

Imagine a bride just a few weeks into her marriage. She recently stood before family and friends and promised to love and serve her husband for the rest of her life. She is overflowing with gratitude for the man God has given her and excited about their future together.

One evening, they sit together enjoying a meal. Laughter and conversation flow easily and she realizes her cheeks ache from how much she's smiling.

She gets up from the table to refill her water.

"Could you please grab a glass for me as well," her husband asks.

"No, Get it yourself."

That answer surprises us, doesn't it?

Love does not respond that way. A bride who truly loves her husband is glad to help him. She cares about him, so she wants to serve him. When love is real, service is natural.

This is the same connection Jesus made with His disciples:

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (John 14:15)

Jesus does not separate love and obedience. He joins them together.

Yet many people think of obedience as heavy, restrictive, or even frightening. We joke that we do not want to pray because we're afraid of what God might ask us to do. When He does speak, we may hesitate. We begin to think about the cost, or our own comfort.

But love thinks differently.

Charles Stanley said,

God never intended for us to think in terms of obedience being a burden, something we have to do.

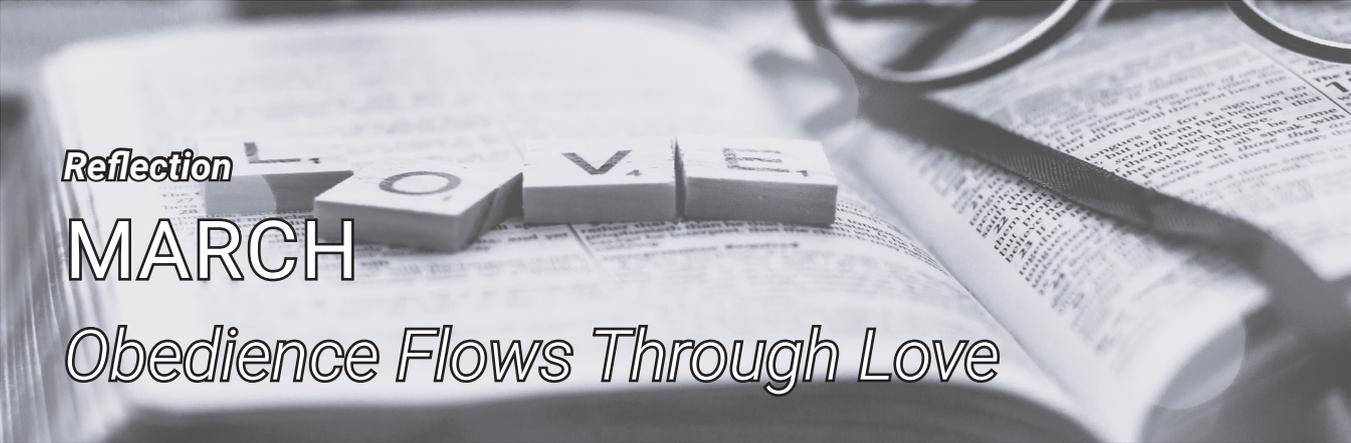
But rather something we want to do, motivated by our love for him.

God intends for us to think about obedience as a wonderful, thrilling adventure with Jesus Christ day after day.

Jesus described following Him in a similar way:

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30).

Following Jesus is light when it flows from our deep love for God. We recognize that He paid the highest price for us and loves us with the biggest love imaginable. From that place, obedience is a love offering, something we desire to give back to the one who gave so much for us.



Reflection

MARCH

Obedience Flows Through Love

1. When you think of obedience what comes to mind? Does it feel more like a duty or delight?

How might that feeling change if we were more fueled by love?

2. Read 1 John 5:3. What does this verse teach us about obedience to God?

How is obedience commonly spoken about in your church or culture? How does this compare to the Biblical teaching of obedience flowing from love and not being burdensome?

3. The Bible is full of examples of those who, unlike the bride above, said yes to God. Which examples come to mind for you?

Read Luke 1:38, Isaiah 6:8, and Genesis 22:1. What do these verses teach us about obedience to God?

4. Read John 21:15-19. How did Jesus restore Peter after he disobeyed Jesus?

What does that teach us about how love fuels obedience?

5. When Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey my commands," He was speaking to those who already loved Him. Instead of a weighty command, this verse could be viewed as a promise - obedience will flow from us because of our love for God.

If this is true, what steps could we take to grow in obedience?