

## Get Off the Bench

In thinking back on the “beatitudes” and how they are sequential for building a godly character, it occurred to me, we can be headed in a similar direction for building a personal relationship with God. While none of these concepts are written verbatim in scripture, the principles establish a foundational approach to growing closer to God.

Highlighting certain scriptures will provide a guideline in which we can build upon. Much like the “beatitudes” from Matthew 5-7 build character, one quality and *action on our part* will generate greater insight, spiritual growth, and advance our “One on one” relationship with God.

Just as a review and reminder, the sequence we are determining are not written in stone, except the first one, love God. Everything falls under this.

**Matthew 22:36-38-** “Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?” And Jesus said to him,” ‘You shall 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;”

Focused studies will be constructive to grow in God’s word when we make them directed and goal oriented. Highlighting particular verses will give us reference for character traits and assist in having ready answers.

Last week, we spoke of “trusting God.”

**Proverbs 3:5-8-** “**Trust** in the LORD **with *all your heart*** and lean not to your own understanding. **In *all your ways*** acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It shall be health to your navel and marrow to your bones.”

Loving and trusting God seem to naturally flow from one to the other. Keep in mind this is all inclusive of the beatitudes beginning with the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, and the hunger and thirst for righteousness. Simplified, the humble and contrite heart and spiritual lack we all have. This solidifies **Matthew**

**4:4** and **Luke 4:4** perfectly, we need to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

There are many words used in the Bible that are a call to *action* for us as believers and followers of Jesus Christ. Merely reading and believing what we read is not a ticket to the Kingdom. Neither is saying a “sinners prayer,” praying to saints, or putting an extra buck in the collection plate, or handing our literature. God did not allow His Son to give His life for such a comfortable ride to us. No, He wants something in return, *all* of us. All of our love and devotion to Him, His Son, and His way of life. Not most of us or all of us, but our entire being.

When thinking on being obedient to God, we automatically think on His Commandments. It is a good place to start by laying a foundation. We will take a look at the three words most associated with His Commandments and a few other “buzz words” but all require us to act. This is one event we cannot watch from the sidelines or the stadium. It is time to leave your comfort zone and heated seats and get on the playing field. Get ready for another scriptural overload this is a Bible Study!

To provide some thoughts on the importance of today's lesson, "Keep, Obey, and Do," let us start with some definitions and use in the Bible.

**Obey** is used *nearly one hundred times in the Faithful Version* (no I did not count them). Merriam-Webster defines obey as: to follow the commands or guidance, to conform or comply.

**Deuteronomy 11:27-28-** "A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day; And a curse, if you will not *obey* the commandments of the LORD your God, but will turn aside out of the way which I command you this day to go after other gods which you have not known."

**Deuteronomy 12:28-** ". Be careful to observe and *obey* all these words which I command you, **so that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever when you do that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.**"

**Jeremiah 42:6-** “Whether *it is* good, or whether it is evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to Whom we send you; so that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.”

As with most instructions within God’s word, there are two sides to the coin. One of blessings for being obedient and the other side is the penalties for disobedience. God is merciful but He is no respecter of persons, and He is a God of wrath.

**Job 36:10-12-** “He also opens their ears to discipline, and commands that they return from iniquity. If they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. But if they do not obey, **they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.**”

**Isaiah 42:24-25-** “Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to robbers? Did not the LORD, against Whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways, nor did they obey His law. Therefore, He has poured upon him the fury of His anger, and the strength of battle. And it has set him on fire all around, yet he did not know; and it burned him, yet he did not lay *it* to heart.”

**Jeremiah 11:3-4-** “And say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “Cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant, Which I commanded your fathers in the day *that* I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, ‘Obey My voice and do according to all that I command you; so you shall be My people, and I will be your God;’”

**John 3:36-** “The one who believes in the Son has everlasting life; but the one who does not obey the Son **shall not see life, for the wrath of God remains on him.**”

**1 Peter 4:17-** “For the time *has come for* judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it first *begins* with us, what *will be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

**2 Thessalonians 1:7-8-** “And to you, who are persecuted, rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels, Dealing out vengeance with flaming fire upon those who do not know God, and **those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;**”

We are also instructed that we are to obey God rather than men. The thirty thousand denominations out there missed that one.

**Acts 5:29-** “But Peter and the apostles answered and said, “We are obligated to **obey God** rather than men.”

**Keep** is used 394 times in A Faithful Version. Merriam-Webster defines keep as: to have in control, to be **faithful**, and to act fittingly, (they actually used “keep the Sabbath).

**1 John 2:3-6-** “And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. *The one who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked.”

**Psalm 119:1-3-** “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they who **keep** His testimonies and **who seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways.**”

When we keep something that is dear to us, we are to abide in it, refrain from departing and maintain our commitment to it. Such is the case with God’s

Commandments. We keep them because we love Him first. We are dedicated and pledge to walk in His ways only. Blessings follow the obedience.

**Exodus 20:5-6-** “You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the LORD your God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, But showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

**Leviticus 26:3-4-** “If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments and do them, Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.”

**Deuteronomy 5:10-** “But showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

**Deuteronomy 5:29-** “Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, **so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!**”



**Deuteronomy 28:2-** “And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you if you will obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

**John 14:15-** “If you love Me, keep the commandments— namely, My commandments.”

**John 15:10-** “If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love.”

The curses and trials will follow our defiance.

**Deuteronomy 28:45-** “And all these curses shall come on you, and shall pursue you and overtake you, until you are destroyed because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.”

**Psalms 89:30-32-** “If his children forsake My law and do not walk in My judgments, If they profane My statutes and do not keep My commandments, Then I will visit their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes.”

**Do** is used 2649 times in A Faithful Version. Merriam-Webster defines do as: carry out, put, perform, execute, commit, bring about, effect, to do another's wishes.

I find it interesting that Merriam-Webster used a quote from Abraham Lincoln to illustrate "do." "It is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence ... and if I can learn what it is **I will do it**—Abraham Lincoln.

**Leviticus 22:31**- "And you shall keep My commandments and **do them**. I *am* the LORD."

**Leviticus 26:2-4**- "You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary. I *am* the LORD. If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments and **do them**, Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit."

Again, the penalties follow the rebellion.

**Deuteronomy 28:58-59**- "If you will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, The LORD YOUR GOD, Then the LORD will make your plagues extraordinary,

and the plagues of your seed great and persistent plagues with evil and long-lasting sicknesses.”

**1 Chronicles 28:7-8-** “And I will establish his kingdom forever if he continues resolute in keeping My commandments and My ordinances, as he is today.’ And now in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God, so that you may possess this good land and leave *it* for an inheritance for your children after you forever.”

Other “buzz words” that are a call to action for us are: hearken, listen, hear, and seek. Hearken is used 141 times, listen is used sixty-three times, hear is used 525 times, and seek is used 242 times in A Faithful Version. That is a lot of scriptures.

### **Hearken**

**Deuteronomy 11:13-14-** ““And it will be, if you will hearken diligently to My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, Then I will give the rain of

your land in its due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil.”

### **Listen**

**Matthew 17:5-** “While he was speaking, a bright cloud suddenly overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight. Listen to Him!”

**Luke 22:31-32-** “Then the Lord said, “Simon, Simon, listen well. Satan has demanded to have all of you, to sift as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren.”

### **Hear**

**Revelation 1:3-** “Blessed *is* the one who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy and who keep the things *that are* written therein; for the time *is* at hand.”

**Revelation 2:7-** “The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the tree of life that is in *the* midst of the paradise of God.”

### Seek

**Isaiah 1:17-19-** “Learn to do good; seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;”

**Matthew 6:33-** “But *as for* you, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

**Matthew 7:7-** “Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you.”

The more of God’s word going in us, the more of the world that leaves us. We become a better vessel to receive more of His Holy Spirit. Having a solid internal

library of God's word will keep us moving forward through the times that lie ahead, drawing us ever closer in our personal relationship with Him.

**Matthew 11:12-** “For from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven is taken with a *great* struggle, **and the zealous ones lay hold on it.**”

This is in no way an exhaustive list of words that require us to act. But our salvation was purchased with the Highest price ever paid. Hopefully, it will encourage you to seek and find more in the Bible and commit them to memory and to get off the bench and into action. Get closer to God while there is still time.

Amen.

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