harmonious Living – peace in the fellowship, not allowing secondary issues to take precedence. Primary is the Gospel – Jesus rose from the dead accomplishing and finishing salvation; so we must get the word out so people can be saved.
 - The Great Commission is our mission!
2. Humble and gracious –at peace with all people
3. Continual Rejoicing – inner confidence
4. Overcoming Anxiety with prayer – God's peace guarding our hearts and minds

❖ Essential Thinking

Our minds are to dwell on the things of God that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, worthy of praise, and excellent.

❖ Essential Practices

Put into practice all we have learned, received, heard and seen...
– and the God of peace will be with us.

⁹The things you have **learned**
and **received**
and **heard**
and **seen in me,**
practice these things,

Paul's final point of essentials is simply obedience.

I see obedience as a combination of three areas:

Responsibility
Relationship
Righteousness

There is a strong connection between responsibility, relationship, and righteousness. Being joined to Christ we have responsibility to maintain our relationship and righteousness through our obedience. This is accomplished by an integration of the truth into our lives. A good summary of this is found earlier in the letter:

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed... work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13).

Grace is the key to obedience,
for it is God working in us to give us the desire and power to do His will.

Paul uses the term, ‘practice’ to explain this process of obedience.

Practice – prasso – *refers to repetition or continuous action.*

Idea of *Normal routine*:

Christians make it their practice to lead godly, obedient lives.

Paul’s basic conclusion for the Philippians was to put into practice everything that he imparted to them.

He states it in four ways:

Learned – manthano – from ‘disciple’ (mathetes)

Refers to teaching, learning, instructing, and discipling.

Personal instruction – Paul taught publically and from house to house.

“You followed my teaching, conduct purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance” (2 Tim. 3:10)

received – technical term for God’s revelation: 1 Thess. 2:13

2 Tim. 2:2

heard – reputation: Paul’s character, lifestyle, and preaching

– what he was known for.

seen – Their personal experiences with Paul.

Paul could exhort them to pattern their lives after his.

1. Christians have a responsibility to obey the clear teachings of Scripture.
 - a. We must know the Word so that we can obey it.

- b. We must pre-determine to avoid evil and purpose to live according to God's laws.
- c. We will be held accountable for how we obeyed God's Laws.

If people concentrated on their responsibilities, others would have their rights.

Stuart Briscoe

Peter writes:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

(1 Peter 2:9).

2. A Christian's relationship with God is the key to everything.

Paul wrote,

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” (Gal. 2:20)

Phil. 1:21

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

Col. 1:27

“...Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

A Christian is in-Christ positionally. Rather than operate in his own strength he lives by the Spirit within. John wrote about abiding in Christ¹ and bearing fruit as a result. Paul spoke of the fruit of the Spirit², and the new nature that lives in grace and conquers sin.³

Christ is everything to the Christian – therefore we obediently pursue our relationship with Him.

Out of that relationship comes our life.

Religion is simply following rules and rituals to please God.

Christianity is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Righteousness: Positional and Progressive

¹ John 15.

² Gal. 5:22.

³ Rom. 6:16-17.

3. Righteousness is the believer's life.

At salvation a believer's faith saves him from sin.

Paul wrote,

"Therefore having been justified by faith
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

(Rom. 5:1)

Positional Righteousness

When a believer is saved, God forgives his sin and declares him righteous.

Dikios - justified– **imputed righteousness.**

"Credited to his account" –

One moment bankrupt in sin, and the next, he is as righteous as Christ.

Grace is undeserved favor. We are saved by God's grace.

Paul's letter to Titus summarizes this grace connection:

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He Poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:5-7)

Progressive Righteousness

On the importance of self discipline, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote:

I defy you to read the life of any saint that has ever adorned the life of the church without seeing at once that the greatest characteristic in the life of that saint was discipline and order. Invariably it is the universal characteristic of all the outstanding men and women of God. Read about Henry Martyn, David Brainerd, Jonathan Edwards, the brothers Wesley and Whitfield o- read their journals. It does not matter what branch of the church they belonged to, they have all disciplined their lives and have insisted upon the need for this; and obviously it is something that is thoroughly scriptural and absolutely essential.⁴

We must behave what we believe!

⁴ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression: it's Causes and Cure*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965).

This is similar to Jesus' warnings not to be a hearer only, but a doer,
“...everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock...Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand...” (Matt. 7:24-27)

James wrote, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” (James 1:22)

Responsibility, Relationship, and Righteousness: finding Christ changes you.

Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed His blood for me;
Died that I might live on high,
Lives that I may never die.