

The Ultimate Purpose
John 4:31-34
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November 6, 2011

Amen. Turn with me in your Bibles to the fourth chapter of John's Gospel. We're looking at Verses 31-34. This is our second week in the larger passage, 27-42. Last week we looked at the theme of the larger passage which is 'Sowing and Reaping in the Kingdom of God'. We saw that Jesus Himself offers for us a pattern of how we are to sow His Gospel, His message in the world, and we see also the pattern modeled in the Samaritan woman. We learned some things about evangelism, and how we are to be about our Father's business.

There's an important, some important truths at the heart of this passage that we kind of passed over quickly last week that I want to come back to. Verses 31-34, we have in these verses a window into our Savior's heart. He unveils for us the affections of His soul. We get a glimpse behind the veil into what makes Him tick. In this we have a picture of man, we have a picture of man as man was made to be. Those of you who get the email that we send out each week, our webmaster Barry Malarshay sends out an email each week. He gets some pictures that go with basically the themes of where I am in my study at the time that we have to send it out, usually writing me on Thursday to remind me I need to do it. Praise God for him. He does a great job of putting together pictures, and if you see those, they're intended for you to look at and get a sense of where we're going, and then also to be able to forward to other people either to invite them to church or to get them maybe looking at our website, listening to messages from the Word of God. This week I gave him at that time 'The Ultimate Purpose-Driven Life' was the title that I was working on. 'The Ultimate Purpose-Driven Life', you know that was obviously taken from a book that sort of took the evangelical world by storm almost ten years ago, I guess about 8 or 9 years ago, maybe 7 or 8, 2003, '04, somewhere in there, by Rick Warren.

Though the book has some helpful things in it, by and large it's not a very helpful book. Warren is a person who seems to be moving in ever increasingly bizarre circles for one who calls himself a Christian pastor, so just be careful. But the book was getting at the idea of, asks the question basically, "What on Earth am I here for?" That's a good question. He could have done a lot better job of answering it than he did in the book. He has some helpful things as I said, but overall I think he misses the essence. I think in this passage, we have in the example of Jesus Christ,

the ultimate purpose-driven life, the ultimate example of how man should live. Not only an example, but the power for that as we look at this passage. What we see is the purpose that drove His life ought to be the purpose that drives ours. We see that the purpose that drove Jesus' life was to obey the will of God. It's that simple actually. You want to know your purpose? It's to obey God. Genesis to Revelation teaches that, but we see the supreme example of that as we look at the heart of the God-man. He opens up to us what aspirations drive Him. We see what we were all created to be. Look with me at John 4:31-34:

John 4:31-34 ~ Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?" 34 Jesus *said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, as we bow before Your Holy Word, how mindful we are of our complete dependence upon You. If we are to know Your truth, You must reveal it, You must illuminate it by Your Spirit, and so we cast our hope upon You that in Your light we might see light, that we might be changed. And we pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

It's interesting when you step back from John 4, Verses 1-42, the story of the Samaritan woman, you step back from it and consider it as a whole. One of the themes that you have running throughout the entire passage is the theme of ultimate, human fulfillment. Now too much evangelical Christianity is always preoccupied with whatever makes you feel good, and so much of ministry is aimed at helping people feel good. The problem is that we deal with it our way. "What makes me feel good, that's what I need to do." We ask people, "What would make you feel good?" Church and ministries have been moving in that direction in the last decades, the seeker-sensitive movement and all of that, but the irony is that when you come to God's Word, when you come to Him on His terms, what you find is ultimate human fulfillment. You really find how to live and how to know what life is. In this passage, that is clearly what is going on. One of the major themes is that this passage is a guide to ultimate, human fulfillment in that the passage directs quite directly the subject of ultimate, human need. The whole setting is one of longing and need. Look at Verse 7 and 8, or actually Verse 6.

John 4:6 ~ ...So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

He's sitting by the well at noon, the heat of the day. He's been on a journey, He's wearied, He's worn out. He's been making His way from Judea to Galilee where He's going to do ministry. He's got to go through Samaria. It's not a pleasant walk, it's an up and down mountainous journey, up and over rocky cliffs. He's come not to a valley, an elevated valley, the valley near the town of Sucasim between Mount Evil and Mount Garizene. He and the disciples are wearied from the journey. We find out in Verse 7 that He's thirsty, in Verse 8 He's hungry. Look:

John 4:7 ~ There *came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus *said to her, "Give Me a drink."

He's thirsty. Look at Verse 8, explaining how Jesus is talking to this woman alone, John tells us:

John 4:8 ~ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

He's weary, He's thirsty, He's hungry, three things. I had a baseball coach in college that said, "There are three kinds of people I hate: Cheaters and thieves." I just did one of those almost. He's weary, He's thirsty, and He's weary. Three things you need to know. He's weary, He's thirsty, and He's hungry, and so are His companions. The disciples are tired, they're thirsty, and they're hungry. He meets the woman at the well and this is this first scene in the unfolding drama, He meets a woman who is also thirsty, who comes with her water bucket, her water jar. What Jesus does is He moves from the natural to the Spiritual. She says, after He says, "Give Me some water," "What are You, a Jew, asking me, a Samaritan, to give You water? Jews and Samaritans have nothing to do with one another." Jesus says, "The amazing thing isn't that I asked you for water, the amazing thing is that you did not ask Me for Spiritual, living water." What's He doing? He's moving from natural need to spiritual need. Do you see that, the metaphor? He uses the metaphor of water and living water to represent something, a profound spiritual need. What we see as the drama continues to unfold in that first scene, Jesus and the woman talking, is that living water is essentially true worship. He says to this woman, "What you really need above everything else, the yearning in your soul, is to truly worship God. That is the deepest need of your heart, and I am One Who can grant that to you. I can bring you to worship God truly. I have this living water."

When we looked at that earlier in John 4, we saw that man was created for worship. When you look at the history of scripture and the unveiling of what man is, he is made to worship the image of God, to reflect back to God the radiance of His worth. To stand in the presence of God, to see the glory of God, and to magnify God. That is what we're made to do. That's Scene 1.

Scene 2, the disciples come back and they kind of break up the conference between Jesus and the woman, but He's accomplished His goal. He's sowed His seed. He's made a worshiper and she goes off and recruits more. Verse 31, in the meantime, His disciples start urging Him.

John 4:31 ~ Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

There are three verbs in that verse. 'Were urging' was the first verb, 'saying' was the second verb, 'eat' is the third. They are all three in different Greek tenses in the original. The first verb, 'were urging' is the imperfect tense, which is past tense in Greek. They had different past tenses, every language has different ways of communicating these different nuances. In Greek, tense means more than just time, it means the kind of action. The imperfect tense means past time, but the kind of action means ongoing action in past time. So the idea was, they didn't just urge Him, they went on urging Him to eat. They went on urging Him, John says. The verb saying 'saying' modifies the first verb. What were they urging Him? Saying, "Rabbi, eat." The second verb is the Greek present tense. Now here again, it's not time of action as much as kind. This is helping to emphasize the ongoing nature of their urging. Imperfect, they were urging. What were they doing? They were saying, in Greek present emphasizes the kind of action, continuous action, repetitive. They kept on saying, "Rabbi, eat." Now why does John tell us all that?

It's a picture of how hungry they must have been. I don't think they waited to eat until they got back to eat. I think when they got to town and they got some food, they ate. They were starving. They kept Him some food to the side, and when they go to Him, they're saying, "Rabbi, you've got to be starving. Eat! Man, we were dying of hunger." You know what it's like when you're really hungry. We eat regularly, it's a part of the way that God has made us. Three or more times a day, sometimes less, but we're made to eat regularly, right? But when you haven't eaten for a long time, or you've been out and you've been exerting yourself greatly, it's amazing how profound that hunger can be. And that's what they had experienced. They've eaten now, they come back to Him and they're thinking, "Look, You need

to eat. You've got to be hungry." He again takes a natural need, just like He had in the first scene with the woman at the well, thirst. What a profound human need. You've got to have liquid, you've got to have water to live. He takes the next human need, basic human need, food, and He says, "You want to talk about food. Let Me move from the natural to the spiritual. You need food to live. Let me tell you what spiritual food is." He unveils His heart and He shows them the soul of the God-man, the Redeemer, and He shows them in this what true man is about. He essentially says, "What you need to be fulfilled when you're thirsty is true worship. What you need to be fulfilled when you're hungry is to obey the will of God." These are two sides of a coin. What He's saying is that man needs more than anything else, that man was created to worship, and man was created to obey God. And isn't that in reality, two sides of one coin?

The passage we read earlier, to obey is better than sacrifice. Saul said, "Look, we left some things here so that we could worship You, so that we could sacrifice." That was the way they worshiped in that day, they'd offer a sacrifice. Samuel says, "No, do you not understand God would have you obey. That is true sacrifice. True worship is obedience." When we see that all of life is supposed to be about worship, how do you worship most completely? You see the radiance of God, the glory of God, you reflect back to Him the radiance's worth in word and action. That's the consummation of worship is obedience.

But what we have here is this invitation to see obedience in a whole new way, because I think the reality is you and I don't see obedience the way we ought to. In fact, we live in a world in which has a continued, unending, constant media assault on this issue. Satan, from the beginning, has been lying. He's been saying, "To obey God is death. To disobey God is life." Isn't that what he did in the garden? "Has God said that you should not eat from the tree?" He's trying to keep life away from you. "Come outside of the will of God and you'll find life." That's his continued message, that is the lie and it continues to beat and to flow through the veins of all of the universe. I mean it's everywhere around us and our sin nature grew up believing that lie. I mean, we grew up believing that lie. Before you knew Christ you knew nothing else other than God is a cosmic killjoy. To obey Him is restrictive. What Jesus is saying is that obedience is life, just like worship is life. Obedience is life. What thrills the heart of man, what God made you and me, our internal wiring, if things weren't messed up with sin, if we could see the internal diagram and understand it, we were made to obey in the same way we were made to worship. People are going to worship something and they're going to obey something. I always wonder why we see things, governments topple. They throw away one dictator and get another one. That's what's going to happen to a lot of

those countries in the Middle East. They're going to exchange Kaddafi for some other dictator. People just like to obey. It's unusual not to find that desire expressed in governments. Tyranny is the natural evolution. It's happening in America, we're moving toward a tyrannical society. People would rather just be told what to do. "Just give me what I need and tell me what to do." Freedom is unnatural to the falling, sinful man. There is some of that that is the wiring of God, but real freedom, we know, is found in obeying God.

I have three points this morning that I think we can draw from this passage, Verses 31-34. The first is the pleasure of obedience. Secondly, the practice of obedience. And third, the power for obedience. Jesus says in Verse 32, "I have food that you do know about." Verse 34, "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent me, that which I eat."

1) The Pleasure of Obedience:

One of the things that constantly, you reflect on different things as you walk through life. I mentioned earlier, isn't it neat how God painted the trees in the fall? He chose to do that. Isn't it neat that God made food taste good? I mean seriously, we should stop and think about that. Why? I mean evolutionists think just because that makes us want to eat, I guess. I think we'd want to eat just to survive. Now it tastes good. You know we could be like a car filling up, just put some fuel in. "Am I full yet? I'm full, okay, move on." No, we enjoy eating. I mean God made all of this diversity of food.

When I was growing up we didn't have a McDonald's within like 20 miles. That's not exactly the great example of diversity, is it? But what I'm getting at is we didn't have Chinese food over here, and Thai food, and Indian food. You can find stuff, I haven't eaten at all the places that we have, and the types of food we have around, but I have started eating Thai food. Man, that stuff is good. Vietnamese food, who knew? But the Lord has put these things all over His world, and He's taught people how to make these things. He's given these things to touch the palette, to satisfy, so that when you eat you enjoy it. How much more you enjoy it when you are really hungry. A wonderful well-prepared meal when you're famished, oh man there's nothing in this world physically that's better than that. It's one of the best things. Nothing surpasses it.

Jesus is drawing on that image to say, "That is what in a more profound sense, it is to obey God, for Me," Jesus says. "I was hungry and I was thirsty just like you." We don't know that He's even gotten a drink yet because the woman left her water

pot. Did she even dip it? Maybe she did, maybe she didn't. I think it's likely she didn't because she starts this conversation, "What are You doing asking me for some water?" Picture her leaving her pot because she's so astonished by that. He hasn't had any water, He hasn't had anything to eat, the disciples are saying, "Rabbi, eat. You've got to eat." He said, "Look, I've got something that satisfies my soul more than food. It's to do the will of God." He's echoing Deuteronomy 8:3. What does Deuteronomy 8:3 say? ***Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*** In fact, that passage, that verse is quoted two times in the New Testament, both times on the lips of Jesus. The same event recorded by Matthew and Luke in Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4. The temptation that satan brings to Jesus. Remember when Jesus had been fasting for 40 days? It says in Matthew and in Luke He's been fasting for 40 days. Matthew 4:2 says, "And then He hungered."

One of the interesting things about fasting is that if you fast for enough time, about three days, after the third day your hunger pangs go away, and they pretty much stay away. I mean there's a little, but relative to those first three days, it's tremendously diminished. You can fast up to about six weeks, depending, we all need to check ourselves out physically. Some of us have different limitations to all of that. For some people fasting is not a good idea because you've got issues, but if you're a normal, healthy person you could fast for about 40 days. At the end of the 40 days, when the hunger pangs return, your body is telling you, "We are in danger. We need to eat." That's true hunger. Jesus has that kind of hunger pangs after 40 days of fasting in the wilderness. That's when satan comes and says, "If you're the Son of God, turn those stones into bread." He's tempting Jesus to use His own divine power and not live as true man, depending upon the Father through the Holy Spirit. "Use Your own intrinsic power and make these stones bread. You can do it if You're the Son of God." And what does Jesus say? He doesn't say, "I am the Son of God." Of course He is. He says, "Man shall not live by bread alone. I'm living as true man and bread is not what man lives by ultimately. He lives by the Word of God." He's saying, "That's more precious than that meal, when I've been famished for six weeks. It's to do the will of Him Who sent me."

Man was created with a deep longing to obey God. Now we say that, the Bible tells us this, but we have to deal with the fact that so much of our experience cries in the opposite direction. There are obstacles to us experiencing this, but the Scripture is clear, it's true of us. The manufacturer has given us the specifications of every human being, and the reality is every single person that has ever lived was created with the ultimate design to worship the one true God and to worship Him through obedience. That's in the hardwiring. Now what has happened? Sin has so distorted,

so twisted. That's what depravity means, twisting. It's so twisted the way we were made. It's so messed up, the wiring, that the sinner does not want to obey God. It's what he needs more than anything. He needs that, but he does not want to because sin is hatred to God.

The natural man will not submit to the law of God, Romans 8:7, nor indeed can he. Sin has made it so that an unbelieving person who has not been born again spiritually cannot truly submit from the heart to God, will not seek it. Romans 3:10, no man seeks God. All have together turned aside. It's the nature of sinful men to not walk the straight and narrow that God has said, but to turn aside. This is the awful predicament of every one of us when we came into this world. We were all conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity. We were created for worship, yet alienated from God. How can this be? Sin has done it. Created for obedience yet having in your hearts disobedience. So to experience the true end for which God created us, worship, true worship, and from the heart obedience, we have to overcome an obstacle, a couple of obstacles. We have two needs, basically. The first thing is we need a new heart. In the context we've already seen that in John, in the flow of his Gospel, haven't we? That's exactly what he told Nicodemus, "You need a new heart." And he's told the woman, "If you're going to worship true worship, you have to have the Spirit." I think it's hinted at even in this immediate passage, when he says to them, in Verse 32, ...***"I have food to eat that you do not know about."*** In the original, it literally says, "I have food to eat that you do not know," know about. And the particular verb for 'know' here, the verb 'oida' (οἶδα), which means kind of full knowledge, a comprehensive knowledge. "You guys don't have a clue about this. I know it, but you don't. I have food that you have not yet come to be able to know." These disciples have not been given the Holy Spirit. They had not experienced the wonder of regeneration on this side of Calvary and the resurrection. So they don't know this, they need a new heart.

That's exactly what the Old Testament told us that we need in Ezekiel and in Jeremiah. Jeremiah 31-34, after Jeremiah has called the Nation of Israel out on their continued obedience and the fact that God's judgment is coming. "You have failed. You have failed. You have failed. Can a leper change his stripes? Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Neither can you who are wicked do righteousness." That's the refrain of the early part of Jeremiah. All the hopelessness for man and yet you have the promise of a new covenant, Chapter 31, Verse 31. You have echoes of this throughout the book as well, this coming to kind of a climax in these verses.

Jeremiah 31:31-33 ~ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. 33 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD,

Look what He has to do to make us obedient.

Jeremiah 31:33-34 ~ “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,”...

He puts the law in our hearts.

Ezekiel 36:24 ~ For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

“How can you walk in My statutes?” God must cause you to. He must take out the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. That is our only hope. We must be born again, regenerated, made able to, and desirous of obedience. That’s what Jesus is getting at, but once you come to know this, once you’re born again, you now have the capacity, you have a new taste. It says if in unbelief we just don’t know what we ought to want to eat. Obedience is a cultivated taste. It’s one of the realities. You have to get saved, first of all. It’s like you have to get whole new taste buds in the first place, and yet there are still these lingering things because of the flesh, isn’t it? We still have to work at cultivating a taste.

We had some turnip greens this weekend. Patti’s Aunt Nell, who attends our church, Nell Reece, they grow turnip greens, and we went by there on Halloween. She said, “Come back this week and get some turnip greens,” and so we did. We

made those turnip greens this week. Man, I want to tell you, I love turnip greens, but you know when I first ate turnip greens, I didn't like turnip greens. Did anybody like them the first time you ate them? Let me ask you this, the first time you ate a Krispy Kreme donut did you like it? You don't have to cultivate a taste for that, do you? Obedience is like turnip greens, or grapefruit, you have to cultivate the palette to appreciate it. Oh, but when you've cultivated the palette, it becomes more and more wonderful, and when you eat obedience, you are eating life. You are experiencing life. That's what Jesus is saying, "Look, I know something you don't know. You have not yet come to experience this, but a day is coming when you will. But for Me, true man, what gives Me pleasure, what satisfies the longing of My heart is obedience. It thrills My soul so much that I'd forgotten that I was thirsty. I hadn't even thought about the fact that I'm hungry because I was obeying the Father's will. I was doing what He sent me to do, preaching the Gospel to this lost person."

Obedying His will, that's what satisfies. That is what is truly pleasurable. It's the reality that sin seems to taste good, and it does taste good initially, but it's not even, let me just be clear, I don't think a Krispy Kreme donut is an appropriate way to say 'sin'. It's not exactly, because a Krispy Kreme donut still has its benefit. But sin is a Krispy Kreme donut filled with poison cream. You still don't need too many Krispy Kremes, right? But, that's what sin is. Sin is poison, but it tastes good initially. Obedience seems hard and yet as you learn to walk in obedience, there is a delight that comes to the soul. There is enrichment, nutrients, spiritually we're stronger, and we're more of what God made us to be. We feel that. You see this when you look at unbelievers as they grow old, especially those who are pursuing wickedness just with abandon, they become less, and less, and less of what they were. Sin kills, it destroys, but obedience builds up. That's the pleasure of it and we have to learn to cultivate that pleasure, that to deny self, to mortify the flesh, to walk in obedience is life. Jesus said, "My commandments are not burdensome. The commandments I've given to you, they're life." And you find the principle that is true in salvation is true every day of your life. "He who saves his life will lose it. But he who loses his life will find it." Denying self, fighting the flesh, obeying God, as hard as it is, is life.

2) The Practice of Obedience:

Now, not only the pleasure of obedience, but he talks about the practice of obedience. We have in Jesus, here in John 4, the model of how to obey. So the practice of obedience. First 34:

John 4:34 ~ Jesus *said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

“My food is to do His will.” The practice of obedience, how do you obey? First of all, we see in this I think it was three sub-points under the practice of obedience.

A) You Must Know the Will of God:

To obey the will of God you have to first of all know the will of God. When He says, in Verse 34, ***“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me...*** the word translated ‘will’, a couple of different words in the New Testament that can be translated with the English word W I L L, ‘will’, ‘purpose or intention’. This one emphasizes more the sense of the will as the completion of deliberation and thought. That is the idea that it’s certain, it’s fixed. God has thought out what He wants to do and he’s made it known. So that idea of certainty needs to be there for us. To obey God you have to know with certainty what His will is.

We don’t have time to deal with this in a detailed way, but one of the problems that sometimes trips up Christians is this idea of the will of God. We wonder, “Is this the will of God? Is it God’s will for me to buy this car or not?” “Is it God’s will for me to marry this person or not?” We wonder about the will of God. We wonder, “Is it God’s will for me to wear this shirt, or that shirt?” We can get kind of hung up on what the will of God is, and we can interpret the will of God in very subjective ways. Almost like, “Which finger hurts more? That’s God’s will.” Now that’s not the way the Bible describes us knowing the will of God. That’s not the way we’re to live on this side of Calvary. Now that the Spirit indwells us, the way that we’re to know the will of God is in the Word of God. In His parameters that are in His Word, He’s given us enough here that if you want to know the will of God, get in the Word of God. Jesus said, “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” From the Word of God! Whatever comes out of God’s mouth is what you do. The Bible! That’s what satisfies the soul. You find out what God says in His Word and you do it.

Psalms 119:105 ~ Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

It tells you what you need to know, you and I need to know. There are some things that God doesn’t tell you. Should you buy that car or not, you’re not going to find a verse that says, “Ty, buy that car.” But you take the principles of the Word of God that speak to that. There are some principles that speak about debt, there are principles that speak about responsibility, there are principles that speak about how

we should use our money for the glory of God, and then you, with wisdom, informed by scripture, within the parameters of God's Word, you act. And don't second guess yourself so much unless you can see from scripture that you've made a mistake. Move on. I think people get way too hung up on this. In fact, there are some times where I felt like with, okay I started down that way, I'll go there for a second.

You know the idea of whether a man is supposed to marry a woman or not, there are certain parameters that are real clear in scripture. If you're going to marry someone, and you make a claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ, you can only marry those people who follow Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as evangelistic dating. There is certainly not evangelistic marriage. That is sin. Now once you're married you've got to stay married, and you're going to reap the benefits of having made that choice. Hopefully, by God's grace, He'll overcome your foolishness and bring your spouse to Christ, but you don't do that. You don't walk into that. The scripture tells you that you should have your parents' blessing. There are just some parameters that are there, but if the person appears to be a person who loves Christ, and you love Christ, and you have affinity, don't overanalyze it. I think you should be careful, please understand that you need to be cautious and prayerful, but if you get counsel of people around you, "Do you think this makes sense, Mom and Dad? Really, as you pray about this, do you see this being a good thing?" Then just move on. I say this because there are guys I know who have just waited, and waited, and waited, like they're waiting for God to give them a sign in the sky. "Marry her." I guess you should rent one of those planes that fly around. The Bible gives us all we need to know, and God doesn't tell us everything. He says, "Within the parameters, act. If you are making your heart to serve Me." If you are making your heart more and more to delighting yourself in the Lord, then He'll give you the desires of your heart, then follow your Godly desires and just go! There are so many things to focus on, don't get hung up on what shirt you're going to wear. Focus on what your heart attitude is. "Do I want to glorify God today?" Stay focused on the main things. The scripture gives us so much of that to worry about, we don't need to worry about these incidental things.

You have to know the will of God, you've got to be in the Word of God. Jesus says, "You have to know the will of God. My food is to do the will." He knew God's will. In fact, Jesus in His humanity, one of the astonishing things that Luke's Gospel tells us in the last verse of Chapter 2 is:

Luke 2:52 ~ And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Ponder that a little bit. He grew in wisdom. The eternal Son of God, His full deity, His full humanity, He had to grow in wisdom. He studied His Bible. Isn't that amazing? The wonder of the God-man, He lived as true man. He meditated on the Word of God. He said, "Not only do I know the will of God, but I do it." So the practice of obedience involves first you knowing the will of God.

B) You Must Do the Will of God:

Secondly, you have to do the will of God. ..."***My food is to do the will of Him who sent me...*** And here again, the active, ongoing nature of doing. That's the tense of the verb, the present there. Doing the will of God. "My food is to be doing, to be continually doing His will, to be about His business." Don't just hear it, but do it. Not just learn about, but practice.

In fact, the Hebrew mindset is much different than the western Greek mindset. In fact, you see in the way that they use the word 'hear' throughout the Old Testament. To hear is to obey. For us, in western mindset, the Greek mindset, to hear is not to obey. Even to agree with is not to obey. Here agree with means, "Maybe I'll do it." The Hebrew mindset is to hear, is to agree, and obey. So we've got to do it.

C) You Must Do the Will of God Completely:

Thirdly, another principle here. ..."***My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.*** We not only need to know the will of God, we need to do the will of God, and thirdly, we need to do the will of God completely. This is where the joy comes in, knowing, and doing, and finishing. ...***to accomplish His work.*** The verb there means to finish, to accomplish completely. It means that you don't just half-way obey, but you obey until you have finished that task. Think of it in terms of dealing with sin, when we're tempted. The New Testament helps us in this, Ephesians 4:22-24, and actually following, is a good passage to meditate on in learning about doing the will of God completely. It says, "Put off the old man. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Put on the new man." Then He gives examples of what that means. Put off the old man, the old nature that wants to keep doing the old way of things. The valuing, all the programming that's in our brains. You know we have a new heart, but we have bad programming. It has to be continually reprogrammed. So the old man is there, put off the old man, be renewed in the spirit of your mind, put on the new man. You have to do all three steps. You don't just fight against anger, and angry words, put off bitterness, put off wrath. Be

renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on kindness. Speak kindly, rather than speaking angrily, go ahead all the way to the other end and speak kindly. Be tender-hearted to one another, forgiving one another as God also in Christ has forgiven you. Steven preached on this a few weeks ago. That's the putting on. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and you put on. Whatever the sin is, if it's wrath, if it's greed, if it's lust, you put off and you put on the opposite. In doing that you get those new tastes that are cultivated, and you're going to experience what it means to do what you're created to do.

We have a dog, we have one dog now. Our other dog died a few months ago. We have a six-year-old Golden Doodle. The only thing I don't like about her is the name of the breed. A dog named a Doodle, it just doesn't make sense. Anyway, a Golden Doodle is a half Golden Retriever, half Poodle. When I drive up, she knows that I am the Alpha in our house. I appreciate that about her. She knows that I am in charge. Nobody else gets the respect that I do. Yeah, I really, really love that dog. I drive up, get out of my car, and it's like the breeding, what's she been born to do. You know what she does? She's only half Golden Retriever. She is looking around. She never greets me, almost never greets me without something in her mouth. She has this little bowl she carries around, and she's, "Where is it? Where is it? There he is. I've got to find it." If she can't find that she'll bring me a rock or a stick. "I'm made to do this." I can imagine if we trained her to be a hunting dog, and you see those dogs that do what they're trained to do. You know whether it's an Australian Shepherd shepherding sheep, or it's a hunting dog going after that's duck that's been shot.

Man, there's such joy in doing what you were created to do! You and I were created to obey, and nothing is going to thrill our souls like worshiping and obeying. If we haven't known that joy lately, let's repent, and go back and find it. Know the will of God, do the will of God, do the will of God completely.

3) The Power of Obedience:

Finally, the power of obedience. The pleasure of obedience, the practice of obedience, and the power of obedience. The power for obedience comes in looking at Jesus Christ in the moment. I mean, this isn't just to show us how to live. Yeah, we need to obey, we need to find food the way He finds food. That what really satisfies my soul is doing His will. God made me like that, but you and I, the reality is, we're in process. If our hearts have been renewed, we're still being sanctified day by day, day by day. How do you do this?

One of the things that the apostle John wants us to do is to behold the man of God. His need is to do the will of His father. In the moment, when you and I don't have that desire in us, it feels like it's not there at all, look at Christ. When it feels like we want the poison Krispy Kreme, look at Jesus. When we want sin, no, look at His purity. When we want what somebody else has, the covetousness of our heart comes up, look at His gentleness and meekness. When we want to be selfish and self-focused, look at His love. Put off sin by looking at Christ. The power comes in looking at Him. When we know what we ought not to do and, "God help me not to do it," look at Jesus. If you need meekness, find in Him meekness. If you need purity, find in Him purity. Look at His purity. Ask Him, "Lord, come to me." In fact, the whole principle that we see the Gospel from beginning to end is looking to Jesus. You're saved when you look from your emptiness to His fullness. When you look from your deficiency to His sufficiency, that's salvation. That's faith, going out and looking at Christ. Look at His death. Look at His resurrection. That's what I need. I need what He has done. His payment for my sins, His righteousness. That's my only hope, and you believe. That's salvation, and sanctification continues the same way by faith. As you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so also walk in Him. "I'm deficient, Lord. I have in me these other desires that aren't of You, but Jesus is pure. Lord Jesus, live your life in me." Galatians 2:20, that's what the apostle Paul is talking about when he says:

Galatians 2:20 ~ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me...

See? "It's Jesus living in me, and the life which I now live in the body, Paul says, "I live by faith in the Son of God." How is it that you make these things come into your physical body? It's by faith in the Son of God. So to put off those things we ought not do, we look to His purity, to His holiness, to His love. Then to do the things that we don't want to do, the godly things, the service. When you feel like your heart is not in it, what do you do? Sometimes we feel like we can't speak kindly to somebody because, "I feel like I'm being a hypocrite." Well, the answer is not just to speak kindly, the answer is to look at Jesus and speak kindly. "I'm going to step out and walk in faith. I'm going to do what I know to do, but I'm looking to You to provide for me the genuineness because You love this person. You care about them. You're never too tired. You're never too distracted. You are able. Do it, Lord!" This is reliance upon Christ, and what happens is, we find that our obedience then is even more worship. We were starting to obey because we want to worship, but now we're seeing, "What are we doing as we obey? We're worshiping because it's His sufficiency. It's the radiance of His work that's motivating me, moving me."

I loved what Spurgeon says in one of sermons about this, looking at Jesus and the difference it makes. When our hearts aren't in it, what do you do? Listen to this:

Our Lord and Master had but one thought, but one wish, but one aim. He concentrated His whole soul, gathered up the vast floods of His mighty powers, and sent them in one channel, rushing towards one great end. My need is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. The zeal of thine house had eaten me up.

Spurgeon goes on to say:

His soul was in all that He did. Mark our Master when He goes about doing good. The task is not irksome to Him. There are some men who if they distribute to the poor, or if they comfort the fatherless, do it with such reserve, with such coldness of spirit that you can perceive it is but the shell of the man that acts, and not the man's whole soul. But see our divine Lord, wherever He walks you, see His whole self inflamed, His whole being at work. Not a single power slumbers, but the whole man is engaged. How much at ease He seems among poor fisherman. You do not discover that His thoughts are away in the halls of kings, but He is a fellow with them. Bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, He walks in the midst of publicans and harlots, and He's not ill at ease. Not like one who is condescending to a work which He feels to be beneath Him. He is pleased with it. His whole soul is in it. Mark how He takes the little children on His knee, and though His disciples would put them away, yet His whole Spirit is truly with the poor, with the sinful whom He came to save. So He says, "Suffer the little children to come to me, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Look up into that face and there is a whole-souled man there. Not one whose thoughts are distracted, one who is completely engaged in every moment.

You and I are not, but He is. In our deficiency, He is fullness. Look at Christ, that's the glory of our Savior. He wants to manifest in, what does He say to Paul? "In your weakness, I am strong." Obedience is the path to life. It comes through the Gospel, you've got to have a new heart. You've got to be born again. Only He can give it, run out. Those of you who are not Christians today, in your heart, run to Christ. He is able to save. He is mighty to save. He's willing to save. Run to Him today. Repent, believe upon Him. For those of us who know Him today, may we make obedience our treasure. May we make obedience our true worship. May we stop satisfying our souls with lesser things, and cultivate a taste for that which truly

satisfies. True worship expressed in heartfelt obedience, which originates in a glorious Savior. May God help us do that so that He may be in all things, our great satisfaction, our great joy. Let's pray.

Our Father, we marvel at the wonder of Your perfect wisdom. Oh, we see things in Your Word laid out for us, we see how foolish we are. How quickly we're turned aside, easily we're turned aside by lies. Lies are our enemy, the enemy of our souls. The lies that permeate this world that have filled our minds for too long. Lord, we want it to be true that all that thrills our soul is Jesus. That He would be all the world to us. God, open the eyes of our hearts more and more to see His glory, to turn away from every deception. We don't deserve, we who know You and we don't deserve any grace, we never have. We come asking because You told us, and You have demonstrated that You are abounding in loving kindness. You overflow in mercy. So we come knowing that we have not obeyed as we ought to have obeyed. We have not worshiped as we ought to have worshiped. We have been foolish, participating in the lie itself. We come looking to our Savior, and knowing that He did it perfectly and that He stands ready today by His Spirit to give in part to us that which we need—mercy, and forgiveness, and power. Lord, consecrate us, dedicate us to Your business, to Your service. And amazingly to find more and more joy and happiness. True joy and true happiness. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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