

02-08-15

Series: The Anatomy of a Church

The Anatomy of a Church (48)

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 02/01/15)

The Internal Systems-2

OBEDIENCE

[First John 2:5](#) says,

1 John 2:5 (NASB)

⁵“But whoever *keeps* His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him” (emphasis added).

A person who can tolerate that kind of abomination in his life (like the person we spoke about last week who preferred animals to women) and says he knows how God feels without reading the Bible has a problem. **Sin causes a person to become self-justifying.** That’s an extreme illustration, but it points out the fact that God has called us to be obedient to His Word. We should know how He feels about things because He tells us in His Word.

The goal of ministry should be to build an obedient people. (Not to meet their needs, that is God’s job). That is what God intended to do in both the Old and New Testaments. When God speaks, we are to obey.

It is sad that when some people are confronted with divine truth that convicts them of something in their lives that isn’t right, they continue in their pattern of disobedience. For example: suppose you hear a sermon about forgiveness, and there is someone you know that you need to forgive. But you push that sermon out of your mind and continue to have a bitter, unforgiving spirit. That is disobedience. It is diametrically opposed to all that God wants to accomplish in your life.

Someone will say, “I go to church. Isn’t that enough?” [First Samuel 15:22](#) says, “**To obey is better than sacrifice.**” Ritual will never replace obedience.

1 Peter 1:13-14 (NASB)-

¹³Therefore, **prepare your minds for action**, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹⁴As **obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,**

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In [1 Peter 1](#) the apostle says to “**gird up the loins of your mind**” ([v. 13](#)). In other words, make sure your priorities are right. Be “**obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance**” ([v. 14](#)). Don’t live the way you did before you became a Christian. You are to be an obedient child.

Jesus said, “**Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it**” ([Luke 11:28](#)).

[Luke 11:27-28 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁷ While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.”

²⁸ But He said, “On the contrary, **blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.**”

Paul, commending the Roman Christians, said, “**Your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad**” ([Romans 16:19](#)).

[Romans 16:19 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹ For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

A pastor’s heart is made happy when the obedience of his people is manifest.

I once heard Howard Hendricks say that people who have been Christians for a long time and are more than fifty years old should be the most excited, committed, pure, servant-like people in a church. The very energy of a church ought to come from them. They should be on the forefront in evangelism and prayer. Why? Because they’ve lived with God the longest. They’ve applied the Word to their lives for so long that they’ve become more obedient and mature than those who have been Christians for only a few years.

It is wonderful that Living Word is starting to have many babies. I like young people because they are energetic. But it’s sad if the energy of a church only comes from its young people. Often I hear young pastors say, “My church is good and is in a nice area, but it’s full of old people.”

If you’re a Christian but don’t apply God’s Word to your life, you’ll just become one of those inert older people. You’ll pass fifty years old, and you’ll want to retire spiritually. You’ll say, “I’ve been going to church for many years. I don’t want to get involved in evangelism; I’d rather leave that kind of thing for younger people.”

Look at the Old Testament leaders of Israel: Many of them were older people! The early church found its energy in its mature saints. Today the church is deriving its energy from young people. We need the energy that young people have, but we also need the power that older believers have developed from long, obedient lives.

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An older believer should be ready to blast off into heaven from the energy he has built up! But because many believers don't apply what they hear as they get older, their lives don't change. They may know a lot of spiritual facts, but they have no power. I don't want that to happen in my life. Perhaps the reason many people eventually stop serving Christ is that they allow themselves to hear the Bible without applying it.

We must be committed to obeying God's Word. If the Spirit teaches you a truth, apply it. When you're confronted with conviction, don't say, "I wish So-and-so could have heard that sermon." Apply the sermon to yourself. When you obey Christ, you grow in spiritual maturity and become more useful to God.