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Philippians 2:12-13 - Obedience: The Holy Spirit's role and volitional responsibility.

The focus of this class:

1. What is obedience?
2. What is empowerment?
3. What are the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the Spirit and how are they acquired?
4. How do we walk in the Spirit?
5. Is Christian obedience dependent upon the Spirit's empowerment?

Obedience:

1. Obedience is connected to listening. **u`pakou, w** Acts 12:13 (doorkeeper), Hebrews 11:8
2. Obedience requires one choose whom or what to listen to. Romans 6:13
 - a. The decision to be obedient to God should be based on reason as all obedience should be based on reason. Your reason for obedience should be that it is good or logically the right thing to do. Romans 6:11, 12:1; Galatians 5:24
 - b. Obedience is an act of the will. All men have a will as a part of their nature. The basic nature of the will is important to understand obedience and why you do what you do.
 - c. Due to the nature of our will it is an inescapable fact that the reason we do what we do is that to some degree, if only for a brief moment, we view our choices as good.
 - d. There is great danger in having a false good. Mathew 6:19-23.
3. Obedience requires instructions to follow.
 - a. This means seeking instruction/truth on which to follow.
 - b. This also means God will reveal His will to you. Romans 6:16
4. Obedience requires acting on the instruction/commands of the one chosen to obey.
 - a. To present yourself to God for obedience and then live according to your lusts means you are still obedient to sin and as a result you are a servant of sin. Such action will result in the least amount of freedom you can have as a believer. Romans 6:17
 - b. To properly obey the instructions found in the word of God we must first see God as good and likewise be able to connect each mandate as good. This results in the greatest amount of freedom.
 - c. To be a willing servant is freedom, and to be an unwilling servant is legalism.
 - i. Willing in the sense that you see the good in a manner that acting on it is in line with the very nature of your own will.
 - d. The problem with many unbelievers is not that they don't believe in God but that they don't see Him as good.
5. The complication of our nature in regards to obedience:

- a. Paul clearly demonstrates a conflict between his 1st and 2nd order volition. Romans 7:25.

Empowerment in Christianity and what it really points to:

1. The main idea comes mostly from the New Testament writings speaking about God giving power (**du, nami j**), enabling (**du, natai**) and empowering (**evndunamo, w**) the believer. The previous Greek words are often translated as power, miracles, empowering, and enablement.
2. The basic idea of anything having power is that it possesses a certain potential that can be actualized immediately to do a specific thing.
3. Empowerment never forces someone to obey or choose.
 - a. A person with a gun may be physically empowered to shoot somebody, but the gun does not make the person shoot.
 - b. Even when a person has a gun that person may still lack the ability to shoot somebody. Empowerment of the will is also needed.
4. How is one empowered to have the following?
 - a. Patience?
 - b. Love? Love is not defined by outward action. 1 Cor. 13
 - i. Obedience must have right intention as well as outward compliance. Eph. 6:5, Col. 3:22
 - ii. If the Holy Spirit can reveal, teach, and produce love in you, then the Holy Spirit can enable/empower you to act in love.

The Holy Spirit's empowerment and volitional responsibility revealed in Galatians 5 and 6.

1. Where do we get our lusts of the flesh? Mark 7:21-23, James 1:14
 - a. It takes thoughtful self-evaluation to realize that these things reside in our heart as some type of value/good to us.
 - b. Perhaps value or treasure resonates better than seeing an evil as good. To actually call evil good is an indication of complete reversionism.
 - c. Lusts of the flesh generally are a self-serving good. Philippians 3:19
 - d. Lusts accumulate over time as one becomes more and more exposed to various sins. This is why our flesh continues to be corrupted until the day we die. Ephesians 4:22.
 - e. Don't be caught up by the idea that outward temptations are the problem. To be physically removed from a bad environment ultimately will not take care of the problem.
 - f. Being tempted to do something that you have never experienced usually will involve curiosity and reasoning. (Eve)
2. Lusts of the Spirit are also going to be desires from within.
 - a. These desires come from exposure to truth made real by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The fruit of the Spirit cannot be a result of outward obedience but rather reveals the necessary prerequisite for obedience.

- c. The fruit of the Spirit gives you power over the lusts of the flesh (Rom. 8:13) and enables the desires of the Spirit to become a 1st order volition.
- 3. Galatians 5:17 is the same conflict that Paul has in Romans 7:15-25.
 - a. He cannot do the good that he desires due to the lusts of his flesh, which keep motivating him to do what is in exact opposition of the good he desires.
 - b. Paul states the remedy for his dilemma is to walk by the Spirit. Romans 8:4, Galatians 5:16
 - c. Paul states the reason for success in those who walk by the Spirit is that they are thinking about the things of the Spirit. Rom. 8:5
 - d. Whatever your mind is actively thinking about will determine which lust is being strengthened and the lust that will likely become your 1st order volition. Romans 8:5 Philippians 3:19, Colossians 3:2
 - e. The mind focused on God and the Word of God is given understanding by the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 2:9-14, John 14:26, 16:13
 - i. An unbeliever and a carnal believer cannot serve God. Romans 8:7, 1 John 1:10, 2:11

The consequences of your walk: Galatians 6:8

1. This principle is stated not just in view of giving money or material goods, but is a follow up warning about choosing to walk by the Spirit or in the flesh.
 - a. This passage does not teach that the evil you do will eventually be done back to you.
 - b. This passage is not something we are to take comfort in when wronged by another person.
 - c. This passage does warn that there are internal consequences to the choices we make.
 - d. Regardless of the difficulty we create for ourselves we can always recover by the grace of God.

Do we need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for obedience?

1. Yes in the of sense being able to see good in order to properly form our will, to have power over the lusts of the flesh and to have the will strengthened so that our 2nd order will may become our 1st order volition.
2. The believer is responsible for choosing to access God's grace resources and to choose every act of obedience.