

destroying the cattle of the land, he had the brilliant idea of sacrificing them for God. But, was it really for God? Obviously not! In doing this, he deliberately rebelled against what God told him to do.

Now to the passage from the book of Acts. The early church certainly had many opportunities to please man, but they were firm in their resolve; they knew they ought to obey God rather than men.

**Reflect:** How is God leading you to trust in him more than yourself and others?

## DAY 5 // Faith and Trust

Read Genesis 12:1-9 and Luke 1:26-56

Let's glimpse a couple more lessons from Scripture on obedience.

When God called Abraham in Genesis chapter 12, we see absolutely no hesitation on his part to obey God. Imagine this: Abram (later called Abraham) was to leave his family, his friends, his occupation, his home, and his worship of false gods to go to a land that he'd never seen before and called by a God who he had never known about before. But we see no hesitation in Abraham at all. He didn't stop to think about it, stop to count the cost, or ask God, "Why?" He simply said, "So Abram went, as the Lord had told him" (Genesis 12:4). Hebrews 11:8 highlights how his faith led to his obedience.

Now to the passage from the Gospel of Luke. I think you'll be hard pressed to find a greater example of obedience than in Mary, the mother of Jesus. When she discovered what God wanted her to do, she could hardly believe it. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God" (Luke 1:29-30). What was Mary's reaction? Did she hesitate to believe it? Was she perplexed because she was still a virgin? All Mary said was, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." Mary trusted in God and this led to her obedience.

**Journal:** Jot down ways faith and trust have led to obedience to God in your life in the past. How might God be calling you to trust and be faith-filled today?

**Pray:** Ask God to help you to respond to his commands with the obedience, faith, and trust modeled by Abraham and Mary.

## MESSAGE NOTES

*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.*  
1 John 5:2, 3 NRSV

Love and obedience ... are they linked?

The reason we are commanded to love one another is so that we love one another. Wait, what?

Jesus obeyed, and yet he is co-equal with God. Somehow obedience and equality are not at odds with each other.

Obedience makes you "supple" for God to work out his beautiful purposes in your life.



2530 Cape Horn Rd., Red Lion, PA 17356  
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**Week 4 // October 1, 2017**  
Message Resources by Pastor Aaron Kunce

## GETTING STARTED

Last week our focus was on how God is sovereign over all and providentially cares for us. This week we continue this theme of God's sovereignty and how our response needs to be loving obedience.

### DAY 1 // A Couple of Helps or Life Hacks

Read John 21:15-19

As a pastor, a common question I hear is how to discern God's voice and know his will. And then, the subject of obedience usually comes up. Obedience can be challenging because we are often afraid. We can be fearful of where obedience will take us, or anxious about what we might lose in obeying. Here's a couple of life hacks to help.

#### LIFE HACK 1: OBEDIENCE DOESN'T MEAN CONTROL

Read John 21 and see how Jesus forgave Peter for his denial and restored him. Jesus also told Peter he would not be in control of his future. Following Jesus leads us to opportunities where we can choose to surrender more control of our lives each day. And surrender is never easy.

#### LIFE HACK 2: FEAR CAN BE A SIGN OF OBEDIENCE

Many of us think we have to understand before we obey. But, obedience doesn't require understanding, it requires trust. We obey God to the extent we trust him. And where our trust in Jesus ends and we only trust ourselves, we get stuck.

"Oceans" by Hillsong United has some scary lyrics. We sing this beautiful refrain, "Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders. Let me walk upon the waters wherever You would call me. Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander." We're asking God to lead us beyond the borders of our trust and understanding.

Obedience in those kinds of places can be terrifying. But sometimes fear can actually be a sign we're following God in the right direction.

**Worship:** Listen to a recording of Hillsong United's song "Oceans." Prayerfully ponder the lyrics. What Scripture does this remind you of? How is God inviting you "out upon the waters"?

### DAY 2 // Chasing the Wild Goose

Read John 3:8

Celtic Christians had a name for the Holy Spirit—An Geadh-Glas, or "the Wild Goose." The name hints at mystery. Much like a wild goose, the Spirit of God cannot be tracked or tamed. An element of danger and an air of unpredictability surround him. And while the name may sound a little sacrilegious, I cannot think of a better description of what it's like to follow the Spirit through life. I think the Celtic Christians were on to something.



This is the main idea in Mark Batterson's book, *Wild Goose Chase: Reclaiming the Adventure of Pursuing God*. The Holy Spirit was called "the wild goose" because the Spirit's movement doesn't always make sense, and the Spirit refuses to be controlled or confined. If you are going to follow the Holy Spirit you're going to be led to do some very uncomfortable things, travel some challenging paths, and experience some wild and unexpected moments. In those moments, obedience will mean everything.

**Reflect:** How have you experienced the leading of the Holy Spirit in your life? How has the Spirit of God called you to obedience?

**Pray:** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you trust and obey him throughout your day.

### DAY 3 // The Center of the Wheel

Read Ephesians 3:14-21 and John 14:15

Obedience is challenging—everybody knows that. But, you and I can fulfill the commands of Scripture better by falling in love with God rather than trying to obey everything. Here's the thing, obedience is

not the center of the wheel. The hub of our lives is our relationship with God. It is life with the Father, Son, and Spirit who we grow to know, love, and follow. Our behavior and obedience radiate like spokes from the center of our lives and allow us to roll forward. When we put our external behavior as the hub, we get stuck. Forward motion must be fueled by love.

The Christian faith isn't a business transaction. It only works with love. You might be fighting temptation by simply working on self-control. This won't work. I'm all for living a disciplined life, but there's a better way. Temptation is a test of your relationship, not just your self-control. Whether you pray or not is not really about self-control. It reveals your relationship. Do you want to talk to God? And better still, do you want to listen and hear what he wants to say to you?

I'm afraid that most of us don't grasp the enormous extravagance of God's love and the lengths to which he's willing to go to show his love. That's why the Apostle Paul prayed that we might know and understand it more and more (Ephesians 3).

**Reflect:** Ask God to help you to abide in his love for you today.

"It is not hard to obey when we love the one whom we obey."

*Ignatius of Loyola*



### DAY 4 // Obedience in Scripture

Read Samuel 15:22 and Acts 5:29

Let's look at a couple of lessons from Scripture on obedience.

The context of the 1 Samuel passage deals with Saul's inability to follow the Lord's commands. Although made king, Saul was supposed to destroy everything in the lands he conquered. However, he decided to take matters into his own hands. Instead of