

~Other Speakers M-R: Old Paths Magazine - Issue 15:**The Joy Of Obedience Is Foremost**

LONG AGO I CAME ACROSS this sentence: "Perfect obedience would be perfect happiness, if only we had perfect confidence in the power we were obeying." I remember being struck with the saying as the means of a possible, though undreamed of, way of happiness. I thought of that saying often, even when full of inner rebellion. It gave me the vision of a rest and yet a vision of a possible development that would soothe and at the same time satisfy all my yearnings.

Need I say that this rest has now been revealed to me, not as a vision, but as a reality. I have seen the Lord Jesus as the way to perfect rest when we yield to Him and take His yoke upon us.

Dear hesitating soul, you are missing such joy! The Master has revealed Himself to you and is calling for your complete surrender. Yet, you withdraw and hesitate. You are partially willing, and you think it is fit and proper that you should feel thus. But a complete surrender, without any reserve, seems to you to be too much. You are afraid of it. You think it involves too much and is too great a risk.

Then, too, you see other souls who seem able to walk with easy consciences in a far wider path than that which appears to be marked out for you, and you ask yourself why this is so. It seems strange that you must do what they do not have to do, and must avoid what they feel free to do.

Surrender Without Limitation

Dear Christian, this very difference between you is your privilege, though you do not yet know it. Your Lord says, "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father. and I will love him, and will manifest myself to Him." You have His commandments. Those you envy do not have them. You know the mind of your Lord about many things. Those walking in darkness do not. Is this not a privilege? Should you regret that your soul is in such close relationship with your Master that He is able to tell you things which those less close may not know? Do you not realize the tender degree of intimacy in this?

Relationships In Life

There are many relationships in life that require little devotion. We may have pleasant friendships with one another, and yet spend a large part of our lives in separate interests and goals. When together, we may greatly enjoy one another's company, but when we are separated we are upset or anxious. There is not enough love between the two parties to give either the right or the desire to enter into and share each other's most private affairs. A certain degree of reserve and distance seems to be the suitable thing in this kind of relationship, but there are other relationships in life where all this is changed. The friendship becomes love. The two hearts give themselves to each other, to no longer be two, but one. A union of soul takes place, which makes all that belongs to one the property of the other. Separate interests and separate paths in life are no longer possible. Things that were acceptable before become unacceptable now, because of the nearness of the tie that binds. The reserve and distance suitable to mere friendship becomes fatal in love. Love gives all and must have all in return. The wishes of one become binding obligations to the other, and the deepest desire of each heart is that it may know every secret wish or longing of the other, in order that it may gratify it.

A Love Relationship

When this kind of love relationship exists the people involved do not complain of the yoke. They do not envy the cool, calm, reasonable friendships they see around them. They do not regret the closeness which this kind of love requires or the obligations it creates. Rather, they glory in these obligations and inwardly pity the ones who do not have such a relationship! Every fresh revelation of the wishes of the loved one is a fresh delight and privilege. No path is considered too hard for them to travel.

If you have ever known this, even for a few hours in an earthly relationship, if you have ever loved any of your fellow human beings enough to find sacrifice and service on their behalf a joy, do so also with your divine Savior. If a complete surrender of your will to the will of another has ever been a blessed and longed-for privilege, then, by all the tender, longing love of your heavenly Master, I beg you to let it be so toward Christ!

He Has Given All

He loves you with more than the love of friendship. He has given you all, and He asks for all in return. The slightest reserve will grieve Him to the heart. He did not spare Himself. How can you spare yourself? For your sake He completely surrendered all that He had, and for His sake you must surrender all that you have, without limitation or measure.

Measureless Devotion To Him

Oh, be generous in your self-surrender! Meet His measureless devotion for you with a measureless devotion to Him. Be glad and eager to throw yourself completely into His loving arms and to hand over the reins of government to Him. Whatever there is of you, let Him have it all. Give up forever everything that is separate from Him. Consent to give up, from this time forward, all freedom of choice. Glory in the close relationship with Jesus which makes this enthusiasm of devotedness not only possible, but necessary.

Separated Unto Him

Have you ever longed to lavish your love and attentions on someone who is unapproachable or who is a stranger? Have you ever strongly wanted to be surrendered and devoted to someone? Will you shrink or hesitate if you hear the loving voice of your Lord calling you into a place of nearness that will require a separation from all else and will make an enthusiastic devotion not only possible, but necessary? Will you think it harsh that He reveals to you more of His mind than He does to others and that He will not allow you to be happy in anything that separates you from Himself? Do you want to go where He cannot go with you, or to have desires which He cannot share?

A Thousand Times No!

A thousand times no! You will meet His lovely will with an eager Joy. Even His slightest wish will become a binding law to you and it will break your heart to disobey it. You will glory in the paths He marks out for you and will grieve for the ones who have missed this precious joy. The obligations of love will be sweetest privileges. Surrendering all that you have to the Lord will seem to lift you into a region of unspeakable glory. The perfect happiness of perfect obedience will dawn upon your soul, and you will begin to know something of what Jesus meant when He said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God."

From the very first your soul has cried out eagerly and gladly to all His offers, "Yes, Lord, yes!" You are more than ready to pour out all your richest treasures of love and devotion to Him. You have surrendered to Him with such enthusiasm that it may disturb and distress some moderate Christians. Your love makes a separation from the world necessary. A lesser love cannot even understand this. It is with love that you sacrifice for and serve your loved ones. The life of love gives you the right to lavish your all upon your beloved One. Your Lord claims far more from you because of your union with Him. He makes His secrets known to you. He looks for an instant response to every requirement of His love.

Let Him Have All

It is altogether wonderful. It will not matter to you if men hate you and separate themselves from you. It will not matter to you if men condemn you. If this happens for His sake, Scripture says your reward is great in heaven for if you are a partaker of His suffering, you will also be a partaker of His glory.

Your love and devotion are His precious reward for all He has done for you. It is unspeakably sweet to Him. Do not be afraid, then, to let yourself go in wholehearted devotion to the Lord. Others may not approve, but He will. That is enough. Do not be stingy with your obedience or your service. Let your heart and your hand be as free to serve Him as His heart and hand were to serve you. Let Him have all there is of you: body, soul, mind, spirit, time, talents, voice, everything. Lay your whole life open before Him so that He may control it. Say each day to Him, "Lord, enable me to regulate this day to please You! Give me spiritual insight to discover what Your will is in all the relationships of my life. Guide me regarding my desires, my friendships, my reading, my dress, my Christian work." Do not let a day or an hour go by in which you are not consciously doing His will and following Him completely.

A Heavenly Glow

Such a personal service to your Lord will enrich the poorest life and give the most monotonous existence a heavenly glow. Have you ever grieved that the romance of youth is so soon lost in the hard realities of the world? Bring Christ into your life and into all its details, and a romance far grander than the brightest days

The Joy Of Obedience by Hannah Whitall Smith

youth could ever know will thrill your soul, and nothing will seem difficult or unbearable again.

When Christ was on earth, He declared the truth that there was no blessedness equal to the blessedness of obedience. "And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked. But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11: 27-28) .

It is more blessed to hear and obey His will than even to have been the earthly mother of our Lord!
May our surrendered hearts reach out with an eager delight to discover and embrace the lovely will of our loving God!

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Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911) - Writer, evangelist, and reformer. In 1875 she published *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, a guide to sanctification and complete surrender.