

Five Ways to Disobey God

Hebrews 2:1-4

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Our society has pretty much eliminated sin from its vocabulary.

- A. Alcoholism is no longer a sin, it's a "disease" (same for drug or sex addiction, etc.).
- B. Criminality is excused because of "poor environment," or supposed discrimination (e.g., racial, sexual, economic, etc.).
- C. This is nothing new! **Gen. 6:5**: "...the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

2. Sadly this attitude influences many "Christians."

- A. MDR: some brethren are constantly seeking "loopholes."
- B. Homosexuality: I saw that the United Methodist Church just a few days ago narrowly voted down the acceptance of openly gay clergy (You know where that's going!).
- C. As Christians we must be very, very careful not to let these attitudes influence us!
- D. We need to take Christianity seriously!

******"Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." —C.S. Lewis

****Heb. 2:1-4**: "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"

3. **3** A faithful Christian never looks for ways to disobey God:

2 Cor. 5:9-11a: "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord..."

Mk. 12:29-30: "The first of all the commandments is...you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment."

Jn. 14:15: "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

Jn. 15:14: "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

4. Over and over and over again, the Bible warns against disobedience:

Acts 3:22-23: "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'"

Heb. 2:2-3: "For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,"

- A. The Bible teaches different ways that God can be disobeyed.
- B. To know these ways helps us avoid the pitfalls of apostasy:

1 Cor. 10:12: *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”*

5. **4** Let's look at five ways we can disobey God so we can avoid sin in our lives.

II. DISCUSSION:

One way we can disobey God is through...

1. 5 Sins of commission:

A. When we do what God forbids it is a sin! A “sin of commission.”

(1) It is direct rebellion against God's law.

(2) It is exactly what Adam and Eve did:

Gen. 2:16-17: *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”*

Gen. 3:6: *“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”*

(3) We can easily see Adam and Eve committed a “sin of commission” and it had very serious consequences (Gen. 3:14-24).

(4) Adam & Eve's sin was straightforward and only a fool would not see its “wrongness.”

B. ****** However, some “sins of commission” are of such a nature that some would try to excuse it: The unnamed prophet: **1 Kgs. 13:1-24**

(1) ****** This sad incident should teach us important lessons about God's commandments:

(a) We must observe them to the “letter.”

(b) We are in no position to judge one command more important than another.

Matt. 23:23-24: *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.”*

(c) We must make no excuses for not obeying God.

(d) We must have a sincere “love of the truth”!

2 Thess. 2:10-12: *“...did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”*

(2) We must take all of God's commands with total seriousness and be determined to observe them ALL.

Another way we can disobey God is through...

2. 6 Sins of omission:

A. When we **do not do** what God commands it is a “sin of omission”:

Jas. 4:17: *“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

Lk. 7:30: *“But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.”*

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

—Edmund Burke

B. ****** God requires His people to be “self-starters”:

2 Tim. 3:16-17: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, *17* that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Eph. 2:10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Titus 2:14: “who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

C. ****** Recall King Saul and the Amalekites:

1 Sam. 15:3: “Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”

1 Sam. 15:9: “But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.”

1 Sam. 15:13: “Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, ‘Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.’”

1 Sam. 15:17-20: “So Samuel said, ‘When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? *18* Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ *19* Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?’ *20* And Saul said to Samuel, ‘But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.’”

D. ****** We must cultivate an intense desire to do what is right; we won’t make it to heaven by the “skin of our teeth”: Jn. 10:10

E. I believe one area we American Christians are particularly vulnerable is sharing with others:

1 Jn. 3:16-17: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. *17* But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” (Median annual household income: U.S., \$62,175; rest of the world, \$2,100; \$170.34 vs. \$5.75 per day!\$).

Another way we can disobey God is through...

3. **7** Sins of addition:

A. God has always condemned those who would **add** to His word:

Prov. 30:5-6: “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. *6* Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”

Deut. 4:2: “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”

Rev. 22:18: “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;”

B. ****** When we **add** to God’s Word we are doing what He has not authorized and that is sin:

1 Jn. 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” (KJV)

2 Jn. 9: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” (KJV)

C. ** Many don’t take adding to God’s Word seriously: big mistake!

(1) Moses and the rock: (Ex. 17:1-7; v. 6: “you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink”).

Num. 20:7-12: “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 ‘Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. **Speak to the rock** before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.’ 9 So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, ‘Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?’ 11 Then **Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock** twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. 12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.’”

(2) ** Most believe “the ends justify the means.” Only one problem with that: God doesn’t!

Psa. 19:13: “Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.”

(3) Modern-day adding to His Word:

(a) Instrumental music

(c) Social gospel

(b) Holy days

(d) Unscriptural remarriage

Another way we can disobey God is through...

4. **8** Sins of subtraction:

A. Just as adding to God’s Word is condemned, so is taking away from it:

Deut. 4:2: “You shall not add to the word which I command you, **nor take from it**, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”

Deut. 12:32: “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it **nor take away from it**.”

Rev. 22:18-19: “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone **takes away** from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

B. ** The Pharisees: Mk. 7:6-13

C. ** Some claiming to be Christians speak of “non-essential commands” (BTW: an oxymoron!):

(1) Baptism: Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21

(2) Worship: Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2)

D. ** People with this mindset claim: “The Bible is a love letter and not a law book.”

(1) In reality, it is both! Lk. 6:46; Jn. 15:14; 1 Cor. 9:21; 1 Jn. 3:4

(2) “Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy.” —Warren Wiersbe

- E. Whether we add or subtract from God's Word we are being supremely presumptuous!
- (1) In essence, we are saying, "I know better than God!"
 - (2) Surely if we have even one iota of respect and fear of God, we can see the hubris of adding to or subtracting from His Word.

Another way we can disobey God is through...

5. **9** Sins of substitution:

- A. When we **substitute** something else for what God commands, we are doing the same thing as when we add to or subtract from His Word: "I know better than God!"
- B. ****** Two vivid examples of **substitution**:

(1) Cain:

Gen. 4:3-5: "And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell."

Heb. 11:4: "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks."

Rom. 10:17: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

(2) Nadab and Abihu thought substitution was acceptable: (cf. Lev. 16:12)

Lev. 10:1-3: "Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, 'This is what the LORD spoke, saying:

'By those who come near Me
I must be regarded as holy;
And before all the people
I must be glorified.'"

- C. ****** God will not accept a substitute for obedience:

1 Sam. 15:22: "So Samuel said:

'Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
As in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.'"

- D. ****** When we substitute our will for His will; we are terribly wrong, terribly wrong.

- (1) Cain: not of faith (**Rom. 14:23:** "...whatsoever is not of faith is sin.").
- (2) Nadab & Abihu: does not regard God as "holy" and does not "glorify" Him.
- (3) Saul: "to obey is better than sacrifice"!

1 Jn. 2:3-5: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."

- E. ****** To add, subtract or substitute is to think we can read God's mind (We know better than God! Presumptuous!)

I Cor. 2:9-13: "But as it is written:

*'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'*

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches,"

III. CONCLUSION: **10**

- I. We have just looked at five ways to disobey God:

① Sins of commission

② Sins of omission

③ Sins of addition

④ Sins of subtraction

⑤ Sins of substitution

2. We must be determined we will do God's will in all things (And take the inevitable criticism for advocating such!).

Rev. 22:14: "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."

Jn. 14:15: "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

Jn. 15:14: "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." (cf. Lk. 6:46)

3. **I I** We must get three very important things through our thick skulls:

① Sin separates us from God:

Isa. 59:1-2: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear."

② Not keeping His commandments makes us liars:

I Jn. 2:4: "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

③ God's commandments are in our best interest:

I Jn. 5:3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."

4. Do you keep His commandments? Do you even desire to?

****Psa. 119:1-2:** "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! 2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!"

5. Invitation

—Adapted from an original sermon (Five Ways to Disobey God) by Joe R. Price.