

# Listening to Jesus Regarding Authority and Obedience

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## Introduction:

- 1) Many questions have been raised about the need for some positive expression of God's will, i.e. the need for authority, versus doing that which is not prohibited (viewing silence as permission).
- 2) Through the years there have also been questions about how that will is expressed and whether the idea of searching God's word for a command, approved example, or necessary inference is valid.
- 3) This lesson will not look at every aspect of these questions, but we believe this simple approach of allowing Jesus in the book of John to speak can be helpful.

*"Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself (of his own accord—ESV), but [only—ESV] what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.' "* 5:19

- 1) Shouldn't we see in this the importance of not acting on our own desires, i.e. of our own accord?
- 2) When I talk of knowing God's will (or establishing authority), I may speak of command, example, and necessary inference (inescapable conclusion) and be told those are manmade rules, but doesn't Jesus say He did what He saw? If Jesus viewed examples (being shown) as authoritative, shouldn't we?

*I can of Myself do nothing (I can do nothing on my own—ESV; I can do nothing of My own initiative—NASB). As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father (Him—ESV, NASB) who sent Me. 5:30*

- 1) I can do nothing! If Jesus, the One who was Himself deity, sought the will of the Father and not His own will, shouldn't we do the same?
- 2) Far too often things are decided on the basis of what seems logical, appealing, etc. to us, but we need the mindset to go back and ask where things originated. Did this come from the will of God or some man's initiative?
- 3) Did instrumental music enter into corporate worship through a commitment to God's will or man's initiative?
- 4) Where did church involvement in recreation, education, etc. originate?

*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.* 6:38

- 1) A common theme in Jesus' teaching.
- 2) Do we notice also the need to do? Believing and confessing are not enough, we must be obedient.

*Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine (teaching—ESV, NASB) is not Mine, but His who sent Me. <sup>17</sup>If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. <sup>18</sup>He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him."* 7:16-18

- 1) People routinely speak of "my church's doctrine" and "you have your doctrine and I have mine," but even Jesus didn't have His own. One of the most important things to take from this is a commitment to seeking and searching for truth.
- 2) The search for truth requires labor, but it also requires a determination to do God's will. Those who approach the Bible simply as an academic exercise or seeking to "get around it" will struggle to truly know God's will.
- 3) Notice also that one who speaks from himself is seeking to glorify Himself and not God.

*I (We—ESV, NASB) must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.* 9:4

- 1) Too often our defense is, "It's a good work," but is it the work of Him? Cf. **Mt. 7:21-23**.
- 2) While those who believe their remaking of the church into more of a social outreach group is a good work may be completely sincere, we need to be sure we are working His works.

*If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ....* 10:35

- 1) This passage confuses many because the psalmist used the Hebrew word *elohim* in reference to the judges of Israel, but the key point is the Scripture cannot be broken.
- 2) Let's not allow ourselves to dismiss Scripture as outdated, applicable to someone else, too hard, etc.
- 3) That's not to say we are to blindly accept what someone tells us is required in Scripture, but the Scripture itself stands!
- 4) This passage also utilizes the "necessary inference" when Jesus argues that He did not blaspheme when He called Himself the Son of God, for even the law called men gods.

*For I have not spoken on My own authority (on My own initiative—NASB); but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command (commandment—ESV, NASB), what I should say and what I should speak. <sup>50</sup> And I know that His command (commandment—ESV, NASB) is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.” 12:49f*

- 1) Is the Bible a law book? Not in the same sense as Ex. 20-23; Lev. 1-7; et al, but it contains commandments. Jesus said the Father gave Him a commandment about what to say? Are we receptive to His commandments?
- 2) Again, if Jesus didn't speak on His own authority, should we ?

*Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority (on My own initiative—NASB); but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 14:10*

- 1) Get the idea this concept of “not of my own authority/initiative” was important to Jesus?

*He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. 14:24*

- 1) Love and obedience go together.
- 2) And again Jesus claims that His message is not His, but the Father's.

*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 15:10*

- 1) To speak of the importance of keeping commandments is not being a Pharisee; it's called being a disciple of Jesus.

*No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. 15:15*

- 1) Let's be committed to knowing all that the Father says and then making it known to others.

*<sup>13</sup>However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority (initiative—NASB), but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup>All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare (disclose—NASB) it to you. 16:13-15*

- 1) Truth matters.
- 2) The Holy Spirit was to manifest the same attitude toward authority. He would not act on His own, but would take and declare what He heard.
- 3) Jesus is glorified when we take His words, not our own. Cf. 1 Pet. 4:10f

*For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. 17:8*

*I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17:14*

- 1) Once more, Jesus spoke the words of God.

**Conclusion:**

- 1) Will approach God's word in the same way Jesus did?
- 2) Are we listening to Him? Seeking to glorify Him? Is our love manifested in obedience?