

OASIS OF LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

THE ART OF Obedience

THE 21-DAY DEVOTIONAL

THEART OF

Obedience

**BUT THANKS BE TO GOD THAT, THOUGH
YOU USED TO BE SLAVES TO SIN, YOU HAVE
COME TO OBEY FROM YOUR HEART THE
PATTERN OF TEACHING THAT HAS NOW
CLAIMED YOUR ALLEGIANCE.**

Romans 6:17

THEART OF Obedience

The 21-day Devotional, **The Art of Obedience** was born after a time of seeking God for our church family to grow together in stewarding a healthy and balanced relationship with God.

We recognize that obedience isn't meant to be approached from a single perspective but rather, that it's a way of life that shapes every area of who we are.

Throughout this devotional journey, we'll develop a more complete understanding of obedience: learning to be faithful with our family, time, prayer life, rest, finances, and hearts. Together, we'll explore what Scripture teaches and encourage one another as we grow in trust and surrender to God. As we complete this devotional, we will practice each of the disciplines we discuss, begining with a simultanous 21-day Daniel Fast, running Sunday, Jan 11th to Sunday, February 1st.

This next month isn't about simply completing 21 days, but about forming lifelong rhythms of obedience that carry us through every season.

Our prayer is that, by the end, we'll be better equipped to live out the freedom described in Romans 6:17–18 by choosing our Heavenly Father and breaking free from patterns of sin and disobedience.

It won't always be easy, but Philippians 4:13 reminds us that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

We're growing together, and He's with us every step of the way.

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DANIEL FAST DATES:

START: SUNDAY, JANUARY 11

END: SATURDAY, JAN 31ST

SUNDAY, FEB 1ST: JUBILEE SERVICE

OASIS OF LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

THE ART OF
Obedience
SERMON SERIES

SUNDAYS AT 11:30AM

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THE ART OF
Obedience

THE 21-DAY DEVOTIONAL

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DAY 1

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CHOICE

“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.”

ROMANS 6:17-18 NIV

Although a New Testament verse, it brings to life an Old Testament truth: *From the fall of man and the conception of Adam and Eve in the Garden, we have always been presented with a choice.*

Will we choose the desires of our flesh, or will we choose to honor our Heavenly Father and Creator?

Obedience is more than just a simple decision; it is our highest declaration of honor to He who created and formed us.

Through this month, we will be exploring the art of choosing God in every aspect of our life.

On this first day, ask God to reveal to you what parts of your life have not yet been submitted to complete allegiance to him. As he shows you, we pray you will decide obedience to be the response of your heart.

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 2

OBEDIENCE OF THE HEART

“Above all things guarded, guard your heart.”

PROVERBS 4:23 NIV

This particular Proverbs correlates the life-giving organ that is the heart, with the mind.

The message is simple, but powerful: It is important for us to guard our thoughts, **as they are the gateway to our emotions and inevitably our actions.**

Eve allowed her thoughts to enter into disobedience, which caused her to question who God was in her life, despite being in constant communion with Him since her creation.

A serpent, foreign to her, was able to make her question the God she knew personally. Think about that. How easy it is for the adversary of our lives to distance us from the truth by implanting thoughts that are misaligned with who God is, and in turn, with whom we have been called to be. The ultimate goal of your enemy is to distort your reality, and bind you in lies.

Today, and every day, decide to **stand firm in the truth!** Live out 2 Corinthians 10:5 and take captive every thought that is contrary to what God has already spoken!

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 3

OBEDIENCE OF TIME

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”

COLOSSIANS 3:23 NIV

Stewardship is a word that is used consistently in church culture and, for the most part, has been used to reference money.

But what does it really mean? Stewardship is defined as *the responsible care, management, and use of what has been entrusted to you, recognizing that it ultimately belongs to someone else.*

Therefore, **stewardship is faithful responsibility over what God has entrusted to us.**

Even when looking at the concept of tithing, we are held captive by the idea that it is centered around finances, but in actuality the center has always been obedience.

The reality is that in order to be effective in stewardship, we need to apply it to every aspect of our lives, not just money.

So today, let's look at how we have stewarded (or managed) the valuable asset of time:

1. Have you taken a moment to pray?
2. Have you taken a moment to talk with the Word?
3. Have you taken a moment to hug your spouse?
4. Have you taken a moment to tell your children you love them?
5. Were you on time for work?

1 Peter 4:10 – Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 4

OBEDIENCE OF WORSHIP

“He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

GENESIS 22:5 NIV

Worship... this is a word that in modern-day Christianity typically brings a picture of a talented musician or singer leading a congregation in a Spirit-led song of adoration to the Lord, evoking an emotional response that makes us feel a spiritual connection to our Heavenly Father.

While this is not untrue, Worship in its first appearance in the Word was far from a church service as we know it.

Genesis 22:5 – *He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”* Worship in this verse refers to obedience in sacrifice.

My prayer, is that we would let John 4:23 be inscribed in our hearts today, understanding that the hour is now where God is looking for those who honor Him with true obedience.

That is our ultimate worship.

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 5

OBEDIENCE IN STEWARDSHIP OF PRAYER AND FASTING

“My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth ... until Christ is formed in you”

GALATIANS 4:19 NIV

It is impossible to be fully obedient in the submission of the flesh and continued intimacy with the Father, without understanding that fasting is more than just a dietary discipline.

From the moment of birth to the moment of death, there is a battle between flesh and spirit.

Galatians 4:19 tells us that our main goal from birth is to have Christ formed in us. Our battle is not just against Satan! This is where most of us fail to really see the enemy and call him out, as many times our enemy is not a two-horned, long-tailed foe, *but rather the person staring back at us in the mirror.*

Romans 7:15 – *“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.”* Obedience and discipline allows us to submit our flesh fully to its master – **Jesus.**

As we speak mysteries and inquire in prayer, we ease the raging contention between flesh and spirit. The war will never stop—not until the day He returns—but you can have the victory by **committing to one decision and act of obedience at a time!**

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 6

OBEDIENCE IN SONSHIP

*“For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”*

PSALMS 139:13 (NIV)

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven..." A prayer that in itself carries so much weight and power, yet we rarely use this declaration to begin our interaction with our Heavenly Father, despite having been given this key by Jesus Himself.

From the beginning of time, Adam and Eve were persecuted by Satan, but it wasn't to make them sin, it was to make them **doubt**. Immediately, the serpent attacks her knowledge and confidence in the words of her Father:

Genesis 3:4–5 — “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

His intention has always been to attempt to strip you of your identity and sonship. Immediately, their disobedience to their Father caused them to hide from Him in shame. Verse 9 is not God being unable to see Adam or find him in the garden because God sees all, hears all, knows all. It was God stating the obvious ramifications of disobedience: *shame in sin and disobedience will always cause us to run and hide from the One we can be vulnerable and transparent with.*

For our spirit understands one simple truth: **be holy because He is holy.**

The flesh will always make us feel unworthy, but today I urge you: no matter where you are in your journey, lean into your spirit man, recognize that voice of shame, and cast it out of your life!

He is still your Father, and you are still His children!

Today I challenge you to come out of hiding... get up and run into the Father's embrace. That is where you belong!

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 7

LISTEN

“When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

ZECHARIAH 7:13 (NIV)

As we navigate our walk with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we have to consistently be cognizant of the role and voice of each one. We won't get into that today, but I want you to learn a lost art: “listen to listen, not to respond.”

While prayer is an essential part of our faith, far too many times we forget the basics of **Psalm 1:1–2**:

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on His law day and night.

Prayer is important, but so is listening for the voice of the Father. Ask these questions that we see all throughout the Word:

1. Lord, where are You?
2. Lord, speak to me.
3. Lord, here I am—what would You have me do?
4. Can You open the eyes of my heart? For I long to see You!

It is hard to be obedient without a directive. It's even harder to be obedient when we have yet to hear and understand the heart of the One we are submitting to. It won't always be easy, but make it a habit to sit in silence, drown out all of the noise, and listen for the voice of God... trust me, **He has a lot to say!**

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 8

A TENTH OF EVERYTHING: OBEDIENCE IN GIVING

“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”

PROVERS 3:9-10 NIV

This has become such a touchy subject for so many. Truthfully, it's a place where many of us lack true obedience. As we look around from generation to generation, there has always been a sense of hopelessness around this topic. Inherently, we all want to be obedient in this aspect, but life comes with challenges, and sometimes we are faced with the decision of whether or not to give.

I want to begin by saying God understands. Remember, He knows every one of your needs, which is why in **Malachi 3:10** He gives us these words:

“Test Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”

In reality, there is no set amount. The Law dictates 10% as the starting point, but 2 Corinthians 8 tells us: *“In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.”*

The church in Macedonia, of which 2 Corinthians speaks, shows us that there is always an excuse to be disobedient to God in any season. But that if God is real in our lives and the words of the Bible are true, then that means Malachi is not just empty words; it is a promise from our Father that He will be faithful in keeping His covenant.

Let us take this and stand against the devourer. Let him know that my God is greater than my circumstance. I will not give out of obligation, but out of gratitude!

In the Old Testament it was a tenth; in the New Testament Jesus tells the rich man, “Give it all!” Today we are obedient not to the minimum expectation, but rather to the measure of our gratitude for Him. Try Him in this!

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 9

YOUR FIRST MINISTRY

“But ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

ACTS 1:8 NIV

Many of us are great servants... outside of our home! Now I know that was a hard way to begin, but understand it's not a reprimand. This is a reminder to ensure that we carry stewardship into every aspect of our life.

This may be the ninth-day devotional, but that does not mean it takes ninth-day precedence in our lives. It is important that as we journey through this devotional and these 21 days, we remember it is not a solo effort. Now, this is for the men reading: it is our job to be the high priests of our homes. But where do we begin?

Begin in the place where no one sees.

“When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, ‘Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ This was Job’s regular custom.” Job 1:4-5, NIV

It's important for us to lead with our life. In turn, our families must be stewarded in discipleship, love, prayer, and fasting. The disciplines we exhibit in the four walls of the church should not be something we pick up and drop off at the threshold of the temple, but rather a reflection of the disciplines we have consistently exhibited in our daily lives.

In its original design, church is not the place we come to be fed; it is the place we come to worship and give thanks for everything we have seen God do in our daily walk with Him.

Acts 1:8 — “But ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Serve and witness to Jerusalem and Judea (HOME) first, and then go to Samaria (all others)! This principle will always protect the legacy you leave the disciples you were first entrusted: your family.

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 10

THE RULE OF THE TENTH

“...and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.”

GENESIS 28:22 NIV

It is the tenth day, and it is only fitting that we speak a little more about the rule of the tenth. Speaking transparently and from a full-circle perspective, I want you to see it's not just about money.

The rule of the tenth goes far beyond us giving of the wages we make. Most lose sight of the power this has in our lives when we look at it as more than just sacrifice—it's stewardship.

It's a hard discipline to carry out, for in actuality this says God is due ten percent of everything in our lives: Material things... clothes, food, money. But what about a tenth of our time? If we break this down mathematically, in a 24-hour period we owe our Creator 2 hours and 40 minutes each day in service to Him.

Now this does not mean you serving in a church (although that can be included). It's saying, "God, I am meditating, speaking, seeking, and praying sufficiently in a day to ensure that I am making adequate space for You."

This one is hard because there is always something working overtime to take our attention, and if we are truthful in the examination of our time, a large majority is typically expended in activities that bring no growth to our lives.

Day 10... audit the tenth in your life.

Are you being a faithful steward of every aspect of your life?

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 11

MATTHEW 28:19

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”*

MATTHEW 28:19 NIV

Today I want you to begin by looking in the mirror and saying, “I am an evangelist.”

We have romanticized titles so much in church culture that we forget the Great Commission was not for one select subset of men with a specific calling, but in fact was a mandate to every believer and follower of Christ.

Obedience to this command is imperative to the spread of the gospel and may also be one of the most challenging commands we have. We are called to preach to unbelievers above all with our testimony!

I remind you of Galatians 4 (I encourage you to read the entire chapter) - Our goal is to look more and more like Christ! Let us purpose to be obedient in this command.

Today I challenge you to live out your faith and be bold in your declaration that He is the way, the truth, and the light!

Walk today, seek out a need, fill it, and be the hands and feet of Christ!

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES



DAY 12

THE JOURNEY OF SELF-CONTROL

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

GALATIANS 5:22-24 NIV

Of all the things written in this verse, I believe self-control is the only one that feels like a personal jab. Let me paint a picture of how I honestly read it:

“...But the fruit of the Spirit is love ❤️✨ joy 🌸✨ peace ✨❤️ forbearance 😊✨ kindness ✨😊 goodness 🌈✨ faithfulness ✨🙏 gentleness ✨💚 AND SELF-CONTROL 😢👌!!

*Now, as I’m sure we all know, these are not the **fruitS** of the Spirit. This is the singular, unified, interconnected **fruit** of the Spirit. These qualities together represent the full expression of the Spirit at work in us. Without any one of them, that expression is incomplete.*

So why hone in on self-control specifically? Well, let me define it:

Self-control is the ability to govern your thoughts, emotions, and actions rather than being ruled by impulses, desires, or circumstances.

*Plainly put, it is the **discipline** to restrain impulses and choose what is right. Ah - another hard word: **discipline**.*

*We’ve villainized this word. Now, it sounds like punishment. It sounds **heavy**, like just saying it out loud should crush us under its weight. But discipline of self (self-control) is not a punishment. It is evidence that in the daily battle between the flesh and the Spirit, the Spirit is winning.*

And it should bring us great comfort that self-control is described as a fruit of the Spirit. That means it is not something we manufacture through sheer willpower; it is the outcome of the Spirit’s own work within us. When it comes to disciplining or controlling our impulses, emotions, and misplaced allegiances, we are not doing this on our own strength. We couldn’t. The flesh would never control itself.

It is the Spirit of God in us, equipping us day by day to tame character flaws, correct faulty thought patterns, bring order to chaotic emotions, and restore discipline to minds disordered by poor stewardship of thought.

*It is the very Spirit of God empowering us to do what we could never do alone - **WHAT IS RIGHT**.*

Self-control, listed as part of the fruit of the Spirit, should feel like an invitation every time we falter - every time we struggle against the contrary habits, behaviors, and thoughts we wrestle with day after day. The Spirit is here to help you. Call on Him!

“Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.” (2 Timothy 1:14)

- PASTOR NASH TORRES



DAY 13

SUBMITTING PRIDE

“The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

GALATIANS 5:19-21 NIV

There is a huge contrast between these verses and the ones we read yesterday about the Fruit of the Spirit.

As we read this list, some works of the flesh seem more severe than others. Our eyes are almost immediately drawn to the “big” ones: *sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft, drunkenness, and orgies*. Then, we usually place the rest as lower on the scale of severity (the “little” things): *hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy*. Yet, it is important to know that this list is neither in order of importance, nor in order of severity. Each work of the flesh is equal in importance, and severity.

However, for today’s devotional, I want to focus on one of the more inconspicuous manifestations of the flesh - listed here as “selfish ambition”. Selfish ambition is also mentioned in various other verses; one of them is **Philippians 2:3** where it is correlated with conceit and contrasted with what we are exhorted to do instead - “Do nothing from **selfish ambition or conceit**, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”. This verse tells us that selfish ambition is conceit, also defined as pride, vanity, egotism and arrogance. So why focus on pride specifically? I have long held the belief that pride is a gateway to other sins. I think of it often as the root of ALL other sins. Pride positions self above God. If you think about it, it was pride that made Lucifer rebel. Any time I think of this story, there’s a Proverbs that comes to mind: “Pride goes before destruction...” (Proverbs 16:18)

Pride is particularly dangerous to the believer because it **blinds** before it **breaks**.

Pride doesn’t typically cause an immediate fall, it creates overconfidence first. That overconfidence and inflated sense of self, leads to taking risks without wisdom, action without counsel and exerting confidence, without humility - all conditions that kick the door wide open to sin.

If I count myself as infallible, always right, always justified - how likely am I to ask for help when I fail? when I am overwhelmed? When I am wrong?

Pride does one other thing that I find incredibly problematic – **pride isolates**. It causes a separation in the body that keeps us from authentic relationships. It avoids vulnerability and accountability, which are requirements for community and for the sort of environment that protects us from unhealthy patterns that lead to sin.

“....in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” The Word gives us the antidote to the secret killer that is pride: HUMILITY. So what does it take to nurture humility? We can start here: have an accurate, honest view of yourself that allows for full dependence on God and high regard for others.

Discipline of self is the submission of pride so humility can flourish.

- PASTOR NASH TORRES



DAY 14

GOD'S WILL FOR YOU

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

Did you catch that? Rejoice **always**. Pray **continually**. Give thanks **in all circumstances** - **This is God’s will for you.**

When I think about the will of God for my life, I always imagine that it will be hard to accomplish. I know almost intuitively that He will require of me something that goes against my preference.

What I did not expect, before reading this verse, is that the will of God for me included being disciplined in areas that seem theoretically simple, but are hard in practice.

Always rejoice? even when I am having a bad day? when I am rightfully sad? overwhelmed?

Pray continually? even when I grow weary because the answer tarries? or worse, when it seems the opposite of my prayers is unfolding?

Give thanks always? How? What about when my life is hard and unfair, what is there to be thankful for?

I found the answers to all my questions in this verse:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2 NIV)

To be conformed means to adopt the ways, customs, and thought patterns of this world. A good visual of this is the way clay can be pressed into any mold, and shaped in any whichever way.

But to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, isn’t just about looking different, or appearing to have a different form - a transformation requires changing in essence, not only in appearance.

This verse is telling me: If you reject the patterns (customs, ways of thinking, norms) of this world, and allow God to transform (change you from the inside out, changing your way of thinking and seeing life) then, fulfilling His will becomes possible.

So I leave you with a question to answer honestly: what are some incorrect beliefs you have adopted that are best submitted to God so he can renew your mind? Take those beliefs now, and submit them into full obedience of Christ.

- PASTOR NASH TORRES



DAY 15

RHYTHMS OF REST

“Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest...”

EXODUS 34:21 NIV

You would think by now we would understand that when the Bible takes time to mention something, it means it is important. The concept of rest, represented through various words, is in the Bible over **100 times**. Let that sink in. God finds rest important enough to have it mentioned more than 100 times.

Moreover, God himself introduces the idea of rest in the creation of the world. We learn in Genesis 2:2 that once God had finished his work, He rested. I like to think this was God leading by example.

Still, for a long time I wondered why rest was such an important discipline. As a child, rest seemed inconvenient. As a teenager, it got in the way of better things. As a college student, it started to seem very elusive.... I wanted to rest, but there was never time. Back then, If I had to choose, I would do anything but rest.

Now, as a wife and mother I realize.... rest isn't a practice I can afford to mismanage. Rest is the difference between dealing with a toddler with patience and kindness... OR using my BIG voice (that's what my son calls it when mami yells). It is the difference between managing work, relational, and ministry pressures with grace and wisdom, OR with callousness and a sharp tongue. ***I have found the absence of rest to be the most effective way to kill joy, silence gratitude and suffocate passion.***

It is not just a biblical concept either, biology also confirms - we NEED rest. From a scientific perspective, rest is a biological process essential for brain function, physical health, emotional stability and long-term survival. We NEED Rest and not just once in a blue moon, or twice a year when we get to travel. We need rest as a habitual practice, embedded in how we manage our day to day. We need a sustainable rhythm that prioritizes slowing down when our minds and bodies need to. We were never meant to function endlessly and without respite.

Now I understand this verse more: “...even during the **plowing season** and **harvest** you must rest...” The plowing season and the harvest seasons are the most demanding and most pivotal parts of the farming cycle. One is a season of preparation, and the other is a season of gathering. Imagine resting then! This verse essentially says that even when the work is demanding, and it seems that rest may take away from the fruit of your labor, even then (and maybe even **specially** then) you **MUST** rest.

Resist the urge to fight this principle in the name of performance or recognition. You are a better person when you are rested!

- PASTOR NASH TORRES



DAY 16

THE GIFT OF PEACE

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 NIV

If you did not know, gratitude ushers in peace. This verse confirms it: God responds to thanksgiving with peace. His peace that surpasses **all** understanding, is the kind of peace we need to live out our earthly assignments without being overwhelmed with the afflictions of this world.

Now, the opposite of thanksgiving is ingratitude, or the inability to recognize the value of what has been received. We usually see ingratitude manifested in the form of complaints.

Let's take this a step further; the Bible says that as a man thinketh, so is he (Proverbs 23:7), which means that whatever I allow to rule my mind, will become my reality. If I were your enemy, and I knew that if your mind was determined to remain in gratitude, your life would yield peace, I would then hijack your thoughts with ingratitude and complaints so that you will not experience the peace God promises in Philippians 4:7. It's a good strategy! So good, that we fall into it all the time.

But when you know better, you must do better. Now you know, every time you indulge in complaints, ingratitude and entitlement, the price you pay is your peace. Interestingly, science follows the Bible here as well. Psychology has proven that actively appreciating what you have shifts focus from lack to abundance, which in turn reduces stress, anxiety and worry and creates contentment and inner peace.

The enemy is waging war against your mind to keep you miserable, so gratitude is never on your lips. His goal is to rob you of your peace. Now that you know his strategy – will you let him?

Start today! What are three things you can be grateful for today? Say it out loud. Just tell Him, “God, today I just want to say thank you! Thank you for”

Decide today that you will master the discipline of gratitude as a daily practice and protect your peace.

- PASTOR NASH TORRES



DAY 17

DISCIPLINE OF THE MIND

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 (NIV)

Yesterday we talked about the verse that reads as a “man thinketh, so is he” (Proverbs 23: 7), and today we will revisit this concept again, from a different perspective: learning to manage the stimuli that control your thoughts.

This verse in Corinthians is one I recite often when my train of thought is “getting away from me”. Any time I am overthinking, reading way too hard into things, creating alternate scenarios, practicing arguments in the shower.... I read this verse out loud and it snaps me back to reality instantly.

I used to love indulging in these negative thoughts - until I started to see that they were shaping how I saw myself, God and the people around me. Suddenly, I was misreading a friend not texting back quicker, as being angry with me. If my husband forgot my favorite snack at the gas station, did he even love me anymore? If my son suddenly wanted dad to tuck him in and not me, did I do something wrong? I know. Sounds a bit extreme. But that's the imaginative power of mind when it has no master. It can dream up beautiful things, or make up terrible nightmares. It all depends on what you're feeding your mind, and what you're allowing yourself to think about.

I started to notice shows that I was watching, songs I was listening to, even people I lent my ear to, were affecting my thought patterns. These people, songs, and shows were not necessarily bad, but they were simply **not for me**. I read this verse one morning and it stayed with me forever. Any time bitter or incongruent thoughts entered my mind I would wrestle them out by meditating on this verse. I use the word “wrestle” intentionally. No part of reframing your thoughts will come without a fight! This verse tells us so - “..we demolish... and we take captive....and make it obedient...” There's a forceful determination to this. Making your mind obey the Word of God will be a daily, intentional fight to reframe your thoughts in submission to God.

The mind is so powerful that it can take reality, distort it, and spit it back out as “truth”. Without the Word of God as the standard of truth, apathy can turn the things you prayed for into a burden. So I urge you, read the Word, give your mind the weapons to fight back and submit your thoughts into complete obedience to Christ.

- PASTOR NASH TORRES



DAY 18

THE HEART OF CHRIST

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls"

MATTHEW 11:28-30 (NIV)

Matthew 11:28–30 is the only place in Scripture where Jesus directly tells us what His own heart is like. The words He chooses are worth our attention: **gentle and lowly**.

Son of God, Alpha and Omega, King of Kings, Prince of Peace, Lord of Lords—these are just a few of the ways Scripture reveals the power and authority of Jesus. They testify to His greatness and might. This is how believers often perceived Him. Yet, when Jesus speaks of His heart, **He** describes it as gentle and lowly. That should stop us in our tracks.

To be like Christ, in essence, is to be gentle and lowly.

Can I share a secret with you? When I was younger I thought the people that were most like God were the loudest in the room. The ones with the thunderous voices, the mighty roars, the ones who commanded attention with their eloquence. I was wrong. These people - amazing and gifted as they were - were on the same journey of becoming like God as I was. None of us better than the other; some simply further along in their walk.

With time, I learned to admire a different quality in people entirely. To be like God is to carry His peace into every room. To be gentle despite great strength. To be lowly despite great gifting. After all, submission is simply strength under control.

To be gentle is not to be weak; it is to possess power that is restrained, patient, and kind. To be lowly is not to think less of yourself, but to think of yourself less, walking in humility, dependence, and surrender before God and others. **This is the heart of Christ.**

To be like Christ, we must obey Christ. Jesus Himself said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Becoming like Him is not merely admiration, it is **obedience shaped by surrender**. May we have the courage to look within, and truly allow His gentle and lowly heart to be formed in us as we surrender whatever is getting in the way.

- PASTOR NASH TORRES



DAY 19

BREAKING CYCLES OF FEAR

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 NIV

Did you know that fear is an extremely effective means of submission? From movie villains to real-life dictators and tyrants, fear has become a favorite tool of control, intimidation, and coercion. It's extremely effective because it activates our survival instincts. When we are afraid, our brains prioritize safety over truth.

Psychologically, fear narrows our focus. Suddenly, it all comes down to one question: How do I make this stop? Over time, fear conditions us to obey not because something is right, but because we are afraid of the consequences if we don't.

You may not realize how often fear trains our responses, but over time I have learned to trace some of the most damaging interactions in my life back to fear.

Let me give you a common example: imagine correcting someone who has never known correction that didn't intend to harm or destroy. Someone so conditioned by the fear of being hurt by those they loved that their immediate response to any form of correction is fear. Fear that the cycle is repeating. Fear that they will be hurt again. Fear that if they don't strike first, someone else will take advantage of them.

Overtime, fear can become the ruler of our decision making and that misguided fear often manifests as callousness, as anger, and as deeply embedded frustration and anxiety. It overwhelms us and chokes out the joy of life. Fear is truly a powerful tactic - but you **must** know this: the spirit of fear that has tried to shape your emotions and expectations does not come from God.

Fear, when used correctly, protects us. If you don't believe me, ask yourself this: what would your first emotion be if a bear were chasing you? Fear. And that fear would drive you to fight for your life. This is fear in its proper place-meant to preserve.

But fear in the hands of the enemy does the opposite. It immobilizes you. It paralyzes you. It lies to you. Fear itself is not the problem; what matters is who - or what - is fueling it.

When fear rises to make you resist God's will over your life, to stop you from obeying HIM and becoming more like Him day by day, remind it: You have no place here, for I have been given a spirit of power, love and a sound mind.

- PASTOR NASH TORRES


 THE ART OF
 Obedience

DAY 20

CULTURE OF HONOR



“The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.”

PROVERBS 15:33 NIV

“Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor.”

PROVERBS 21:21 NIV

Other than “prosperity” and “submission,” I think honor is one of the most misused and misunderstood terms in church culture. Anytime I heard the concept of honor brought up, it was usually in the context of elevating a specific group of people as more deserving of honor than others - most often, church leadership.

Please don’t misunderstand where I’m going with this. I believe it is beautiful to honor leaders, and as one of the leaders in this organization, I am genuinely and eternally grateful when people consider me at all—whether in prayer, in a thoughtful text during a hard week, or by marking meaningful milestones. Those things matter deeply, and they are always received with gratitude.

However, it is important to note that biblical honor is not a one-way street. Honor was never meant to flow in only one direction, nor was it intended to be reserved exclusively for leaders. **Honor was meant to be the language believers use daily to love, protect, and care for one another.** Romans 12:10 says it best: “Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” This verse reframes honor entirely. It calls us to mutual humility, and to a posture that actively seeks to elevate others, not because of title or position, but because love demands it. Biblical honor is not about hierarchy; it is about Christlike love expressed through selflessness.

That is today’s exhortation: that we may decide every day to sustain a culture of mutual respect, selflessness, love and understanding that aligns us closer to the heart of Christ.

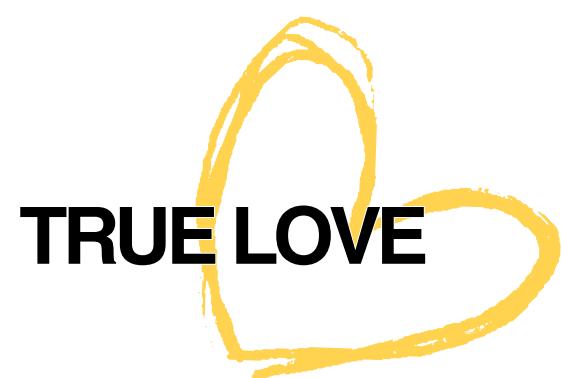
A culture of honor is never an accident. It is built intentionally when the body of God commits wholeheartedly to walking in obedience to Matthew 22:37–40:

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets”***

- PASTOR NASH TORRES


 THE ART OF
 Obedience

DAY 21



“By this we can be sure that we have come to know Him: if we keep His commandments. If anyone says, “I know Him,” but does not keep His commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him. / But if anyone keeps His word, the love of God has been truly perfected in him.”

1 JOHN 2:3-5 NIV

Did you know God has a love language? The way God wants to be loved is through obedience. In return, he offers a beautiful promise: The love of God is perfected in us when we keep His Word.

I hold on to this truth when I have to make difficult decisions. I know that when I'm given the choice to obey or disobey God's Word, only one option yields life, love, and favor—and that choice is obedience. No matter how uncomfortable obedience may feel in the moment, there is far more discomfort in disobedience.

What an interesting thought: that there is no greater way to respond to God in love than by following His commands. It makes sense when you think about it. Obedience requires surrender and sacrifice, and that mirrors Christ's own life. He lived to fulfill His Father's will. His entire life was devoted to obedience. John 12:49–50 says it clearly:

“I have not spoken on My own, but the Father who sent Me has commanded Me what to say and how to say it. And I know that His command leads to eternal life. So I speak exactly what the Father has told Me to say.”

I encourage you today, as we have every day for the last 20 days, to trust the Word enough to guide you, shape you, and lead your mind and heart. Determine within yourself that no matter the circumstances, the fear, or the chaos surrounding you, you will honor God's Word in your life by obeying it.

As we steward each of our days on earth mindfully by allowing the Word and not the world, to lead our decision-making; we disarm the enemy's attempt to turn our lives into cycles of disorder.

Disorder is defined as a state of confusion, disruption, or lack of proper arrangement, where things are no longer functioning as they were intended. **Disorder breeds decline.**

We cannot allow our lives to spiral into decline by rejecting the order established in God's Word: *Seek first the Kingdom and His righteousness, and all else will follow.* Trust that your good Father in heaven knows you, cares for you, and will never allow your obedience to go unanswered.

Lastly, if you made it this far, congratulations on 21 days of determining in your heart to love God the way he wants to be loved: With your obedience.

- PASTOR NASH TORRES



FINAL THOUGHTS

Obedience is not so you can be used by God. Just because He **uses** you does not mean He is **pleased** with you.

Take Samson, in fornication but still liberating God's people (Judges 16:1; 15:14–16). Take Jonah, with a heart against God's will, but God turning his disobedience into the very thing that would turn the hearts of Nineveh (Jonah 1:3; 3:5).

The purpose of obedience is to be known by Him.

Matthew 7:21–23 —

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?’

And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

- PASTOR CECILIONETTI TORRES

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