

***“If ye love me, keep my commandments..”***  
***(John 14:15)***

## Light from the Word

### The Faithful Church: Obedient to Scripture



*Writings based on God's Word*

Motivated by our love for God and a deep desire to please Him, members of the faithful church are called to obey His Word, “... *that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more*” (1 Thes. 4:1). Jesus stated simply, “*If ye love me, keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). Faith is at one with obedience, which provides evidence of its validity. (Jam. 2:18) We are taught that “*without faith it is impossible to please Him*” (Heb. 11:6) and that Abraham, the father of faith, exemplified faith in action. “*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive as an inheritance, obeyed*” (Heb. 11:8). By our obedience we not only prove our love for God, but we establish ourselves as one of His own: “*But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him*” (1 John 2:5).

The faithful church understands and appreciates the significance of the Scriptures. Not only do the Scriptures give us comfort, hope, and joy for our daily lives, but God's Word also provides the wisdom and instruction to obtain our eternal salvation. “*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Tim. 3:15-17). Obedience to the Word of God is vital because the Scriptures will provide the standard of judgment in the last day. “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*” (John 12:48).

In order to obey the Scriptures, one must have personal knowledge of them. Wisdom, prudence, and godly fear characterize sound biblical knowledge. “...*that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*” (Col. 1:9); “*The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge...*” (Prov. 18:15); and “*The fear*

*of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...*” (Prov. 1:7). Asking God to give us spiritual discernment as we prayerfully and reverently read and study His inspired Word results in the correct understanding of the “*word of truth*” (2 Tim. 2:15). Knowledge of the Scriptures at a personal level is essential that one be “*grounded and settled*” in the faith (Col. 1:23), and be not “*carried about with every wind of doctrine*” (Eph. 4:14). A sincere love for our God and a Spirit-led knowledge of His Word results in humble obedience to Him and brings true joy to the heart of the believer: “*O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth*” (Psa. 119:97, 102-103). It is only with God's grace that we can humbly comply with the teachings of His Word. (John 15:5)

We believe responsibility for doctrinal stewardship within the church rests with all of us, and with heightened accountability and authority with the Elder Body. Through prayer, the leading of the Holy Spirit and a firm reliance upon Scriptures, our elders humbly seek to provide sound teaching and to encourage correct understanding and application of the principles of God's Word in all our lives (Acts 15; 1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 4:13, 16; 5:17; 2 Tim. 4:2). They must not carry out these duties as “*lords*,” but as humble servants, motivated by the love of Christ. (1 Pet. 5:2-3, John 21:15-17). Another duty of church leadership is to serve as “*watchmen on the wall*” and sound the alarm when matters of spiritual significance confront the church. They are to be vigilant in watching for the cunning devices and methods which Satan is constantly refining to try to destroy us (1 Pet. 5:8). Submission to church authority is asked of us as another expression of God's love for His church and His care for our souls. (1 Thes. 2:11-13; Heb. 13:17) As God's children, we are to search the Scriptures and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to confirm that what we are being taught is sound, scripturally-based truth (John 16:13; Acts 17:10-11).

The proper interpretation of God's Word is crucial for maintaining sound doctrine so that the faithful church may continue to “*earnestly contend for the faith*” (Jude 3). Scripture exhorts us to not add to or take away from biblical truth, to avoid misapplication of Scripture, and to humbly seek and receive counsel (Prov. 12:15, 30:5-6; Gal. 6:3; 2 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 22:17-18). To lay aside true doctrine ultimately results in disobedience to God's Word: “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Praying for our elders will greatly assist in their discernment of God's Word. “*Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you*” (2 Thes. 3:1). Earnestly seeking to teach and obey “*all the counsel of God*” as the source of absolute truth is a tremendous safeguard in maintaining sound doctrine (Acts 20:27).

The Scriptures contain many promises and blessings for the believer who lives an overcoming life through obedience, by His grace. As a faithful church, we become members of the family of God, “*For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother*” (Matt. 12:50). Keeping His Word brings us the blessing of divine fellowship, “*Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*” (John 14:23). Obedience to Scripture enhances peace and unity within the church: “...*that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel*” (Phil. 1:27). The ultimate outcome for all loyal believers in Christ of the faithful church will be an eternal home in heaven: “*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city*” (Rev. 22:14).