

Kingdom thoughts

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. Hebrews 12:28

BMI Devotional May 2014

Obedience vs Disobedience

We all know what it means to obey. Someone tells us to do something, and we do it.

But do you realise that when you obey someone, you're actually humbling yourself and giving someone a certain level of authority over you?

Now this can take on many different forms and levels. When I am on an airplane the flight attendant can say to me 'I'm sorry sir, but you need to stow that live chicken in the overhead locker' and I'll say 'right away, miss', but if she said to me 'sir, after we land I need you to stop shopping at Coles and start shopping at Woolworths' — I'm going to stare at her blankly and have something of an awkward pause before backing away slowly.

See when I click that OK button on the terms and conditions of booking my airline ticket, I'm submitting myself to the authority of the airline and agree to obey the instructions of the flight attendants. But that authority is a limited one, which extends only to my time with them in that cabin, and even then it's only for things that are reasonably related to the flight.

Are we ever like this with God? Do we ever come to church on Sunday and treat him like a flight attendant whose authority only extends between those four walls? When God says to us 'I want you to stow that bitterness in the overhead locker' do we obey him while we're there, and then when church is finished we grab it back, walk out the door of the church and continue to be bitter?

God's authority over us is timeless and spaceless — he wants us to obey him all the time, and wherever we are. His

authority extends, as Paul describes in Ephesians 4:6, 'over all and through all and in all'.

Another key thing to understand is that when we're disobeying God we're actually obeying something else.

Romans 6 talks about being slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness. Here are some snippets:

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires (vs 12). Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? (vs 16). You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness (vs 18), But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life (vs 22).

So we can't really say 'You can't pin me down! I'm not gonna obey anyone! I'm my own man and I'm going to do whatever I want!' — because you're either a slave to sin and obey your mortal, sinful, evil desires, OR you're a slave to righteousness, which leads to holiness and eternal life. Even when you're being disobedient you're still obeying something!

Actually verse 22 of Romans 6 is quite interesting because it talks about holiness as a *benefit* that we reap rather than something we have to *try* and do:

Too often, especially for those who are outside Christianity looking in, they see holiness as a bunch of rules and something that's really going to stifle them. Little do they know that the holy life of a victorious christian is one of the greatest freedom and release — it's the life that the master designer designed us to live.

John Garrard

