

Obedience and Self-Denial

God gave us His word not only to increase our knowledge but to change our lives. It is only as we apply truth to our lives (obey the Scriptures) that there will be any significant change. As Christians, we have a new nature. Our spirit has been re-born as a work of the Holy Spirit, but our flesh is still subject to temptation. To grow, we must learn to say “No” to the flesh, and say “Yes” to Christ as He has empowered us. If we want to save a lot of heartache, wasted time, dead-end roads, and wrong turns in our Christian lives, we need to let God direct our paths daily.

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him...If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. (John 14:21, 23)

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. (1 John 2:3-6)

Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Psalm 25:4-5)

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. (Psalm 32:8-9)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Then he said to them all, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.” (Luke 9:23-24)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11)

1. What commands are there in these verses?
 2. Can we judge if a person is a Christian by the way they live?
 3. What does it mean to deny myself and take up my cross?
 4. If we are obedient, how does God make our paths straight?
 5. How can we judge which things we should avoid and deny in our lives?
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MEMORIZE: Proverbs 3:5-6