

Sermon #32

# The Kingdom of God is Obedience to Christ

God is tremendously good.

His mercy is great and His forgiveness complete.

God knows all.

He knows which way is best.

He is eager to show us the way that is best.

He even supplies us with all we need to do what is best.

God completes me and fulfills me.

No good thing do I lack when I am in Him and He is in me.

Jesus said that the work of God is to believe in the one He sent;  
that is, Christ.

## **The Kingdom of God is obedience to Christ.**

Do you desire to obey the teachings of Jesus Christ  
in your everyday life?

If so, you are growing in the Kingdom of God.

The greatest spiritual dangers to us church folk are hypocrisy,  
self-righteousness, complacency and self-deception.

These things often are so subtle that their cancerous growth can  
go unnoticed for quite sometime.

I have devised a personal list that helps me objectively evaluate  
just how much I am or am not following Christ.

It has been given to you as a **handout** today.

Instead of checking a box, shade it according to how much that trait is  
present in your life and character. If that trait or belief is about 30%

established in you, shade a third of the box. If it is 50% established in you, shade half of the box, and so on.

I hope that this list will help you objectively evaluate yourself and your progress in the Kingdom.

It is not something to get puffed up in pride over, nor is it something to get legalistic about.

The purpose is to gain an honest assessment of your faith and obedience, so that you can expose dark spots and receive what you need to go forward in God.

If you want to gain the greatest benefit from this, be brutally honest with yourself. Then ask God in prayer to show you how accurate your assessment is.

**{wait 10 minutes for congregation to do personal evaluations}**

These are not rules but indicators that help me objectively evaluate my progress in the Kingdom of God. Most of the time, an honest evaluation will both encourage and humble me, as well as shed light on hidden pockets of darkness in my soul. I like that, because when the light of truth exposes that darkness, I can repent of it and be free of it, as well as have joy and peace restored to my soul.

Following Christ is not a checklist, nor can it be done legalistically.

It is giving myself to Him, seeking Him, listening to Him and walking obediently in His love. As I do this, He provides for my needs, restores my soul and leads me in the path of righteousness.

This is the only way into the kingdom of God and eternal unfettered, joyful fellowship with God.

I follow Christ, not out of duty or compulsion or sacrifice, but because He loves me and knows what is best for me.

When I truly believe, I follow.

If I don't believe, but do want to be convinced, all I have to do is follow Christ and He will make me a believer! He proves that His way is best, and shows me why!

In following Christ, the word of God is proven to be true and the character of God is revealed.

I encourage you to consider these lists prayerfully at home, add or take away as God leads, or whatever else He shows you to do with them.

By the way, if you take these lists and give them to someone else to "help" them, instead of examining yourself, you are probably not following Christ.

"I, the Lord, am a good God.

I AM merciful and kind.

I show you the way to abundant life;

I do this for your good, not for harm.

My way is the best, and it is for your good.

Put your trust in Me, and I will see you through.

Be encouraged in Me.

Receive My grace, mercy and forgiveness,  
and continue forward in Me.

Do not despair because you fail;  
just put your trust in Me.

Speak the truth and live the truth;  
the truth will set you free.

Come out of the darkness into the light,  
and let Me restore your life.

I love you and want you to be with Me where I am:

in righteousness, peace and joy, eternal love and life.

Isn't this what you want?"

**Notes:**

## Indications that I am following Christ:

*(shade each box according to how much this trait or action is established in your heart and life.)*

- I have given myself, and entrusted my life, to God, and desire Him more than anything.
- I desire to know the truth and reject falsehood.
- I accept the teachings of Jesus Christ as true and applicable to me and my life today.
- I place the words, ideas, teachings, philosophies and beliefs of all human beings subject to the words of Christ; I believe Him over my parents, spouse, pastor, teacher or leader
- I am seeking truth and guidance from the Holy Spirit.
- I am discerning the validity of what I hear by making sure it is in harmony with the teachings of Christ and the Ten Commandments.
- I am repenting of my sin as soon as I become aware of it.
- I am giving of my energy, love and resources in the way that the Spirit of God leads.
- I am seeking to remove the “plank” from my own eye.
- I am doing and enjoying the work God has given me to do.
- I see God working in all and through all for good.
- I do not murder.
- I do not call people hateful names or harbor anger against them.
- I do not give any offering to the church if I remember that a brother has something against me; first I go reconcile with him and then give my offering.
- I settle matters out of court with those who are suing me.
- I do not sue people who have wronged me or counter-sue those who sue me.
- If my eye, or any other body part, causes me to uncontrollably continue in adultery or other sin, I pursue surgical remedies to amputate the offending body part(s).
- I seek to love my spouse as Christ loves me..
- I don't reject my spouse and replace him/her with someone else.

- I just say “Yes” or “No”, rather than making vows or promises.
- I do not swear that I am telling the truth.
- I do not resist an evil person.
- If someone strikes me on the right cheek,  
I turn to him the other also.
- If someone wants to sue me and take part of my property,  
I let him also have some property which he isn’t trying to take.
- If someone legally or physically forces me to do some work  
for him without being paid, I do even more work than he is  
forcing me to do.
- I give to the one who asks me.
- I do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from me.
- I love my enemies and pray for those who persecute me.
- I love those who don’t love me.
- I am careful not to do my ‘acts of righteousness’ before people,  
to be seen by them .
- When I give to the needy, I do it anonymously rather than  
having my name printed or acknowledged in some way,  
or being honored by people
- I do not pray standing in church or in public to be seen by people,  
like the hypocrites do.
- When I pray, I go into my room, close the door and pray to my  
Father, who is unseen.
- When I pray, I do not keep on babbling like pagans who they think  
they will be heard because of their many words.
- This is how I pray: *“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name; your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”*
- I forgive people when they sin against me, and receive forgiveness  
from my heavenly Father for all my sins against Him and against  
other people.

- When I fast, I do not look somber (drab, dismal, gloomy) so others will know that I am fasting.
- I do not store up for myself material possessions and treasures on earth.
- I do store up for myself treasures in heaven (righteousness, peace, joy, goodness, love, etc.)
- I serve God, not money. My final decisions are based on God's will rather than hope for financial benefit or fear of financial loss. I trust God to take care of my family and me financially as long as I trust and obey the teachings of Christ.
- I do not worry about my life, what I will eat or drink.
- I do not worry about my body, what I will wear.
- I seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness.
- I do not worry about tomorrow.
- I do not judge.
- I repent of the large amount of sin/unbelief in my own life before nitpicking my brother or trying to show him his fault.
- I do not give scornful, haughty people what is sacred; I do not throw the wisdom and insight that God has given me to those who don't want it or value it.
- I ask and receive, believing God has given to me what is needed and fitting.
- I seek and find.
- I receive His grace, mercy and forgiveness continually.
- I knock and go through the door God opens to me.
- In everything, I do to others what I would have them do to me.
- I enter through the narrow gate of obedience to Christ.
- I watch out for false prophets who appear to be nice Christians but who are inwardly greedy and trying to exploit God's people for their own gain.

### Indications that I am NOT following Christ:

- I am trying to convince myself and/or others that something Jesus taught does not apply to me.
- I am going to church to satisfy or impress someone, make contacts with people, improve my business, keep a tradition and/or to convince myself and others that I am a Christian.
- I make a decision based on money rather than on God's guidance and love.
- I am doing good deeds and giving money for human recognition and human praise, or to justify myself.
- I am trusting in myself, money, my spouse, my parents, or someone else instead of God.
- I am currently breaking one of the Ten Commandments and justifying my behavior or attitude rather than changing it.
- I am judging and/or condemning others.
- I am justifying or making excuses for my behavior and actions.
- I am not enjoying the work that I do.
- I take this checklist and give it to someone else instead of honestly evaluating myself.

**Notes:**

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