

## Just Say The Word!

### Introduction:

- I. Submission to authority is something that is not well received in our society today. We all want to have authority, but few want to submit to it. The idea that we should do something just because someone says to do it is difficult for us. We just don't like to be told what to do. We live in America, the land of the free and so we think that we ought to be able to do whatever we want to do.

Some have taken this to the extreme. There was a man by the name of Abbie Hoffman who during his life was arrested 53 times. Do you think he knew what it meant to submit to authority? Before his death at the age of 52 in 1989, in an interview with freelance writer Craig Unger, Hoffman spoke of his youngest son, America, then age 18, and said, "He's been kicked out of class seven times already. I'm very proud of him."

In our culture we have cultivated a mentality which has trouble submitting to authority. Yet I must say to you that without having a willingness to submit to authority you really can't be a Christian because submission to Jesus to a huge part of being a disciple of Christ.

- II. Open your Bibles to Matt. 8:5 and I want you to notice a man of great faith (**Matt. 8:5-13**).

Here was a man who understood authority. When Jesus offered to come to his home and heal his servant the centurion said that Jesus did not have to do that. The reason he gave was that he understood authority. He was a man who was in authority himself and he saw in Jesus great authority and he was able to see himself in relation to that authority. He said that he was not even worthy to have Jesus in his house. You see, this centurion saw in Jesus ultimate authority. And so he told Jesus to *just say the word*. He knew that if Jesus were to simply give the command that things would happen. All Jesus needed to do was *just say the word*.

Let me ask you a question. Are you a *just say the word* follower of Jesus Christ? We should try all the days of our life to be the kind of person who will do anything and everything that Jesus tells us to do. All He has to do is *just say the word!*

Now, who is a *just say the word* follower of Christ? I'll tell you who it is. He is the person who allows Jesus to impact his decision making, his money management, his vocabulary, his behavior in the local church, his marriage and everything else he does. The *just say the word* Christian is the one who totally surrenders himself to the sovereignty and leadership of Jesus.

Why don't many churches grow and reach their full potential? It is not because society has changed so much. Oh that contributes to some of our problems of

growth today, but that is not the primary reason we are not growing. It is not because the gospel has lost its power. The gospel is just as strong now as it was when it was first preached. No, the reason we aren't reaching our full potential is because there are not enough disciples in the church today who say, "Jesus, just say the word and I will do it. It doesn't matter if I like it or not. Just say the word! It doesn't matter if I have to sacrifice to obey. Just say the word! It doesn't matter if there is some sufferings involved. Just say the word! It doesn't matter if what you are commanding is unpopular with the masses. Just say the word and I will do it.

Why do we not have more in the body of Christ who are "*just say the word*" followers of Christ? In this lesson I want to explore three possible reasons why some are not fully committed, *just say the word* followers of Jesus.

## Lesson:

### I. Some Have A Knowledge Problem.

I'm not talking about a general knowledge of the word of God; I am talking about knowing the importance of recognizing the complete authority of Jesus in your life. There are too many in Christ who think that a little dab of religion is enough to appease God. Why is it that some won't keep the commandment of God to assemble at each service? Why are there those in the body of Christ who show up on Sunday for services but then follow after the flesh during the rest of the week? Why are there so many who are persistent when it comes to doing things unauthorized by the Bible? Let me tell you why! It's because there are too many people, both in and out of the church, who do not understand the importance of complete and comprehensive, unmodified and unqualified submission. There is an interesting passage in 1 Kings 11. Let's read it together (**1 Ki. 11:1-4**). I like the wording of the NIV in this place:

*1 Kings 11:4*

*As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. NIV*

When you read on in this text, you find that Solomon committed idolatry and he help make provision for his foreign wives to do the same. But listen to me: the idolatry was not the real problem; it was just the result of the real problem. The real problem was that Solomon's heart was not fully devoted to God (**ver. 9**).

When people don't come back to services at night, their real problem is not refusing to come back; the real problem is that their hearts are not fully devoted to God. When people refuse to walk in the light and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, that's not the real problem. The real problem is that their hearts aren't fully devoted to God. When people don't determine to do what Jesus says to do and to be *just say the word* Christians, it is because they don't understand that God wants hearts that are fully and completely devoted.

Listen to me: we need to understand that 95% devotion is 5% short. God is not interested in anything less than 100% devotion to Him. God desires that we follow Him fully. God desires hearts that are *fully devoted* to Him. Our commitment to Christ must be so total and our love for him so fervent, that all other commitments takes a back seat.

*Matt 10:37-38*

*37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.*

If you don't understand the importance of absolute and complete devotion to God, you have a knowledge problem, and that problem is keeping you from being a *just say the word* follower of Christ.

## **II. Some Have A Pleasure Problem.**

We live in a society today where pleasure has become the most important pursuit in life. People are convinced that if they can just fulfill the flesh and its appetites that life is going to be great. And the devil wraps up pleasure in many different shapes and sizes. There is emotional pleasure and physical pleasure. There is vocational pleasure, sexual pleasure and worldly pleasure. There is the pleasure of luxurious and extravagant living and there is the pleasure of being popular and having prestige. There is, ladies and gentlemen, the pleasure of sin and it can be attained on every hand in our society. You can find it at school. You can find it on the job. You can find it on TV. You can find it on the radio and you can find it over the internet. If the pleasure of sin is what you want, you don't have to travel far to get it for Satan dangles it before our eyes like a carrot before a rabbit, and like the rabbit, more times than not, we lunge forward in an attempt to grasp it because we think it will bring us true happiness, but as Solomon once said, it's all vanity. Listen to him:

*"I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity" (Ecc. 2:1).*

Trying to find true happiness through the pursuit of earthly pleasure is like chasing the wind; it's a hopeless endeavor. Why? Because, as Moses realized, the pleasures of sin only last for a season. I would to God that we would understand this better.

A happily married man with nothing to gain and everything to lose stays out late one night with some friends. He has a little too much to drink and finds himself in the arms of strange woman...adultery occurs. His faithful wife finds out and before you can say infidelity the man has lost his wife, his home and the comfortable life he worked so hard to attain and all for what? Just a little bit of pleasure.

A young lady has lived for years protecting her reputation, saving herself for that special man who will come along and become her husband for life. Boys have pursued her but she has had the courage to say no. Peers have laughed at her old fashion ways but her integrity has stayed in tacked. But then one day a smooth talking, good looking boy catches her attention and after the passing of some time, cajoles her into a sexual relationship and then tells all who will listen how easy it was for him to have his way with her. Her reputation is ruined. Her purity is lost and all for what? Just a little bit of pleasure.

A bright young man with a promising future gets an acceptance letter from a big time college. He has worked hard in school and has mapped out his future with a sure fire plan for success. With the acceptance letter he can see everything falling into place. He calls some friends and they go out to celebrate the good news. On the way home from a night of partying and having a good time, the young man is in a car accident and is killed. In a blink of an eye his future is gone and all for what? Just a little bit of pleasure.

Ladies and gentlemen, the pleasures of sin are just not worth the cost. Not only does it promise you something that it can't deliver, but it stops people from giving their all to God. It prevents some children of God from being *just say the word* followers of Jesus because, truth be told, the ways of worldly pleasure are in many in conflict with the ways of Christ. Sooner or later you'll have to decide to do what Jesus tells you to do or follow the lust of the flesh.

*Gal 5:16*

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

To walk in the Spirit is to allow yourself to be under the influence of the Spirit by following His instructions. To walk in the Spirit is to develop the mentality that says, "*Jesus, just say the word and I will do it.*" That's walking in the Spirit, and may I say to you that that's the only way for you to overcome the lust of the flesh. You can't overcome the flesh by philosophy. You can't over the flesh by secular education. You can't overcome the flesh by your own greatness. You overcome the flesh by walking in the Spirit and saying Jesus, "*whatever you want me to do, I'll do it. Where ever you want me to go, I'll go. Whatever you want me to say, I'll say it. Jesus, just say the word.*" That's what walking in the Spirit is all about, but one thing that can stand in you way is the flesh and the pursuit of earthly pleasure

*Gal 5:17*

*17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*

*1 Peter 2:11*

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.*

We need not make any provisions for the flesh because if we do Satan is sure to take advantage of it.

Someone has said that *“sin will not only take you farther than you want to go; it will keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.”* Can you not see that it's all vanity? Earthly pleasure may bring temporary satisfaction, but it can never bring lasting fulfillment. But I'll tell you what can. A life committed to God and the doing of His will. There's satisfaction in that, both in the world to come and even right now.

*1 Tim 4:8*

*8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. NKJV*

Don't let pleasure rob you of what's rightfully yours in Christ. Don't let pleasure stop you from being *a just say the word* Christian.

### **III. Some Have a Commitment Problem.**

The final reason why you may not be following Christ fully is not that you have a knowledge problem or a pleasure problem, but that you have **a commitment problem**. There are some people who simply don't know how to make a commitment. They never learned the basic skills of following through on a commitment made. It was never taught or modeled for them as their character was being formed in their early years growing up. So, they have no idea how real commitment works and they have developed no skills for making and following through on commitments. The tragedy is that some people don't even know that they are not committed. How many of you spend about 2 hours a week serving God and think that you are totally committed to Him? There's a plethora of folks in the body of Christ who are convinced that they are committed to Christ and heading towards heaven when really they are not simply because they don't know what a true commitment to something or someone is. They have defined casual commitment as true commitment, but pay attention to me, casual commitment is no commitment at all.

The word commitment is defined as, “The state of being bound emotionally or intellectually to a course of action or to another person or persons” (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language).

Let me illustrate for you real commitment.

*Fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence. Their conviction resulted in untold sufferings for themselves and their families. Of the 56 men, five were captured by the British and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army. Another had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty-six fought and died from wounds or hardships of the war. Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships sunk by the British navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts and died in poverty. At the battle of Yorktown, the British General Cornwallis had taken over Thomas Nelson's home for his headquarters. Nelson quietly ordered General George Washington to open fire on the Nelson home. The home was destroyed and Nelson died bankrupt. John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their thirteen children fled for their lives. His fields and mill were destroyed. For over a year, he lived in forest and caves, returning home only to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later, he died from exhaustion. Kenneth L. Dodge, Resource, Sept./ Oct., 1992, p. 5.*

Do you want to know whether or not you are really committed to Christ? Listen to me:

- If you don't come back to Sunday night services, you're not committed to Christ.
- If you don't read your bible until next Lord's Day, you're not committed to Christ.
- If there is unrepentant sin in your life, you're not committed to Christ.
- If you don't attend all Bible studies conducted by this local church, you're not committed to Christ.
- If you're not interested in soul winning, you're not committed to Christ.
- If you don't stand up against false doctrine, you're not committed to Christ.
- If you don't support the local church in every way you can, you're not committed to Christ.

You see these are real, tangible things that determine whether or not you are or are not committed to Christ. We are not committed just because we say that we are. We are not committed just because we think that we are. We are committed when we follow through with the promise we made to Christ when we obeyed the gospel and accepted Him as our Lord **(Lk. 6:46)**.

Now, are you committed to Christ or not? Someone says, "Oh I'm committed as long as the road is easy and I don't have to do too much." That's not being committed to Christ.

*A missionary society wrote to a missionary and asked, "Have you found a good road to where you are? If so, we want to know how to send other men to join you." The missionary wrote back, "If you have men who will come only if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all."*

*Good News Broadcaster, April, 1985, p. 12.*

Now someone says, "*but I just don't know how to make a commitment.*" Okay, that's a legitimate response because at least you are acknowledging the problem. Now you need to allow yourself to develop commitment skills. I'll tell you how to do it.

- **First, you need determination.** Make up your mind that you want to be a *just say the word* follower of Christ. Make up in your mind that you want to place yourself under the complete authority of Jesus Christ.
- **Second, you need God's help.** Go to God in prayer and ask Him to help you with the commitment you want to make to Him (**Heb. 4:16**).
- **Third, you need earthly help.** Take advantage of the local church. Make yourself accountable to others who want to help you. Become a part of the personal work groups. Develop a relationship with another Christian here that will hold you accountable in regard to keeping your commitment to Christ.

### **Conclusion:**

What kind of follower of Christ are you? There is only one kind that is pleasing to God. It is the kind that says I recognize the absolute authority of Christ and I place myself under that authority. It is the follower that say, "Lord, just say the word and I'll do it."