

EGF-10: Is Obedience Really Necessary?  
EGF Group Bible Study 11-26-11

The Ostrich is a species of large flightless birds native to Africa. It is distinctive in its appearance, with a long neck and legs and the ability to run at maximum speeds of about 45 miles per hour, the top land speed of any bird. The Ostrich is the largest living species of bird and lays the largest egg of any living bird. When threatened, the Ostrich will either hide itself by lying flat against the ground, or will run away. If cornered, it can attack with a kick from its powerful legs. Contrary to popular belief, Ostriches do not bury their heads in sand. This myth likely began with Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79), who wrote that Ostriches *"imagine, when they have thrust their head and neck into a bush, that the whole of their body is concealed."*

Many people seem to have this mentality when it comes to obeying God. People might feel like they can get away with violating a traffic law or cheating on their taxes, but God and His laws work much differently. God sees everything we do, He hears everything we say, and He really does care about how we behave. While the Lord offers forgiveness for our sins, there still are deadly consequences for breaking God's law. Amazingly, some Christians say any attempt to obey God's law is completely unnecessary. Yet Jesus said if you really love God, you'll do what He asks. So is obedience to God really necessary? Let us see what God says about obeying His law.

1. **Does God really see and take note of me personally? Genesis 16:13; Psalms 139:1-4; Luke 12:7**
  
2. **Can I be saved in His kingdom without obeying His Word, as found in the Holy Bible? Matthew 7:21; Matthew 19:17; Hebrews 5:9.**

Salvation and the kingdom of heaven are for those who obey the Lord's commands. God does not promise eternal life to those who merely make a profession of faith or are church members or are baptized, but rather to those who do His will, which is revealed in Scripture. Of course, this obedience is possible only through Christ (Acts 4:12).

3. **Why does God require obedience... why is it necessary? Matthew 7:14; Proverbs 8:36; Deuteronomy 6:24.**

Because there is only one narrow path that leads to godlikeness, and thus to His kingdom. All roads do not lead to the same place. The Bible is the map and guidebook with full instructions, warnings, and information on how to safely reach that kingdom. To disregard any part of it leads away from God and His kingdom.

4. **Why does God permit disobedience to continue? Why not destroy sin and sinners now? Jude 14, 15; Romans 14:11.**

God permits disobedience and sin to continue until all people everywhere are at last fully convinced of God's justice, love, and mercy. All will finally realize that God, by requiring obedience, is not trying to force His will upon us, but rather is trying to keep us from hurting and destroying ourselves. The sin problem is not settled until even the most cynical and hardened sinners are convinced of God's love and confess that He is just.

**5. Will God actually destroy the disobedient? 2 Peter 2:4; Psalms 145:20; 2 Thessalonians 1:8.**

**6. Will any be lost who truly think they are saved? Matthew 7:21**

Matthew 7:21-23 makes it clear that many who prophesy, cast out devils, and do many wonderful works in Christ's name will be lost but will think they are saved. Christ said they are lost because they did not do *"the will of my Father which is in heaven."* Verse 21.

**7. I want to obey all of God's rules. How can I be certain I will not overlook one? Matthew 7:7; 2 Timothy 2:15; John 7:17, 12:35; Psalms 18:44.**

God promises to keep me from error and lead me safely to all truth if I: (1) pray earnestly for guidance, (2) sincerely study God's Word, and (3) follow truth when I am shown.

**8. Does God count me guilty for disobeying Bible truth that has never been made clear to me? John 9:41; James 4:17; Hosea 4:6; Matthew 7:7.**

If I have had no opportunity to learn a certain Bible truth, God does not hold me accountable. But the Bible teaches that I am responsible to God for all the light (knowledge of right) I have and all I can have! To play ostrich in these exceedingly crucial matters is fatal. It is my responsibility to hunt diligently for truth.

**9. But God isn't particular about obedience on every point and in small details, is He? Numbers 32:11-12; Matthew 4:4; John 15:14.**

**10. Is it best to wait until all obstacles are removed before embracing the truth? John 12:35; Psalms 119:60; Matthew 6:33; Psalms 18:44.**

Procrastination is the devil's most dangerous trap. It seems so harmless to wait, but the Bible teaches that unless a person acts immediately upon light, it quickly turns to darkness.

- 11. But isn't full obedience an impossibility for a human being? Matthew 19:26; Philipians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 2:14; John 15:5; Isaiah 1:19.**
  
- 12. What will happen to a person who willfully and knowingly continues in disobedience? Hebrews 10:26-27; John 12:35.**

When a person knowingly rejects light and continues in disobedience, the light eventually goes out, and he is left in total darkness.

- 13. Paul seems to say that if a person willfully commits just one sin after he knows better, he is lost. Is this correct? Hebrews 10:26-27.**

The Bible is speaking here not of one single act or sin but of a presumptuous continuation in sin and a refusal to surrender to Christ after one knows better. Such action grieves away the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) and hardens a person's heart until one is "past feeling" (Ephesians 4:19) and lost.

- 14. Isn't love more important than obedience? John 14:23-24; 1 John 5:3.**

- 15. But doesn't true freedom in Christ release me from obedience? John 8:31-34; Romans 6:17-18; Psalms 119:44-45.**

True freedom means freedom "*from sin*" (Romans 6:18), which is breaking God's law (1 John 3:4). The citizens who obey the law have freedom. The disobedient are caught and lose their freedom.

- 16. When I believe God requires a certain thing, should I obey even though I do not understand why He requires it? Jeremiah 38:20; Proverbs 28:26; Psalms 118:8; Isaiah 55:9; Romans 11:33; Isaiah 42:16; Psalms 16:11.**

We must give God credit for being wise enough to require some things of us we may not understand. Good children obey their parents even when the reasons for their commands are not clear. Simple faith and trust in God will cause us to believe that He knows what is best for us and will never lead us in any wrong path.

- 17. I have asked God to give me a sign if He wants me to obey. This is safe, isn't it? Matthew 12:39; Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 2:15.**

18. **Who is really behind all disobedience, and why? 1 John 3:8-10; Revelation 12:9.**
19. **What glorious promise regarding a miracle does the Bible give to those who are God's children? Philippians 1:6.**
20. It is a relief to know that Jesus not only provides the new birth to those who accept and follow Him, but He also continues to work needed miracles in their lives until they are safe in His kingdom. **Do you want to begin lovingly obeying and following Jesus fully at once?**

Ostriches have the largest eyes of any land animal and their eyesight is so acute that they can see over two miles clearly. With their acute eyesight and hearing, Ostriches can sense predators such as lions from far away. In this respect Christians should imitate the Ostrich by being a vigilant lookout for the temptations of the devil to disobey God. *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”* 1 Peter 5:8-11.