

Obedience to Christ

John 14:21 NIV
TMS Scripture Memory Sermon Series

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We are memorizing Scripture together and tonight's verse is about obedience.

Student Teacher



1 John 1:3 NIV
We proclaim to you
what we have seen
and heard, so that you
also may have
fellowship with us. And
our fellowship is with
the Father and with his
Son, Jesus Christ.

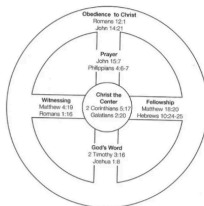
I remember Calculus in high school where we would run problems on the board: this is what I'm doing tonight as I offer what I know and you offer what you know.

I also want you to be children: In fact, I have candy and worksheets for you!

The verses we are memorizing this summer came from The Navigators Topical Memory System. In 1943 Navigator founder Dawson Troutman got together 50 bible scholars to compile potential memory verses; they came up with 600 verses which they narrowed to 60 verses which they further divided into 5 parts with 12 verses in each. In fact, I think the plan is for us to do one of these packs of verses each summer for the next four years.

Why Memorize

- **Christ the Center:** All power and life flow outward from Jesus at the center.
- **Vertical Line:** Your personal relationship with God.
- **Horizontal Line:** Your everyday relationships with people.



The pack we're doing this summer is the "A Pack" which has the theme of Living the New Life in Christ. Here the Christian life is illustrated as a wheel with Christ at the center: Jesus is the center of all we do. The vertical line is our relationship with God (prayer and the Word) and the horizontal line is our relationship with people (fellowship and evangelism). Obedience surrounds all them.

A review of last week's verses; I have candy for anyone who knows these:

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
the new creation has come:
The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

Galatians 2:20 NIV

I have been crucified with Christ
and I no longer live,
but Christ lives in me.
The life I now live in the body,
I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me
and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 NIV

Romans 12:1 NIV

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters,
in view of God's mercy,
to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God—
this is your true and proper worship."

Romans 12:1 NIV

And the verse for this evening:

John 14:21 NIV

W h m c
a k t i o w l m
T o w l m
w b l b m F
a i t w l t
a s m t t.

John 14:21 NIV

Whoever has my commands

This morning's verse was Rom 12:1

John 14:21 NIV

Whoever has my commands
and keeps them is the one who loves me.
The one who loves me
will be loved by my Father,
and I too will love them
and show myself to them.

When I was a Navigator 20 years ago, I wrote down the
beginning of each word on my hand.

Let's take this verse apart into chunks and do them one at a
time. Everyone gets a worksheet for this!

Here are some hidden laws/folklore from our across our country; match the state (AK, AZ, CN,
AL, GA) to the law:

Silly Bizarre Rules



1. It is illegal to wear a fake mustache to church if it makes people laugh (AL)
2. For a pickle to be legally called a pickle, it must be able to bounce. (CN)
3. It is illegal for a donkey to sleep in a bathtub AZ
4. It is illegal to eat fried chicken with a fork/knife; hands only (GA)
5. It is illegal to look at a live moose from an airplane (AK)

We might laugh at these silly laws but I think we also think of God's law and commandments as restrictive, strange, and burdensome that get in the way of what we want. But God's Law is *incola* or *Mitxvah*: it's when children choose maturity and become a daughter or son of the commandment. When God asks you to do something, it's not burdensome (I John 5:3).

Wedding Vows



Author Ann VosKamp has a beautiful metaphor that compares The Ten Commandments to Marriage Vows. This was God's invitation to Israel to be his people and these commandments are the best way to live in a relationship with each other and Him. They were an invitation to love. When I respond, I am saying "I do want to be in a relationship with you, God, and that this is for my best." Jesus says in

Matt 5:17 "Do not think I have come to abolish the Law and prophets but to fulfill them."

I took the Ten Commandments and re-organized them into how to love God, self and others.

10 Commandment Promises

Love (Honor) God
1. Put God First
2. Worship Him Only
3. Respect His Name
4. Keep Sabbath Holy

Love (Honor) Yourself
1. Honor Your Mind
2. Honor Your Heart
3. Honor Your Body

Love (Honor) Others
1. Honor Elders
2. Honor Life
3. Honor Property



Love God Love People



- Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. Romans 2: 14-15 NLT
- Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:37-40 NIV

One technicality is "whoever has my commands" could mean if you don't have the commands, you can do what you want. But this is contradicted in Rom 2 and Matt 22.

All of us have these commandments whether by Law or conscious.

John 14:21 NIV

and keeps them is the one who loves me.

This is not easy: there is a disconnect here. We are pushed to the edge by our sin. We turn away from God and choose selfishness to make the world work for us. We are frustrated: we want what we want when we want it which traps us. He knows this and speaks love over us: he says we **can** obey because we have his Spirit.

Why do we disobey? The Table of Folly



Selfish: I am what I have.
Pride: I am what I do.
Fear: I am what people say about me.

- **The Human Problem:** We are naturally pulled toward selfishness, pride, and fear.
- **The Illusion:** We wrongly think God doesn't offer us comfort, care, or kindness, so we try to do things our own way.
- **Scripture:** Judges 17:6 — "Everyone did as they saw fit."

Why do we disobey?

- We are selfish
- We think we are what we have
- We're prideful
- We think we are what we've done
- We are fearful
- We are what people think about us

John 16:33 NIV
I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. **In this world you will have trouble.** But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Suffering
Pressure
Tears
Pushed to the edge

The Disconnect



We have a human problem: we cannot keep God's law flawlessly. We live like we don't have a king and can do whatever we want. But God has a divine solution: Jesus lived the only perfect life and so the Law is sustained by HIS performance, not ours.

Amazing Grace

- The Problem: We cannot perfectly keep the law.
- The Divine Solution: Jesus Christ lived the only perfect life, and fulfilled the law on our behalf.
- The Cross: On the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for our sin. The law is sustained by His performance, not ours.
- In Christ you have kept the law, and in Christ now you can ask for the Holy Spirit to help you obey.



This is not about willing ourselves to obey, we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us. He is right here with us.

Sour Explosion



Hebrews 12:11 NIV
No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Time for a candy "Warhead" and I will read Heb 12:11 while you experience sour faces. Warheads are painfully sour: we call them the **discipline candy**. If you stick with it, though, and believe that I actually gave you candy, if you don't spit it out, it becomes sweet. God's boundaries for your life are like this: His commands might initially feel sour but if we allow the Holy Spirit to do his work, they will be sweet.

Table of Folly

- I live for myself. (selfish)
- I am defined by my past. (proudful)
- I must protect myself. (fearful)
- I am trapped by shame. (fearful)
- I am ruled by fear. (fearful)
- I am what I have done. (proudful)
- I am what others have done to me. (fearful)

Table of Wisdom

- I live for Christ.
- I am forgiven and defined by his life, death, and resurrection.
- Jesus protects me.
- I have a new identity.
- I am ruled by faith.
- I am by the Spirit living a resurrected life.
- I am becoming a person of reconciliation.

We get to move from the table of folly to the table of Wisdom:

- from living for ourselves (it feels like dying: sour and bitter) to living for Christ.
- From being defined by our past to being forgiven
- Protection and fear to being protected by Jesus
- Shame to a new identity
- Ruled by fear to being reule by faith
- Living in the spirit to a resurrected life
- What others have done to us to living in reconciliation

Selfishness, Pride, and Fear



I want to tell you some stories of how foolish, proud, and fearful I am without Jesus. When I was 7-8 years old I wanted a Little Mermaid Party but I didn't believe my parents would give me such a party. So instead, I stole money from my parents and mailed it to the party company to buy the Little Mermaid Party Pack. The company called my parents and while they were

impressed by my independence and determination, they did not give me this party because I stole from them and lied. I still do this: but I cannot demand celebrations.

How Obey?

- **Come like a child:** Approach Jesus with simple trust.
- **Admit limitations:** Confess that you cannot do it on your own.
- **Depend entirely:** Rely daily on His Holy Spirit to guide your mind, heart, and desires.
- **Be vulnerable:** Let down your guard with God and trusted people.



My pride: I love to read the Bible with Kate. But when I was in grad school, I thought the Bible, especially Psalm 119, was boring. I didn't meditate on the Bible all day long. But when Corey and I moved to Seattle, I asked God for a hunger for His Word: I came as a dependent child and confessed my pride of believing I could do life on my own and didn't need His word.

I'm also fearful of a white dog in my neighborhood which I see in the dark when I run. I thought it was a polar bear until I finally saw it in the light. God invites me to cast my fears on him.

"The one who loves me will be loved by my Father." Sometimes I read this and think I have to obey for God to love me. No! God's love is unconditional for you: you cannot earn it or make it go away. Obedience changes your experience of his love: the motivator is not fear but it's actually the sweetness of his delight.

Why Obey?

- **Unconditional:** God's love for you **never** changes. You cannot earn it.
- **The Role of Obedience:** Obeying doesn't make God love you **more** or **less**. Instead, obeying changes your **experience** of His love.
- **Motivator:** God's rules are protective love, not a heavy burden.



Sometimes, Corey invites our family into games and the kids don't want to play initially but afterwards, we have a very sweet time.

I grew up in Nebraska where my father would invite us to shovel snow with him in the winter: I may have made it worse for him, but I had his delight that we were doing something together. It's a precious memory: I feel this way when Jesus asks us to obey.

Creed of the Beloved

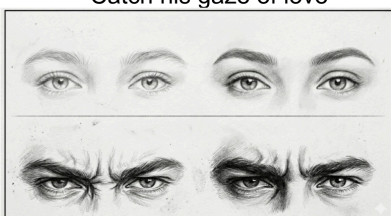
I'm not what I do. (Pride)
I'm not what I have. (Selfishness)
I'm not what people say about me. (Fear)
I am the beloved, child of God.
It's who I am.
No one can take it from me.
I don't have to worry.
I don't have to hurry.
I can trust my friend Jesus and share his love with the world.



We are asked to come to Jesus as a child: to be dependent and vulnerable and asking for Jesus to live in me: his eyes, ears, desires, his mind, his heart, his faith. In that, we can embrace the creed of the beloved that Eric talked about last week.

How do you think Jesus looks at you as you live your life and struggle with obedience? ...

Catch his gaze of love



Corey's friend in Seminary, Kristin, painted this picture: Jesus is not looking at you like the bottom eyebrows but like the top: He says "that's my kid! I love them"

There is safety in this: love and safety is our greatest motivators to obey.

We don't obey because of shame:

SHAME: Self Hatred At My Expense.

NO!!! Jesus doesn't want you to hate yourself. I really want you to know this. I also want you to know there is no fear in love:

I John 4:18, Rom 8:1

I want everyone to have a mint now and listen while I read excerpts from **John 14** over you.

If I go to prepare a place for you....³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going." ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you....²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

The core truths are here:

Love is Obedience

Core Truth: God's commands are not a heavy burden, they are protective love. We obey naturally when we feel securely attached to His love rather than driven by fear.

Core Take away: When I am stuck in selfishness, fear, and pride, I disobey. When I am in Christ, caught in his gaze of love, I experience comfort, care, and kindness, I obey knowing my Heavenly Father cares for me.



Who can you be vulnerable with this week?

I invite you to focus on God's love and care for you: it will help you obey.

I also want to invite you to celebrate; tonight I will celebrate my first sermon. What will you celebrate?

Gather, Practice, Focus, Celebrate

Obey! Gather, Practice, Focus, Celebrate

Gather: Meet and encourage each other to obey.

Practice: Memorize! We can do it! When, where, how with whom?

Focus: Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus' gaze of love and tell the story of his kindness.

Celebrate: How have I obeyed and how can I celebrate?



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and keeps them is the one who loves me.

The one who loves me
will be loved by my Father,
and I too will love them
and show myself to them.