

Obedience
to God is an
Expression
of our Love
for God.

We all have our faults! Obedience is the key to the Kingdom!
Obey or obedience in the Bible: 244 times in the Bible.

1 Samuel 15:22. “.....to obey is better than sacrifice...!”

Why would obedience be better than sacrifice?

If Jesus had to sacrifice His life for us, it would be God’s will and His will only. Since Jesus was “obedient” to the Father, He willingly (personally) gave his life for you and me (the sinner).

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, “And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

“And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle:” Paul elaborates on what it means to *withdraw* from a brother as mentioned in 3:6. When he says, “does not obey our word in this letter,” he is saying that “those who do not follow the instructions laid down in this letter” should be ostracized until there is repentance.

Take note of that person...and do not keep company with him: With the purpose of causing him to **be ashamed**. The purpose is not to make him an **enemy** of the church, but through the severity of the withdrawal from fellowship, to warn and **admonish** him as an erring or wayward **brother**.

Spiritual Discernment is the key: In its simplest definition, discernment is nothing more than the ability to decide between truth and error, right and wrong. Discernment is the process of making careful distinctions in our thinking about truth.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11, “or... do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men, ^{nor} thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

“Stepping on toes doesn’t just happen while dancing.”

Praise God for the forgiving heart of a loving Savior and God!

Now for the Conclusion to the Letter;

Do letters really have a conclusion...an ending?

Think about it! Most of the time, a letter stays on your mind for a long time. I have some letters in the back of my mind that will stay with me forever.

2 Thessalonians 3:16-18, “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

Now may the Lord of peace: The Lord’s blessing of **peace (always in every way)** was appropriate for the Thessalonian Church. They were experiencing both persecution and tribulation and needed the “one-of-a-kind” peace that comes from the Lord himself. Paul could not give them peace! The pastor can’t give him, you, or me true peace; only the Lord has the “peace that passes all understanding.”

HOWEVER, YOU CAN PROMOTE PEACE...GOD’S PERFECT PEACE!

Encourage others and be a “bridge builder.” Promote joy and peace as you travel over the road of life. Build bridges as you promote life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is ALWAYS the presence of the Lord of peace that will grant someone peace.

“I want to call particular attention to the apostle’s words in this place. He does not say ‘May the Lord of peace send his angel to give you peace.’ It was a great mercy if he did, and we might be as glad as Jacob was at Mahanaim, when the angels of God met him. He does not even say, ‘May the Lord of peace send his minister to give you peace.’ If he did we might be as happy as Abraham when Melchizedec refreshed him with bread and wine. He does not even say, ‘May the Lord of peace at the communion table, or in reading the word, or in prayer, or in some other sacred exercise give you peace.’ In all these we might well be as refreshed ... but he says ‘the Lord of peace himself give you peace,’ as if he alone in his own person could give peace, and as if his presence were the sole means of such a divine peace as he desires.” (Spurgeon)

The salutation of Paul “with my own hand”:

As you read the New Testament, you’re going to see that Paul is using several secretaries. He usually tells his audience whether he is writing the epistle himself (Galatians or Colossians...and here) or whether he is employing an amanuensis (A person whose employment is to write what another dictates, or to copy what has been written by another.). For Paul, the difference was usually dependent on whether or not he was in prison.

This was the custom of Paul. He himself wrote the final words of the Thessalonian letter with his own hand. This was both a personal demonstration of affection, and proof that the letter was authentic. This means that when he had someone else to write for him (such as stated in Romans 16:22, a secretary/helper named Tertius interposes a greeting in his own name to the Apostle’s readers, “I Tertius, who write the epistle, salute you in the Lord.”

Very Important: We should not think of these secretaries as taking mere dictation. They had to be “Spiritually” led. Remember, the Word of God is inspired by the Holy Spirit himself.

Were there others who took dictation (the words of Paul/Peter?)

Biblical scholars say, “Yes.” We do know that there were several friends of the apostles who possibly, if not probable, ones who actually wrote down the words of the apostles. Some possible ones who wrote for the apostle besides Tertius...Timothy, Silvanus (Silas), and Luke.

Paul literally wrote Galatians with his own hand (Gal 6:11). In other epistles besides 2nd Thessalonians, he writes a final exhortation or blessing with his own hand: 1 Cor. 16:1; Col 4:18; Philemon 1:19.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

For Paul, God’s **grace** was the beginning and the end of the Christian life. It was appropriate that this letter – and most – of his letters began and ended with a mention of **grace**.

Note: There is one little word added in this final benediction as compared with the first Epistle. It is the word **‘all.’** The apostle Paul includes those whom he had been rebuking and correcting along with those who were to discipline...thus, revealing the greatness of his heart and his love.

Remember the primary purpose of discipline and judgment: to reveal the grace of the Father.

“Oh...the love that drew salvation’s plan. Oh...the grace that brought it down to man!”

Every letter Paul wrote to the churches and to individuals was tied in with grace and mercy. Paul had experienced “grace and mercy” on the road to Damascus...and he was willing to forgive as God had forgiven him!

Shouldn’t we do likewise?

God’s grace spans the chasm of sin and repentance!

**GRACE
GREATER
THAN
ALL OUR
SIN**