

# EXTREME PRIZE OBEDIENCE GOING FOR THE GOLD!

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In John 15 Jesus tells us that an abiding life is essential if we are to produce fruit for Him. Jesus also tells us that the only way to abide in Him is to be obedient to His commands.

*“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”*

John 15:10

If you are truly running to win the extreme prize God has for you... and are “going for the gold,” then aim to please Christ by obeying His commands. Jesus said,

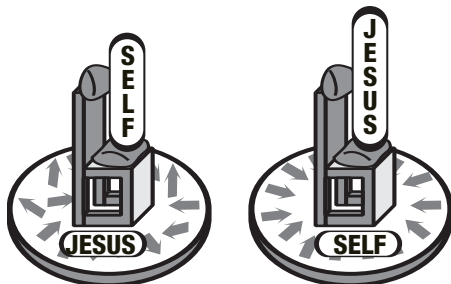
*“If you love me, obey my commandments.”*

The entire Christian life is to be lived by faith, not works. Other religions give lists of rules to follow. But when we see how much God loves us, and that Jesus paid the ultimate price for our sins, we will want to obey Him. Trusting the Holy Spirit with your life will result in a life of obedience to his Word.

Don’t be disappointed when progress in your Christian walk doesn’t happen as quickly as you want. Christian growth is a lifelong process. God is patient with you, and will never take His love away from you. However, the Holy Spirit will give you victory any moment you choose to obey Him.

Many Christians say they trust God with their lives, but refuse to obey His Word. James calls their faith “dead.” The abiding life however, is to be lived by faith, trusting in God’s promises even when we are going through trials and don’t understand how God is answering our prayers.

Remember the two circles from Chapter 2?



**Q** Which circle represents your life? \_\_\_\_\_

If Christ is directing your life, it will result in a transformation of both your walk and your talk. In other words, your character will become more like Christ's character, and your words and actions will sound and look like Him.

## THE WALK

We have already seen that a life of obedience to Christ is based upon faith in His Word. You and I are totally unable to live the Christian life in our own strength. However, by faith in His promises, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to overcome trials and temptations. As we surrender our lives to Him, He conforms us into His likeness.

Jesus is totally unlike us. Let's take a look at just a few of the differences:

JESUS IS:	MAN IS:
Holy	Sinful
Loving	Unloving
Humble	Proud
Forgiving	Unforgiving
Obedient	Disobedient

But, in spite of the differences, the Holy Spirit is continually conforming us into Christ's image. What does Paul say in Galatians 4:19?

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## PERSONAL HOLINESS

The highest attribute of God is holiness, which means He is morally pure and righteous, set apart from any unclean thought or deed.

The Holy Spirit is working in our lives to remove all filthiness and lustful thinking.

Nancy DeMoss writes, "True holiness starts on the inside – with our thoughts, attitudes, values, and motives – those innermost parts of our hearts that only God can see. It also affects our outward and visible behavior: 'Be holy in all your conduct.'"

**Q** What does Peter say in 1 Peter 1:15&16?

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**Q** What does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20?

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## LOVE FOR OTHERS

The Holy Spirit is actively at work in giving us His supernatural love for others. His love is forgiving rather than judgmental, patient rather than irritable, and compassionate rather than easily angered and embittered towards others. Corrie ten Boom was only able to love the prison guard who demeaned and abused her when she made the choice to love him by faith.

Many Christians are able to put on a good front which appears loving, while holding deep grudges and resentments inside. Christ's love is totally different; it begins on the inside.

Since it is impossible for us to simply improve our sinful natures, our act of obedience is to surrender our lives to the Holy Spirit, and allow Him to make us Christ-like.

**Q** What does Paul say in Galatians 3:3?

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**Q** What is Paul's solution in Galatians 2:20?

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**Q** What does a Christ-centered life look like? (Galatians 5:22)

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**Q** What areas of your walk with Christ have changed to become more like Him?

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**Q** What areas have not changed that need to be surrendered to Him?

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**Q** Why not surrender those areas to the Holy Spirit now? List any areas you need to surrender:

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## THE TALK

You and I as followers of Jesus Christ have the awesome privilege of sharing the good news of eternal life with others. There is tremendous joy in winning other to Christ.

*“Jesus came and told His disciples, I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations....”*

Matt. 28:18,19a

As you continue your race, remember that Jesus’s command is to all believers...including you!

**In this chapter you will learn how to invest your life to win others to Christ, thus fulfilling your Lord’s Great Commission.**

### YOUR GREATEST INVESTMENT

Have you ever thought of your life as an investment? Jesus did. He continually compared your life with an investment of money. Jesus wants you to invest your life for the greatest possible return. He wants you to help build His Kingdom.

**Q** How are you investing your life?

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### THE THREE SERVANTS

(Luke 19:12-27)

*Jesus told the story of a prince who had left his three servants a huge amount of money to invest for him. He would settle with them when he returned years later. When the time came to settle, and reward them for their faithfulness, the prince asked them for an accounting:*

*The first servant said, “Master, I doubled your money”*

*The prince was elated, and said, “Great job! Because you’ve earned me so much on*

*that small investment, I'm going to put you in charge of ten cities!"*

*The second servant said, "Master, I made a fifty percent return on your investment." The prince said to him, "I'll put you in charge of five cities."*

*The third servant said, "Master, here's your money, safe and sound. I kept it hidden in the basement since I was afraid to lose it. I know you... don't put up with fools."*

*The prince was extremely disappointed... and told him, "You're right that I don't put up with fools... and you have been a fool! Why didn't you at least invest the money in a savings so that I would have gotten a little interest on it?"*

*Then turning to the others standing nearby, the prince ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one who earned the most.'*

*They objected, and said, 'But master, he already has double...'*

*The prince then said, "That's what I mean: Risk your life and get more than you ever dreamed of. Play it safe and end up holding the bag."*

*(Luke 19:26 The Message)*

Jesus told His disciples this story to give them the picture that God expects a return on our lives. In other words,

## HE WANTS OUR LIVES TO "COUNT" FOR HIM.

Life on earth is short. Soon it will be over – then it will be too late to invest your life for Christ.

## THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that when your life is over, you will have the great honor to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and receive rewards for your faithful service to Christ. (2 Cor. 5:10)  
All believers will give an account of their walk with Christ, but unfortunately not all will receive rewards.

**Q** What does Paul say in 1 Cor. 3:11-15?

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Jesus wants you to invest your life for the greatest possible impact for His Kingdom. Like the prince who rewarded the first servant who doubled his investment, Jesus greatly desires to reward you.

### EXPAND YOUR TERRITORY

In The Prayer of Jabez, the author Bruce Wilkinson relates how a relatively unknown man from the Old Testament, Jabez, asked God for “expanded territory.” (1 Chron. 4:9&10)

Jabez wanted to be special for God. He wanted to invest his life for the greatest return. (This book will greatly challenge you.)

D.L. Moody was a man who asked God to expand his territory. He made this statement:

*“The world has yet to see what one man who is totally sold out to Jesus Christ can accomplish. By God’s grace, I want to be that man!”*

*--D.L. Moody*

**Q** What “expanded territory” are you asking God to give you?

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## AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

In the same passage of Scripture that Paul tells the Corinthian believers about the Judgment Seat of Christ, Paul tells them another awesome fact:

*“We are Christ’s ambassadors”*

2 Cor. 5:20a

A country selects an ambassador to represent them in the highest manner to another land. Great care is made by the King or President to select the finest representative.

Your King has selected you to represent Him. You are God’s choice to reach others for Him. You are Christ’s “witness”.

YOUR WITNESS FOR CHRIST TAKES TWO BASIC FORMS:

**WITNESS BY YOUR “WALK”  
WITNESS BY YOUR “TALK”**

### WALK BEFORE YOU TALK

One reason to grow in your relationship with Christ is so others can see Christ by your walk. This can have a huge impact on others. Jesus said:

*“Let your good deeds shine out for all to see,  
so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”*

Matt. 5:16

**Q** Your thoughts on being Christ’s Ambassador:

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## WORK IN PROGRESS

Don't let the fact that you are a "work in progress" stop you from sharing Christ with others. Satan would love for you to keep silent about your new relationship with Christ.

However, if you are not living for Christ, that behavior will be obvious, and sharing Christ will appear hypocritical to others.

**Q** Is there anything holding you back from sharing Christ with your friends and others?

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## TELLING OTHERS THE GOOD NEWS

Have you ever thought about how many kids you know, or rub shoulders with who are hurting...and are disillusioned with life? In fact, some get so despondent that they consider ending it all. Bob Phillips was one of those kids.

### *JUST IN TIME*

*Bob Phillips had everything going for him in high school. As the son of a multimillionaire, money was no problem. When Bob was sixteen his parents bought him a new Jaguar convertible.*

*Bob had an aura about him. His good looks and captivating personality made him Mr. "Cool"...the most likable and sought after guy in his class.*

*Girls were "blown away" by his flamboyant manner. He was elected president of an elite club for only the very "coolest" guys.*

*Since Bob had so much going for him, I was reluctant to witness to him. As a*

*new Christian, I had never witnessed to anyone personally. I thought kids would think I was weird...or some kind of religious fanatic. Since Bob was my best friend, I thought he would let me know if he wanted to know about Christ. Of course, that was just a “cop out”.*

*As the weeks went by, I realized I was not really being a friend to Bob by hiding the truth of Christ. I told him what Christ meant to me, and introduced him to my Young Life leader, “Doc”, who then led Bob to Christ!*

*Years later, Bob shared this shocking true story with me:*

*“I had reached a point in my life where I was fed up with what life had to offer. Everything had been too easy for me... money... toys... friends... girls... kicks. Nothing satisfied. None of it meant anything anymore!*

*I finally came to a day when I wanted to end it all. I asked God to show me if there was any reason for me to keep living. I decided to put off my decision to take my own life for a week to see if God would answer me.”*

*Bob then told me to my amazement, “It was during that week you told me about Christ...and ‘Doc’ led me to receive Jesus as my personal Savior!”*

*Years have passed, and Bob and I are still good friends. It’s great to know we will spend eternity together. It is a truly frightening thought to think that he came so close to dying before he had a chance to hear how much Christ loved him.*

**Q** Can you think of some people you have the opportunity to share Christ with?

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## HOW TO SHARE CHRIST WITH OTHERS

You don't need to be an expert in the Bible, or have years of experience with Christ to witness for Him. There are several ways you can verbally share Christ on a daily basis:

### INFORMAL SHARING

You don't have to make a complete presentation of the Gospel to make an impact for Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to someone who is open to hearing more about Christ:

- Invite a friend to church or youth group.
- Give your personal testimony.
- Ask a kid to join you at a Christian camp.
- Introduce a friend to other Christians.
- Give out a Christian book or tract.





**Pray**  
“Go to God about men... before you go to men about God.” Ask God to prepare the person’s heart and to control you by His Spirit.

**Use a Gospel Tract**  
In order to be concise and not get side-tracked, use a good Gospel tract, such as **The Four Spiritual Laws**, by Bill Bright. (New Life Publications), or **The Bridge**, (Navpress). You can also use Chapter One of this booklet.

**Use a Bible**  
Carry a small Bible with you that has the key verses underlined. It’s best to use a modern translation, such as the New Living Translation. Try to memorize the key verses for each point of the Gospel.

**Share Your Personal Testimony**  
Write out your personal testimony, and review it with a friend until you can present it naturally in 3 to 5 minutes. Keep focused on how Christ has changed your life...and how awesome He is to you. Be enthusiastic...but not phony. Be transparent...and let them know you’re “real”.

**Stay Focused**  
You fight a spiritual battle when you share Christ with an unbeliever. There may be unusual interruptions...or the person might try to evade the real issues and get you off track. Pray, and keep focused on Christ’s love...and His death for them on the Cross. Emphasize how important they are to God.

## □ Ask For A Decision

As the Holy Spirit leads, expect God to be working in their heart. Ask one of the following questions:

“Does this make sense to you?”

“Would you like to accept God’s Gift?”

“Would you like to make sure?”

“Would you like to ask Jesus into your life?”

## □ Lead Them In Prayer

If they are ready to receive Christ, pray with them, using the prayer in your tract, or from Chapter One in this booklet.

### THE NEXT STEP

Once a person has come to Christ, it is vital that you show them how the “pieces” of the “puzzle” fit together. Schedule a time to go through this booklet with them.

It is also vital that they immediately get “connected” with other Christians...preferably people they can relate to.



### PASSING THE BATON

When you lead a person to Christ, you are “passing the baton” to them. Teach them from God’s Word the discipleship principle Paul taught Timothy, so they will pass it on to others:

*“Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others.”*

2 Tim. 2:2

For those who take God's Word seriously... and want to be discipled, it is strongly recommended that you schedule regular meetings (at least every other week), to get deeper into the Bible. Both a small group Bible study, and one on one discipleship are recommended for a new believer.

## **RUN TO WIN**

Although this chapter concludes this study, your race goes on! There are many miles to go.

You now see how each "piece" of the "puzzle" is vital for your growth in Christ...all contributing to the awesome life God wants you to live.

