

Obey GC²

(Obey the Great Commandment and Great Commission)

a blog series by Curtis Sergeant

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What are you living for?

Hopefully it is more than trying to make as much money as possible or gain as much power as possible for the purpose of living a life of hedonism. There is nothing wrong with pleasure and comfort, but you were made for more than that. God has a purpose for your life. It is to glorify Him. There are lots of ways to do this. In fact, most activities and pursuits can be done in such a way that they glorify God (unless they inherently wrong in and of themselves).

Glorifying God can also be called worship. There are some ways in which we should all be glorifying God. First, we should acknowledge Him and commit ourselves to following His instructions and guidance for our lives. We should also encourage others in the pursuit of a life of worship. We should continually grow in our likeness to Jesus Christ's character. We should serve others and look out for their interests as well as our own. We should seek to draw others into a relationship with God if they don't already know him. Conveniently, these facets of living a life of worship are gathered into a couple of summary statements in the Bible.

One time (Matthew 22:36-40) a Jewish lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: **"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.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."**

This is referred to as the Great Commandment.

Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave His disciples their final instructions. This was a crucial event because He knew He would never see them again in the flesh. In Matthew 28:18-20 the Bible says, "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'**"

This is referred to as the Great Commission.

This blog is about the ethos of the ObeyGC² Life which can be summarized as an attempt to help people live out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as effectively as possible. ObeyGC² is read as "obey GC squared" and by now you might have guessed that GC squared refers to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. ObeyGC² is an attempt to expand the Kingdom of God by catalyzing a movement of Christ's followers working together to bring about greater glory to God and doing what they can to see His will done on earth as it is in heaven. This blog will address my take on what that might look like in practical implementation.

Definition 1

ObeyGC² is a movement seeking to mobilize and equip every person to become a follower of Jesus and live out the Great Commandment and Great Commission in collaboration.

ObeyGC² is about getting *everyone* involved. It is about training them to do what they can't already do (in a continuous cycle of growth). It is focused on obedience to God. It is about cooperative effort.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Definition 2

ObeyGC² is far more than missions. ObeyGC² is an expression of discipleship, involving us in the investment of who we are and what we have in doing and teaching all that Christ commanded with keen stewardship.

Discipleship is the process of following Jesus. The phrase "doing and teaching all that Christ commanded" is a reference to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 and is a summary of what Jesus said it meant to make disciples. Stewardship is a key idea of being a faithful follower and is integral to the ethos of ObeyGC². All that we have and all that we are is a gift of God. To show our love and gratitude we need to make the most of it for His pleasure and His glory.

1 Cor 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Definition 3

ObeyGC² is ordinary people empowered by God making a difference together wherever they are.

On one hand, it is for everyone. On the other hand, it's only fully possible for those who are followers of Christ, those who are filled with the Holy Spirit. It is aimed at changing the status quo for God's purposes at all times and in all places.

1 Cor 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Definition 4

[ObeyGC²](#) is helping people help themselves and others.

It isn't only about doing good or doing the right thing. It's also about doing things in the right way; the most effective way; the way that will ultimately have the greatest possible impact for good. This means capacity building. It means blessing others in such a way that they can and will bless others.

Eph 5:15-16 Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Anti-definition 1

[ObeyGC²](#) isn't saved people who are healthy, wealthy and wise. Rather it is Reproducing disciple-servants who are generous healers and teachers.

The goal is not only to raise peoples standard of living or education or health but to help them realize and achieve their God-given calling and purpose to be a blessing to others. Those with faith in God are spiritually children of Abraham to whom God gave the following promise.

Gen 12:2-3

"I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

Contributors, not Consumers

[ObeyGC²](#) is about us becoming contributors rather than consumers; living a life aimed at giving and catalyzing rather than comfort and convenience; being characterized by doing and teaching rather than fruitless hypocrisy.

It is for people who want to serve rather than being served; people who want to make a difference and make the world a better place. It is for people who are serious about wanting to follow Jesus and follow His example.

Matt 20:25-28

25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you.

Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave- 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Glory of God

[ObeyGC²](#) is all about the glory of God and His mission in the world; about His Kingdom.

This is what all of life and history is about as well. This is an expression of worship *and* is intended to draw others into a life of worship and service to the One who created us and loves us. There is no higher calling and no greater way to invest one's life, energy, and time.

Matt 5:14-16

14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Believing Activism

The world has more than enough inactive believers and unbelieving activists. [ObeyGC²](#) is about becoming believing activists.

It is always amazing to me that people who claim to believe in and follow Jesus so often do not live as if that is the case. What is perhaps more amazing is the surprising number of people who have beliefs which should lead (if really believed) to a life of self-centered hedonism but actually engage in some tremendously selfless and altruistic behaviors. It's crazy! I am led to suspect that many people have a serious chasm between their stated beliefs and their actual worldview. I can't explain it and I can only guess at some of the causes. Is it too much to ask for people to live out true beliefs *and* right behaviors?

Mic 6:8

8 He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Prophetic

[ObeyGC²](#) is about becoming prophets who do not merely predict the future, but seek to change it.

I forgot who first said it, but I love this quote: "Some people look at the way the world is and ask 'why?' I look at what could be and ask 'why not?'" As admirable as that is, it is close to meaningless unless one does something about it. The environmentalists got a lot right with their slogan, "Think globally, act locally." Nike put it even more concisely with their byline, "Just Do It."

James 2:14-17

14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Ordinary Radicals

[ObeyGC²](#) aims to build small communities of ordinary radicals who do small things with great love.

It is a joint effort. It doesn't take people with unusual intelligence, ability, or wealth. It does require people who are serious, intentional and focused...the sort of people who could be called radicals. Their focus is on living day-to-day and moment-to-moment in such a way as to serve others and glorify God; to live a life of love.

Col 3:17

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Transformative Stories

[ObeyGC²](#) is spread through the stories of the transformative power of God working in and through people.

Stories are a powerful communication tool in any society and any age. They grip us. I love the story of the healing of the man born blind in John 9. The frustration of the Pharisees, who were trying desperately to discredit Jesus, was obvious. There was simply no way to refute the power and love of Jesus when the man who was healed was simply telling how Jesus had changed his life. Life-changing good news travels fast.

John 9:24-33

24 A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

25 He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

26 Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

27 He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

28 Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."

30 The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. 32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

Orthopraxy

ObeyGC² is not merely about believing the right things, but about following the right One. It is about living, not theorizing.

Ivory tower theoreticians need not apply. Philosophizing doesn't help. Acting does. There seems to be so much concern over *orthodoxy* these days but not nearly enough attention paid to *orthopraxy*. Right belief matters a great deal but that isn't the major problem with people. The major problem is with right behavior.

James 2:14-19

14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder.

Obedience

[ObeyGC²](#) is not about explaining the parts of the Bible you don't understand but about living out the parts you do understand.

What is the use about arguing about the meaning of Scripture if you don't obey the parts we are all crystal clear about? Until we obey what we have heard and understood, we will have serious problems with our life in the eternal perspective. What could possibly be more important than obeying what Jesus told us to do? He evidently thought it was pretty important...

Matt 7:24-27

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Live It

[ObeyGC²](#) is not about criticizing the church as it is, but about becoming the church we were meant to be.

There is a quote which I have kept on my desk for well over a decade through many moves to various countries. It is attributed to Theodore Roosevelt and is hard to beat for expressing my sentiments on this topic.

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

Matt 7:1-5

7:1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the

speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Asking "Why?"

I asked God why He allows all the spiritual darkness, abusive leadership, poverty, illness and ignorance in the world. He replied, "Ask rather, 'Why do we allow this to happen?' You are my body, my hands, my feet."

Ever since the garden of Eden mankind has been pointing the finger at someone else and blaming them for all that has gone wrong. God is looking for someone who will take responsibility rather than shifting it.

Matt 25:31-46

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Metrics

The measure of us as followers of Christ is not how much we have studied His word, but how much we are living it.

Metrics are important. There is some truth in the old maxim, "What gets measured gets done." The United Nations has set forth some laudable goals for dealing with disease, poverty, and lack of education in their Millennial Goals. The trick will be people trying to take credit for improvements which will not have a clear cause and everyone trying to avoid blame when things take major turns for the worse. Issues such as famine, wars, political corruption and so on make it tough to achieve such goals. Don't get me wrong, I think such goal-setting is a positive step. It is only the first step, however. Action must follow. As followers of Christ we should try to contribute to the reaching of those goals and to the reaching of goals set by Jesus in [the Great Commandment and the Great Commission](#). Studying those goals will not accomplish much either. We must act on them. Start with a single step.

James 1:22-25, 27

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Motive

Acts of [ObeyGC²](#) without love are emptiness. True [ObeyGC²](#) is love in action.

Motive matters. We can love others and love God because God first loved us. There is no earning of celestial "brownie points" by doing good deeds. Our good deeds are an expression of our love for God and others or they are worthless.

Isa 64:6a

6 All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

1 Sam 16:7b

"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

1 Cor 13:3

3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Discomfort

The message of [ObeyGC²](#) comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable.

Kay Warren, the wife of Rick Warren (pastor of Saddleback Church and author of "The Purpose Driven Life") calls herself a "seriously disturbed woman." You see, she has been brutally seized by a deep passion for ending the suffering inflicted on people by HIV-AIDS. Are you seriously disturbed or are you fairly comfortable and happy with the status quo when it comes to the welfare of others? The message of [ObeyGC²](#) will disturb you if you are comfortable. It provides hope for those who are already disturbed.

Heb 13:3

3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Isa 1:17

17 learn to do right!

Seek justice,

encourage the oppressed.

Defend the cause of the fatherless,

plead the case of the widow.

Prov 31:8-9

8 "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.

9 Speak up and judge fairly;

defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Being and Doing

As an agent of [ObeyGC²](#) I should concern myself not only with what I am doing, but in what I am becoming. An agent of [ObeyGC²](#) is a lover of God and of people.

I doubt anyone is much more eager for heaven than I am. Usually multiple times a day I use the word *Maranatha* (Hebrew for "Come Lord!") with a full awareness of its meaning and intent. Around our home my wife and I say, "Now would be a really good time (for Jesus to return)" almost daily. The Lord is leaving us here for several reasons. One is that He has specific things in mind for me to do. Probably just as

importantly, He has a clear picture in mind for what He wants me to become...like Jesus. That might take a while...

Rom 8:28-29

29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Phil 1:6

6 [I am] confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Eph 2:10

10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Occupation

God uses all sorts. It does not matter if you are a butcher, a baker or a candlestick-maker. The question is what sort of butcher, baker or candlestick-maker will you be?

Lots of people seem to think they can only serve God effectively if they are doing it as a full-time occupation. Nothing could be further from the truth. Actually, people who serve full-time have a difficult time even connecting with a world in need in many cases. Unless you earn your living doing something that is just plain wrong, you can serve and glorify God right where you are. If you are in the pornography business or you are a drug dealer or you are a "hit man" then please find something else to do. The rest of us need to figure out how to most effectively be God's hands and feet where we are. Like the bumper stickers say, "Bloom where you are planted." Of course we also need to be concerned about and acting on behalf of those who are beyond where we are day-to-day, but that will be another blog entry...

1 Cor 7:19b-24

Keeping God's commands is what counts. 20 Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. 21 Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you-although if you can gain your freedom, do so. 22 For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.

Eph 6:5-9

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve

wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Materialism

[ObeyGC²](#) is not for those who only want what they can own.

One of the biggest problems in the world is that many people are only concerned about their own welfare and the welfare of those who are personally cherished by them. We've all heard the statistics about how there is more than enough food to feed everyone in the world but so many people are starving because of distribution issues. Yet somehow, here in the United States where I live at present, obesity is a major health problem. What's up with that? The same could be said for just about any other resource necessary for living a healthy life. The wealthy hoard far more than they need or can reasonably use while many suffer to an extreme degree due to a chronic shortage of whatever it is. I don't want to get into an in-depth discussion on forms of government here. I'm simply saying that a lot of these issues would improve significantly if people thought (and cared) about others. Why do we hoard what is temporary and ignore the more important matters, eternal matters of the heart?

2 Cor 4:18

18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Phil 2:3-7

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
7 but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

Involvement

The great tragedy among rich Christians is not that they do not care about the poor, but that they rarely even know the poor.

This is one of the sad things about gated communities or even the way most of the world is divided up into neighborhoods which are essentially systems of segregation based on socioeconomic levels. I don't have a ready solution for this. I live in a neighborhood like this. It is a wonderful mix of various Asian ethnicities, a number of Hispanic families of various origins, African Americans, and Caucasians...but we are all firmly in the middle class. I have to go out of my way to interact with anyone living in poverty. This isn't because they don't live in the town where I live or the town where I work. I drive past such people every day, standing on street corners waiting to be hired for some sort of daily odd job. I don't really see them, though. They are not at my workplace or in my home or where I shop. It's difficult to really love someone you have never met except in some sort of hollow philosophical way...not with a love that has hands and feet.

Luke 14:12-14

12 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Hypocrisy

Most people in the U.S.A. can tell you what Christians believe, but watch the confusion in their eyes if you ask them how Christians live.

That is sad.

I've often heard it said, "You may be the only Bible someone ever reads." Originally the term "Christians" (which means little Christs) was meant as a derogatory term. Early followers of Jesus were known as "followers of The Way." The term "Christian" stuck because followers of Jesus loved it. It communicated exactly what they were trying and hoping to be. I don't know what nicknames you've heard lately for Christians, but I'm guessing they don't mean "little Christs."

Luke 11:39-42

39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. 40 You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give what is inside [the dish] to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

42 "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone."

Preparation to Live and Die

[ObeyGC²](#) does not merely offer people life after death, but also gives them a taste of life before death. It doesn't only prepare them to die, but also teaches them how to live.

I'm not sure it's possible "to be so heavenly minded that you are no earthly good." At least not if you really understand what it means to be heavenly minded. That would mean seeing things as God sees them; caring about what He cares about; valuing what He values; loving the ones He loves. The fact of the matter is that God seems to care a great deal about the welfare of those who suffer.

Ex 22:21-23

21 "Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt.

22 Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. 23 If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry."

John 10:10b

[Jesus said,] I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Luke 18:29-30

29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."

Fish

[ObeyGC²](#) doesn't simply give people fish. It teaches them to fish. It shows them how to sell fish. It tears down walls erected around the fish pond. It figures out who polluted the fish pond and helps clean it up.

You've probably heard the famous saying often attributed to Confucius (but which actually came into being much later): "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime." That saying makes a great point. It would be even better if we taught the man how to teach others to fish so we could feed his entire village for a lifetime (and beyond if he taught others the same thing). [ObeyGC²](#) is about all of that and all the related issues that arise from it. It is about people's welfare and about community and relationships. It is wholistic. [I know it is spelled holistic, but I'm trying to start a trend :-)] It is about building a better world for the good of mankind and the [glory of God](#). It is a virtuous cycle that feeds itself if we are faithful to put into practice what we learn and pass it on to others.

Prov 11:24-27

24 One man gives freely, yet gains even more;
another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

25 A generous man will prosper;
he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

26 People curse the man who hoards grain,
but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell.

27 He who seeks good finds goodwill,
but evil comes to him who searches for it.

Opposition

[ObeyGC²](#) is not about charity. Jesus wasn't about charity. He wasn't crucified for charity. He was crucified for living out a love which calls forth a new world order and disrupts the existing social order.

Jesus was a threat to Satan. He was a threat to the Jewish leaders of His day. He was a threat to the power structures and to people who were prospering at the expense of others. He was a threat to everyone's self-serving lives and selfish lifestyles. He came to serve. He came to sacrifice and suffer and die on behalf of others (all of us). He came to call us to follow His example. If we do, we will suffer the same fate of being hated and misunderstood because the same forces which opposed Him will oppose us.

Matt 10:25

25 It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!

Luke 9:23-26

23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Difficult but Not Complex

[ObeyGC²](#) is simple but not easy.

Have you ever noticed that the really powerful ideas and concepts are easy to say but not to do? Reading the Bible and even understanding most of it is pretty easy. Living your life based on what it says is impossible apart from the Holy Spirit whom God gives to those who give their lives to Him. (In fact, one appellation of the Holy Spirit is the one "whom God has given to those who obey Him." in Acts 5:32.) The various definitions of [ObeyGC²](#) I put forth in previous postings are all pretty simple conceptually. They all come down to living out [the Great Commandment and the Great Commission](#). Ultimately, you and I have no control over what others do in this regard. The question is, how will I respond? How will you respond? The price is high. Count on it.

Luke 14:25-35

25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: 26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters-yes, even his own life-he cannot be my disciple. 27 And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. 33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

34 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? 35 It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Faith, Hope and Love

[ObeyGC²](#) agents believe so much in another world that they cannot help but begin to create it now.

I'm not talking about some sort of post-millennial Dominionism. I'm talking about working toward what Jesus prayed for, that God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). In other words, they live a life of love for God and others. They do this because of the hope they have which arises from faith in God and the future He has promised. Frankly, I can hardly wait. Day-to-day, I find in my own life that the faith and hope parts are a lot easier than the love part. The faith and hope only

directly relate to God. (I know, I know, the faith and hope have implications for my relating to others, but for the sake of this blog entry, I'm saying those implications are bound up in love.) The love part requires I love others. That's often not an easy thing when it comes down to my daily decisions and lifestyle. That's the hard work of beginning to create the future we believe and hope in, here and now.

Phil 3:17-20

17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Clear Vision

Do you want to know who the true Christians are? Ask the poor. Ask the suffering. Ask the disfranchised. Ask the prisoner.

Sometimes it is confusing down here on earth. It would be wonderful to have the insight of heaven; to be able to see hearts; to be able to discern motives; to see the end from the beginning. Unfortunately, I don't even fully see and understand my own heart or discern my own motives. There are some people who see more clearly than others, however. They are the disadvantaged. For some reason, all the benefits and blessings we experience tend to cloud our view to an extent. When these things are taken away, there is one benefit: clearer vision. Suddenly, peoples' motives are clearer and eternal values become more obvious.

Col 3:1-2

3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

1 Cor 4:3b-5

I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Matt 25:31-46

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he

will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Discipleship

Jesus is not to be admired, but followed.

I've always appreciated the argument made by C.S. Lewis that because of Jesus' claims, He must be considered as either a lunatic, a liar, or the Lord of heaven and earth. He says that there cannot be any "patronising nonsense" about Him being a great moral teacher. If you've never read the short, simple classic, "Mere Christianity," then I suggest you do so. It is a very quick read and is the sort of book where you will feel you've learned nothing "new" but it has helped you frame familiar issues in new ways. (I also greatly appreciate his chapter on pride.)

John 12:24-26

24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains

only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. 25 The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

John 10:27

27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Risk

Perhaps many people have such a difficult time believing in heaven because Christians take so few risks.

My guess is that this is the case due to the fact that so many Christians focus on the temporal rather than the eternal. Part of sinful human nature seems to be that we think about what is visible more than about what is invisible. Unfortunately, the things we think about tend to become the things we value. The things we value shape the decisions we make. Soon we can find ourselves making decisions based on the wrong things. Risk-taking (in regard to earthly, temporary things) should be no big deal for Christians if it is for the sake of God's Kingdom, which is eternal. If this were true more often, I believe it would get people's attention in a remarkable fashion.

Matt 16:21-23

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

1 John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

2 Cor 4:16-18

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles

are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Fear

Jesus said we should not fear what can kill the body, but what can kill the soul. We should not fear the "violent" inner cities but the suburbs which can eat away and numb our souls with complacency and comfort.

Okay, Jesus actually said "who" can kill, not "what" can kill. The principle still applies. I suspect the root of the fear is actually a love of physical comfort and safety which are often coupled with a love of money. If we become involved in "dangerous" and needy places, it will place a burden on our resources, time, and money. Why risk all that when we can simply minister in the 'burbs?

Luke 12:4-5

4 "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him."

Luke 16:9-15

9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

Change Agents

ObeyGC² practitioners are disturbers of the status quo. If the "powers that be" do not hate us, we may not be truly representing God's Kingdom.

Don't be deceived into thinking that you will be praised and honored because you are following Jesus and doing what He commanded. It definitely didn't work out that way for Him. People who should be encouraging and supportive for the sake of the

Kingdom will oppose you and do things which seem horrifyingly evil. Cheer up! That is actually a sign you are on the right track. By the way, there is no neutral party in the cosmic battle. If you aren't on God's side, you're against Him. When "push comes to shove" there will be no one neutral about your efforts for His Kingdom either.

Luke 23:20-31

20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

22 For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him."

23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. 24 So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 25 He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

26 As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27 A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. 28 Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' 30 Then

"they will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!'
and to the hills, 'Cover us!'"

31 For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Matt 5:10-12

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

John 16:1-4

2 They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. 3 They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.

Matt 24:9-10

9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

Matt 12:30

30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Community

Communities of [ObeyGC²](#) are built around a shared brokenness, not a shared self-righteousness.

The Kingdom of God is a relational affair. Discipleship has fellowship as a vital aspect. When we are "discipling" someone, we do them a disservice if it is strictly a one-on-one experience. That is like trying to teach someone to play basketball only through one-on-one drills. That may be fine for ball control, but they will have no concept of very important aspects of the game: passing, many aspects of defense, pick-and-rolls, off-ball screens, and so on. Individualistic expressions of discipleship are fine as far as they go. Unfortunately, they don't go very far. God has called us to live in community. His Kingdom is a community and is based on our relationship to Him and to each other. The basis of this is His grace, not our glowing personalities or lovable natures or any other characteristic we may pride ourselves in.

Eph 4:1-6

2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you were called- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Rom 12:3-5

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Life!

Jesus isn't aiming to make bad people good, but to make dead people live. We aren't about morality, but about abundant life.

Of course, those who receive this abundant life from Christ will be good, but that's not the point. In several of his letters, the Apostle Paul writes that we are supposed to "take off" evil deeds and "put on" a righteous character because of the new life we

have from God. These are the result, however, not the cause. The cause is the new life we have in Christ. The upshot is that we are to be involved in helping others find this life as well.

John 10:9-11

9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Gal 2:20-21

20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

2 Cor 5:17-21

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Love/Hate

ObeyGC² practitioners are known as those who love outcasts, not those who hate "gays".

I don't know how it happened. Somehow Christians, especially evangelical Christians, got a reputation for hating homosexuals. Perhaps some do. One thing is clear: Jesus didn't. God clearly forbids homosexuality in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. He also forbids pride. And lust. And lies. Etc.

Somehow, particularly since the nineteenth century, sexual sins have come to be considered more serious than other sins. They are bad...as bad as other sins...but not any worse. In fact, if I was forced to rank sins on their seriousness, I'd put pride at the top of the list. I'll have to write on that another day.

The appropriate response to homosexual individuals is to love them and try to draw them to Jesus where they can receive the power and the will to change their lifestyle. This is how it works for people who are bound by other sins. This is how it needs to work with homosexuals as well. They are not the enemy of Christians. They are bound by the enemy of Christians and they need to be released...the same way those of us who are already Christians were formerly bound by the enemy and released by Christ.

Jude 22-23

22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

John 8:1-11

8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

11 "No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Rom 6:16-23

16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

Eph 6:11-13

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Extremism

These are extreme times that call for extremists. [ObeyGC²](#) practitioners are extremists for love.

Imagine a world in which the headlines shouted out reports of extremists who were turning the world upside-down by returning good for evil. We actually do see such reports from time to time even in the mainstream media. They are rarely the headlines, but they are attached to articles or stories about unspeakable atrocities perpetrated by heartless terrorists, recently often Islamic extremists. Survivors or family members of those who have been killed speak of forgiveness and even love. Those people are also extremists and in every case I have seen they are radically following Jesus. They are extremists for love. Their response glorifies God and mystifies many observers. The more closely the world examines the situation, the more glory God receives. Extreme darkness provides a greater contrast for the light to shine forth. Let's commit ourselves to shine consistently so when the opportunity arises we will be ready. We should also seek out dark surroundings in order to maximize our impact for God's Kingdom.

Matt 5:43-48

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

2 Cor 8:1-6

8:1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

Symbols

The symbols of the church have included the Lamb, the Lion, the Dove, and the Fish, but never the Chameleon.

George Barna is a widely published and oft-quoted pollster and researcher. One of the most disturbing discoveries he has made through studying the state of churches and Christians in the USA is that there is essentially no difference in the ethics of actual behavior between those who claim to be born-again Christians and those who don't. I'm not talking about standards that people purport to hold, but how they actually behave. This is stunning and exceedingly sad. This is certainly not the situation God is looking for. He desires (and commands) that we be people who think differently and as a result, act differently. The power for this does not lie in ourselves (which I believe is the largest part of the problem in the USA now) but in the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us. Let us walk in the Spirit rather than in our own strength and wisdom.

Rom 12:2

2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 Peter 1:13-16

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Focus

ObeyGC² doesn't focus so much on what we are against that we forget what we are for.

This is another way of encouraging us to be people who learn to see the glass as half full rather than half empty. Focus on the positive. What can we do to encourage one another to do more of what's right? I've heard from several sources (so I don't know if any of them is original) that we should seek to make at least four positive, reinforcing comments for every negative correction. This is not something I'm naturally good at. Many times I feel as if I'm doing well if I achieve a one-to-one ratio. "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." We will likely be more influential in the lives of others and in achieving significant impact in society if we learn to leverage positive reinforcement more effectively. For now, I'm determined to work towards at least a two-to-one ration of affirmations to criticisms...

John 3:17

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Heb 10:24-25

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Tough Path

ObeyGC² will not be attractive to everyone. The invitation to come and suffer and sacrifice and give and die is not convenient, comfortable or attractive to those who have a lot to lose or who fear risk.

Ironically, it is the people who are most satisfied now who are the least likely to get what's worth having in the long run. This is a good way to summarize the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:2-10. Evidently, of all the temptations to cling to something that's available now at great cost to one's eternal welfare, money is one of the most powerful. I base this on the fact that Jesus spent so much time talking about it. There are plenty of other things and people which can short-circuit our commitment to the Lord...anything which keeps us from following Him unreservedly. Is there anything you are unwilling to sacrifice if the Lord asks you to?

Matt 6:24

24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Matt 19:16-24

16 Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

17 "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

18 "Which ones?" the man inquired.

Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"

20 "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Object of Love

Love can build or destroy community, depending on its object. One who loves *the dream* of an ideal community will destroy it; one who loves *those around them* will build it.

Christians can be harsh, mean, judgmental, and condemning in the name of God if they view themselves as defending orthodoxy, purity, and the "right" way. Of course, orthodoxy, purity, and the "right" way are all important, but there is an appropriate spirit in which to correct people and a correct procedure to follow when making such corrections. The "Golden Rule" is a good measure here: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Luke 6:31). We should help others improve out of a spirit of love, not vindictiveness or an accusatory stance. Most often people want to do the best possible job in serving the Lord and in following Him. Usually they simply haven't been shown a better way.

Gal 6:1

6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Matt 11:18-19

18 "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners."' But wisdom is proved right by her actions."

Matt 18:15-17

15 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

Luke 9:49-56

49 John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us."

50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."

51 When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;

52 and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.

53 But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.

54 When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

55 But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of;

56 for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."] And they went on to another village.

NASU

Journey

The *means* of [ObeyGC²](#) must express the *end* we desire; the journey is as essential as the destination.

The end does not justify the means, *especially* when the end is the Kingdom of God and His glory. The message and the messenger must match. The delivery must be consistent with the message. Any type of training will be most effective when it includes a model. Being a disciple is, by definition, being a follower. We can best equip others to follow when we show them how to follow. Being a good model requires doing the right thing in the best way that can be emulated by the person you are modeling for. This is a big topic which I will come back to later...

1 Cor 11:1

11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Phil 3:17

17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.

1 Tim 4:12

12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

Col 2:6-7

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

1 John 1:5-7

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Change the World

[ObeyGC²](#) will be carried out by little bands of ordinary radicals. Can that change the world? That's the only way it's ever been done!

For good or ill, this is how it has happened. The greatest example is the rag-tag bunch we refer to as Jesus' disciples. They were certainly ordinary (until Jesus and the Holy Spirit transformed them). They were unquestionably radicals. They have changed the world beyond reckoning. We are their spiritual descendants. Let's live up to our heritage. We have the same Lord, the same God, the same Spirit, the same Kingdom, the same purpose, the same calling, the same power. What are we waiting for?

Acts 17:6b-7

They dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."

NKJV

1 Cor 1:18-25

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 Jews demand

miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

Repentance

The world isn't being changed by "altar calls." [ObeyGC²](#) is an *alter* call.

The word "repent" actually means to change one's mind. The idea is to turn around; change direction. At the bottom of this idea is a change from serving oneself and one's own desires and values and give one's allegiance instead to Christ. His values, His desires, His direction are adopted as one's own. This can be viewed as a change from pride to an attitude of humility; from seeing oneself as king to seeing Christ as King. That means all that I am, all that I'm not, all that I have, all that I hope to be are His. It also means I actively seek what His desires for me are. The best place to find this sort of information is in the Bible. The best summary of this can probably be found in [the Great Commission and the Great Commandment](#).

Matt 18:1-4

18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 He called a little child and had him stand among them. 3 And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

2 Tim 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

ObeyGC² Byline 1

[ObeyGC²](#): Living out [the Great Commandment and the Great Commission](#)

This is probably the most all-encompassing summary of [ObeyGC²](#). It makes it abundantly clear that [ObeyGC²](#) is about living a life of discipleship. The [first entry in this blog](#) addresses this foundational issue. Belief in the right things is worthless and meaningless if you aren't living out those beliefs.

James 2:8-19

8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as

yourself," you are doing right. 9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder.

ObeyGC² Byline 2

[ObeyGC²](#): Helping people help themselves and others

The primary emphasis communicated in this summary is that of the intentionally reproductive and multiplicative nature of service characterized by [ObeyGC²](#) values. We are blessed to be a blessing. That is the upshot of the call of Abraham and the promise God made to him. We are spiritual descendants of Abraham and inherit the same calling and the same promise. This was God's intention for the nation of Israel as well, although they did rather less well in fulfilling it. We are the spiritual Israel, adopted into God's family. Let's live it out.

Matt 10:7-8

7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Luke 12:48b

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

2 Tim 2:1b-3

Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 3 Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

ObeyGC² Byline 3

ObeyGC²: Slaying the global evil giants virally

Pun intended. The global evil giants of spiritual emptiness (lostness), self-serving leadership (which leads to all sorts of injustice and suffering), grinding poverty, pandemic diseases, and crippling ignorance are foes so large that no one has been able to defeat them. The United Nations, the United States, business, military, government, no one. By most measures we have been losing ground on all these fronts when the global situation is considered. Perhaps the brightest of these is the battle against lostness, but even though the church is growing faster than it ever has in history, it still isn't keeping pace with population growth.

The church has not played the role it should in any of these battles. The biggest problem has been that most of the manpower in the church is sidelined for no good reason. For some reason, most of us have been led to believe that the only significant contribution which can be made in these battles is by professionals because the giants are so big and so intimidating. The fact of the matter is that all of us who pledge allegiance to God are called and equipped to be in the battle against these giants at all times. We are all "soldiers" and "priests" and "prophets" and "kings" whether or not we are professional missionaries, trainers, business gurus, doctors, or teachers. The more quickly we can spread this message and model it for others in a "viral" fashion, the more quickly we can make a difference in the epic battle against the giants. Snowflakes by themselves are fragile, but when enough of them get together they can stop traffic, close down a city, or even create an avalanche. If enough ordinary people are involved doing the simple things they can do and getting those they are helping involved as well, the faster we can win this battle.

Let's be like Joshua and Caleb who gave the good report after spying out the land of Canaan. The other ten spies looked at the giants and the great walled cities and said Israel would be unable to take the land. Joshua and Caleb looked at their God and said, "He will surely give us the land." The people followed the advice of the ten and had to wander in the wilderness and die for another forty years. Joshua and Caleb alone survived from their generation and they were proved right when God did give them the land forty years later when they finally had the courage to obey Him and attack the giants.

Num 13:27-28a, 30-32 ;14:1-3, 6-10a

27 They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. 28 But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large."

30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." 32 And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.

14:1 That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. 2 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! 3 Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. 8 If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. 9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

10 But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.

ObeyGC² Byline 4

ObeyGC²: Contagious improvement

If we are going to make things better, it will take all of us practicing what we preach. Nobody wants to emulate dry hypocrisy. I'm far more likely to buy something from someone if they are a user of the product themselves and are a raving fan. This means we must do ObeyGC² and train others to do it and train still others. This sort of a virtuous cycle creates a contagious movement...the sort of movement that can change the world!

Matt 5:19

19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Ex 18:20

20 Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.

Ezra 7:9-10

The good hand of his God was upon him. 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

NASU

ObeyGC² Byline 5

[ObeyGC²](#): Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

This of course is one of the opening lines to the Lord's Prayer, also known as the Model Prayer. It says in familiar King James Version, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9a-10). This, of course, is the bottom line for all of us who claim the Lord as our King. This motive of loving service to our Savior and Lord is the reason behind our obedience to His desires and commands. That is the reason for [ObeyGC²](#). The Kingdom of God is where His will is done. We express the Kingdom whenever we do His will. Until the final day when Christ returns in glory to establish His eternal Kingdom, when every knee will bow to Him, we must do what we can to make sure as many as possible bow in loving obedience rather than as vanquished foes. [ObeyGC²](#) is one way for us to accomplish that end.

Phil 2:9-11

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

ObeyGC² Byline 6

[ObeyGC²](#): Loving God by loving others

One of the main ways to demonstrate emphasis in Hebrew culture and writings was through repetition. Jesus clearly had some things He wanted to emphasize because He was fairly repetitious on some subjects. One of these subjects was that love is directly tied to obedience. Specifically, our love for Him is intimately related to our obedience of Him. He was also extremely clear in stating that a primary command He intended for us to obey was that we love others and show it in practical ways. This is a great way to summarize what [ObeyGC²](#) is all about.

John 14:15

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command."

John 14:23-24

23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."

John 15:9-13

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

1 John 5:1-3

5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

1 John 2:3-6, 9-11

3 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. 4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

2 John 4b-6

5 I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. 6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

ObeyGC² Byline 7

ObeyGC²: Glorifying God by serving others

Since all of history and life finds its purpose in bringing glory to God, it seems as if we might want to pay attention to how we might do this. It turns out that one way to bring glory to God from others is to show forth a life of service and good deeds. We

don't live a life of service to others for what we can get out of it but for what God can get out of it.

Matt 5:13-16

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

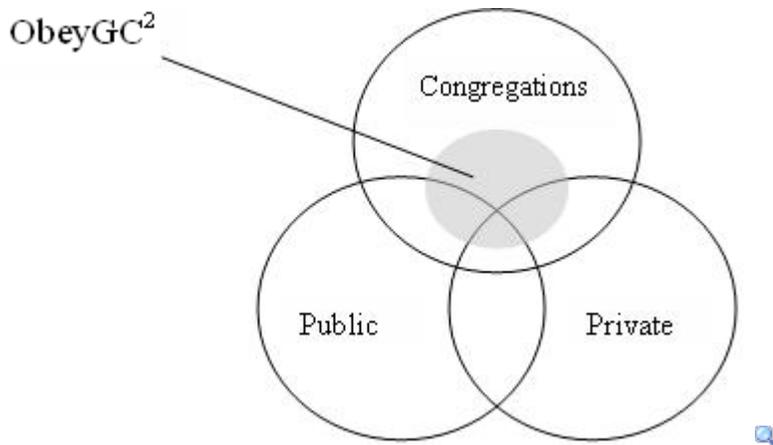
14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that **they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**

1 Peter 2:12-17

12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, **they may see your good deeds and glorify God** on the day he visits us.

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. 16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. 17 Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

ObeyGC² Byline 8



ObeyGC²: Make a difference together

This tag emphasizes the cooperative nature of [ObeyGC²](#). It is the power of working together which makes it so potentially impactful. Not only can we work together with others in the church, but also, when agendas coincide, we can work with public

(government) and private (NGO, business, parachurch) enterprise in a show of support for values we share. I've addressed the issue of cooperative effort within the church in previous entries. Now I'd like to propose some guidelines for cooperative effort outside the church.

1. [ObeyGC²](#) does not need to be redefined in order for collaborative efforts to occur. It already provides a framework for collaboration. Often practical quality of life issues are of common interest among public, private and church sectors. The task is to discover where the legitimate concerns of each sector overlap and focus the collaboration on that area of overlap. Each sector has its own unique and God-given area of responsibility and concern and each sector will already recognize many of its own particular distinctive spheres of influence. What must be redefined is the perception of the role and spirit of the church in working with the public and private sectors on common areas of concern.
 2. When communicating to congregations (or individual Christians) we need to point out that it is an effectiveness and stewardship matter that they collaborate with public and private sectors whenever it is possible or feasible.
 1. This will often mean that congregations must initiate the relationship.
 2. This also means that congregations should be responsive to overtures from the private and public sector when appropriate.
 3. Suggestions for parameters of collaborative efforts:
 1. Ask about felt-need issues felt by the potential partner(s). These issues will often be easiest to collaborate on if they are framed in terms of people or how people are affected.
 2. Present the role of the congregation as that of a servant.
 3. Jointly discuss possible contributions by each of the current and potential partners, with each party focusing on its own potential areas of contribution.
 4. Whenever possible, seek to break down or minimize "us/them" references by recognizing and capitalizing on overlaps in constituency. (We are part of them and they are part of us. E.g., some of our members may be in local government and some of the local government officials may be members of our congregation.)
 5. Seek to make the first step an event or project of very limited duration. Follow this up with discussions on possible next steps and/or longer term collaborative efforts. This will provide all parties with a comfortable escape clause and help to identify individuals within each of the partner groups which might be open to ongoing efforts related to the issue.
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Rom 12:17b-18

Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

ObeyGC² Byline 9

ObeyGC²: Ordinary radicals working together

Ironically, ObeyGC² will probably be most effective when obviously unremarkable people practice it. It will then be obvious that it is God who is responsible for anything of value which is accomplished. The other obvious testimony to this fact will be if we work together in unity as Jesus prayed we would. I love the illustration of a turtle on a fencepost. If you are ever walking along and see a turtle on a fencepost, you don't say, "Wow! What an amazing turtle!" Instead you start looking around to see who put the turtle on the fencepost.

1 Cor 1:26-31

26 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-and the things that are not-to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

John 17:20-23

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

ObeyGC² Byline 10

ObeyGC²: Working out your faith

Most of us who seek to follow the Lord have figured out that it isn't a one-time decision. We have to daily die to ourselves and follow Him. In fact, we must choose to obey moment by moment. It is this process which God uses to perfect us, molding us into the image of Christ *and* the process through which He uses us to accomplish His purposes in the world.

Luke 9:23-24

23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it."

Phil 2:12-15

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.

Eph 2:10

10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Rom 8:29

29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

ObeyGC² Byline 11

ObeyGC²: Activism with a purpose

We have an eternal reason for what we do. Whatever happens in our earthly lifetime is of little consequence compared with what happens in eternity. When Paul summarizes what the essentials of the gospel are, one of the few issues that he chooses to mention is the coming judgment. Since it is coming, and we need to be ready for it, that means we need to get busy getting ourselves and others prepared for it. Time is limited. The matter is urgent and important. It deserves all our attention and energy and resources.

1 Peter 1:13-17

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

2 Peter 3:10-14

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

James 2:14-18

14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

2 Cor 4:16-18

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

ObeyGC² Byline 12

ObeyGC²: Let's build the world we've always wanted

While this doesn't communicate the heart and soul of [ObeyGC²](#), it does provide some common ground with [non-Christian partners](#) with whom we may have the opportunity to work. We are quite clear on the fact that we'll never see God's will done on earth as it is in heaven until Christ's return. That doesn't excuse us, however, from the responsibility of being a force for preservation and good while we remain here. We do have a responsibility to work together with community and government leaders to carry out their God-given responsibilities. [ObeyGC²](#) is an avenue to do that.

Matt 5:13a

13 "You are the salt of the earth.

Col 4:5-6

5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

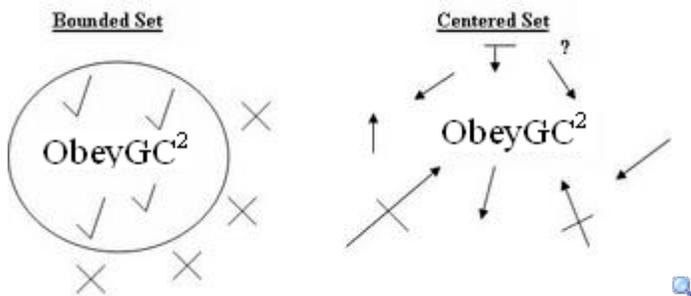
Rom 13:1-10

13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

ObeyGC² Values



I believe we should not (and perhaps cannot) define [ObeyGC²](#) in an airtight fashion which will allow us to determine what is and isn't [ObeyGC²](#). For starters, it just isn't practical. We must rather give a general definition and then carefully enunciate the values and principles that will ideally characterize [ObeyGC²](#). The result will be a

situation in which we are not dealing with the construct of [ObeyGC²](#) activities as a bounded set but rather as a centered set. The question at hand when planning and evaluating opportunities will not be, “Is this [ObeyGC²](#) or not?” but rather “How can we respond in a way that is as [ObeyGC²](#)-like as possible?” The values and principles can then be considered as benchmarks to shoot for. Arrows with a hash in the centered set diagram would be considered [ObeyGC²](#)-like because they would in general represent most of the values of [ObeyGC²](#). This is less alienating for “non-[ObeyGC²](#)” practitioners, leaving the door open for influence and interaction in order to make their activities as fruitful and effective as possible *and* continues to challenge [ObeyGC²](#) practitioners to improve and refine their work.

A partial list of [ObeyGC²](#) values would include: high-leverage, strategic, sustainable, reproducing, scaling, wholistic, efficient, coordinated, intentional, glorifying God, congregation-centric, addresses greatest needs, community-based, virality, training (not teaching), oral-friendly, love-motivated, prioritize least/last/lost, effective, local ownership, transferable, do no harm, listen and learn before acting, do and train, presence before projects, team-based, respects the church, involves every member, transformational, respects local community leaders, exit strategy if not in home community, etc. This is not an exhaustive list, but a representative list. I intend to write a blog entry on each of these values.

To summarize, the values of [ObeyGC²](#) are principles which should be used in order to ensure that our activities are as effective and as efficient as possible. This is a matter of stewardship of the time, energy and resources which God has given us.

Matt 25:19-21

19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"

High-leverage

One of the [ObeyGC²](#) values is that work is high-leverage.

This is just another way to say working smart. The point is that the outcomes are large when compared to the inputs. This can be achieved in any number of ways, but it will nearly always include the involvement of as many people as possible downline. In other words any time I am doing something, I should involve those I am doing it with and those I am doing it for in doing it for someone else later. Leverage can also be achieved through engaging idle resources.

Phil 3:17-18

17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.

2 Tim 2:1-3

2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Strategic

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is strategic.

Being strategic means that it is an intentional part of a larger coherent plan. Another way of looking at it is that it employs system thinking, recognizing and incorporating plans to deal with unintended consequences and the constellation of issues which will be affected by one's actions. The larger strategy is ultimately God's plan to glorify Himself and establish His Kingdom. A subset of that larger strategy is the blessing of all peoples and the restoration of mankind and indeed all creation. In this regard, it might be helpful to ask this question before acting: "How can this best bring glory to God?"

Gen 12:3

3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

Rom 8:19-21

19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

2 Cor 5:17-19

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Sustainable

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is sustainable.

The point of this value is that something can be carried on after the initiator has left the scene. Often, this requires capacity-building to take place rather than simply doing things *for* people. Sustainability ensures that the benefits of the work will be continuing and durable.

What is not sustainable? Providing a pump which the recipients cannot repair if it breaks. Building a structure which cannot be properly maintained. Doing a task for someone which they cannot duplicate or train others to do.

John 15:16a

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last.

Reproducing

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is reproducing.

This is a more emphatic way to say reproducible. If it is reproducing then it *can be* reproduced and it *is being* reproduced. Actually the same thing should have been said about the value of being "sustainable"...it should actually be "sustaining." In my mind, being reproducible has two major components. First, it can be reproduced. This means that whatever is being done can be repeated with local resources and abilities. This might require capacity building within the community. This often requires that training approaches be adjusted for local context. For example, if the community has mostly oral-preference learners then training should be put into an oral-friendly format. The second aspect requires that there be *accountability structures* within the community for the reproduction of the benefits connected with the work. What gets measured or inspected gets done.

1 Cor 9:19-23

19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Heb 13:17

17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Scaling

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is scaling.

Similar to the value of "reproducing," "scaling" implies not only that it is scalable (able to be scaled) but that it actually does scale. Jesus loved to use agricultural illustrations, partly because God uses similar principles in nature that He does in spiritual life. Seeds are a great illustration of scaling. Not only can they multiply themselves, but each of the resulting seeds can also multiply, resulting in true scaling. Again, the actual scaling implies some sort of accountability structure in practice. What is measured/inspected is what actually gets done. I think of scaling as reproducing on steroids. To me it implies continuing reproduction, most likely with more than one offspring per generation.

Mark 4:20

20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

2 Cor 9:8-10

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 As it is written:

"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever."

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

Wholistic

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is wholistic.

Yes, I am aware that the word is properly spelled "holistic." I'm trying to start a trend so bear with me. No one (who understands reality) has any doubt that spiritual welfare is more important than physical welfare. As Jesus said in Mark 8:36-37, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" If we feed and heal and educate a person and give him a utopian existence but fail to meet his spiritual need we have done him no good at all in the long run. For some reason, however, God seems to care a great deal about the physical welfare of people as well, and in fact, He ties our love for Him to our practical expressions of love for our fellow-man in the physical realm. Only God

knows why He chooses to emphasize these temporary issues as a necessary supplement to meeting the more important eternal needs, but He does. We need to pay attention to that fact.

James 1:27

27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Mic 6:8

8 He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Efficient

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is efficient.

This is a matter of stewardship. The Lord wants us to make wise use of whatever He gives us. In the parable of the talents we see that He will reward those who make good use of what He gives them. One of the up-sides of this is that He will give more to whomever makes wise use of what He has already given them. God is not a foolish investor. He invests more in people who are consistently giving Him a good return on His investments in them. If our goal is to bring maximum glory to God, we want to be one of those people.

Eph 5:15-16

15 Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Matt 25:23, 29-30

23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

...

29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Coordinated

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is coordinated.

This implies that it is cooperative. For some odd reason, God has equated our love of others with our love of Him. He has chosen to tie our status as His children with our status as siblings of His other children and seems to think that our getting along with them is pretty important. This actually means we need to work together with them. In fact, He goes so far as to actually say we are actually part of one body. This is a major point in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. If we are one body, let's be a coordinated body and not a clumsy one.

Rom 12:3-5

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

1 Cor 12:27

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Eph 4:1-6

2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you were called- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Intentional

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is intentional.

In other words, it's more than random acts of kindness. Random acts of kindness are wonderful and we need to do them. But we mustn't stop there. We have a purpose for our lives and so we need to live it purposefully and minister purposefully.

1 Cor 3:7-9a

7 Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers.

Gal 4:18

18 It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you.

Phil 2:2-4

2 Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Phil 2:12-13

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

2 Thess 1:11

11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

Glorifying God

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is to [glorify God](#).

Have a look at the first blog entry on this site for a discussion of the centrality of [glorifying God](#), not only for [ObeyGC²](#) but for all of life and history. Learning how to do this in all of life is a life-time process, but there are some basics that are "givens" in any situation. First, one needs to live a life controlled by the Holy Spirit. No one can live a life pleasing to God without doing that. This requires a continual filling of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, unity among believers is essential for the Lord to be glorified. There are several passages which teach this. Thirdly, credit needs to go to Jesus for any good thing which is done. He is the head of the body, His church, and God will not share His glory with anyone.

Eph 1:13b-14

Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-to the praise of his glory.

Rom 15:5-6

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil 2:9-11

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Congregation-centric

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is congregation-centric.

This is to say that the church in its local expression should be the central actor. This can obviously be a subset of a local church, but they act on behalf of the body. We are God's representatives and it is in that role which we do anything of eternal value. The responsibility for meeting needs and doing God's will in the world belongs to the church. Unfortunately, much that could be done and should be done but isn't done is an indictment against the church. In many times and many places we have abdicated the responsibility which God has given us to be a blessing to every family on earth. We need to involve *every* follower of Jesus in living out this heritage. We are to be salt, light and leaven in this world. We should provide an example and be a good partner in working for good with both public and private enterprise, with faith-based organizations and any other men and women of goodwill which we can find. We are responsible to lead out and to do what we can as God's representatives in our local communities and beyond.

Eph 2:19-22

19 You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Col 1:24-29

24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. 25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness- 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 27 To them God has chosen to make

known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. 29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Addresses Greatest Needs

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work prioritizes the areas of greatest need.

This means that work focuses on places with the greatest lostness, especially in terms of having the least access to the gospel. This takes the form of prioritizing work among UEGs (unengaged people groups) whenever possible. UEGs are ethnolinguistic people groups among whom there are no intentional church planting efforts taking place. You can see a list of peoplegroups online at www.peoplegroups.org. Of the roughly 12,000 people groups in the world, about 3,500 are UEGs. Most of these have populations of less than 100,000 and one reason they are unengaged is that it is not efficient for missions organizations to commit resources to reach them because there are much larger groups which are still very unreached. Local churches nearby these UEGs, but composed of a different people group are often the best placed to take responsibility for beginning outreach to the UEGs.

We also need to target the areas of greatest poverty, greatest illness, greatest injustice, greatest ignorance, etc. If you work in a slum you can ask people who is poor and they will nearly always be able to identify people who are worse off than they are. There is often a degree of satisfaction among the relatively poor, but absolute destitution is a serious matter which deserves priority attention. HIV-AIDS is an example of a "greatest illness" although in some places it is not the only affliction deserving immediate attention. Malaria, or even simple diarrhea can be devastating in some places. Severe injustices such as sex slavery fall into a similar category. Especially in some Muslim societies such as Afghanistan, the education of girls is a major issue.

Every community also has one or more issues which are the most severe. In many places which are prosperous physically there is great spiritual darkness. Much of Western Europe comes to mind in this regard. Locally we need to address the greatest need. Globally we need to do what we can to bring light to the darkest places.

Matt 9:10-13

10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Community-based

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is community-based.

Long-term, if work is going to be ongoing and scalable, the resources and expertise must come from within the community where it takes place. This means that capacity building must often be a key component of the work. People must learn how to effectively use the resources they already have at their disposal as well as learning how to generate additional resources in many cases.

The aspect of being community-based is also related to the value of being congregation-centric. Worldwide, many communities already have a church in their midst, and this church needs to play a significant role as a banner-bearer in the work. If there is no church, there is not likely to be a banner-bearer which will persist unless and until a church is planted. Governments change, leaders come and go, but churches remain. Individual congregations may die, but the Kingdom of God will continue and persist and nearby congregations can take up the responsibility until another church is planted in the community. If local ownership and leadership are not established from the beginning of the process, there will not be enough motivation to continue the process of community renewal and building once any outside partners leave.

1 Thess 4:11-12

11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

1 Tim 5:8

8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Eph 4:28

28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Viralocity

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is characterized by viralocity.

As far as I know, viralocity is a new word. Don't look for it in the dictionary. It means quickly and widely spreading. If something is going to be quickly and widely

spreading it will have several characteristics. First, it will be simple. Complex things do not easily and quickly replicate. Think about it. An organism's complexity and size are generally inverse to the number of that type of organism which exist. There are a whole lot more bacteria than people. There are far more plankton than there are blue whales. There are more mice than there are elephants. You get the picture.

Second, something with virality must have clear advantages over something which it replaces or changes and there must be sufficient dissatisfaction with the current situation. That dissatisfaction must either be created or brought to light before the new solution can achieve virality.

Thirdly, there must be a motivation for the new pattern or solution to be passed on. People must want to have this viracious [another new word] pattern or solution and to pass it on to others. Fortunately, as they say, "good news travels fast."

1 Cor 2:1-5

2:1 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Eph 4:22-24

22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

2 Tim 2:2

2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Training (not teaching)

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is done by training rather than merely teaching.

OK, maybe this is just semantics, but there is an important principle here. When we hear the word "teaching" we tend to connote the idea of mental acquisition without any assumed effect upon a person's behavior. The word "training" is usually used in such a way as to connote a behavior which is learned. For some reason, though, training is often viewed as a lower level of instruction, though it is often far more practical. At any rate, [ObeyGC²](#) is about helping people change their lives for the better and become involved in helping others change their lives for the better. In other words, it is a training of practitioner-trainers in areas which will improve lives both

spiritually and physically. It is not interested in creating ivory tower theories or theorists, but in changing lives.

Rom 6:11-14

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Titus 2:11-15a

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. 15 These, then, are the things you should teach.

Titus 3:14

14 Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

1 Peter 3:1-2

3:1 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

2 Cor 5:17-18

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Oral-friendly

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is oral-friendly.

What do I mean by oral-friendly? I mean that it is appropriate for oral-preference learners. It turns out that most people in the world are oral-preference learners. This includes all people who are illiterate or functionally illiterate as well as many other people. Among the least, the last and the lost, people who suffer the most from spiritual darkness, abuse, poverty, illness, and ignorance, the overwhelming majority are oral-preference learners. Such people do not learn effectively from structured arguments, outlines, and so on. They learn most effectively from demonstrations and

from stories. This is a huge issue which has only hit the mainstream in the Christian world in the past few years. If you are not familiar with this issue, you are in the majority. I'd like to recommend a couple of websites for you to browse in order to begin to familiarize yourself with issues related to orality. The best place to start is www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com. A good follow-up site is www.oralbible.com. If we want to help most people then we need to accommodate ourselves to them and that includes equipping them in the manner they can best learn in.

1 Cor 9:19-23

19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Love-motivated

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is love-motivated.

Motive counts. Love is the motive God looks for. Love is demonstrated by obedience. Our "good works" from any other heart is worthless. Isaiah 64:6a says, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." Doing the right thing for the wrong reason or out of a heart not submitted to God is not doing any good. Obviously, every one of us has a mix of motives and none of us truly knows our own hearts completely. God is willing to continue to work in us to mature us and overlooks less than stellar motives just as He overlooks other sins, as long as our heart is submitted to Him. If we want to please Him, we need to check our hearts and commit ourselves anew to doing His will.

Matt 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

1 Cor 13:1-7

13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but

have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Prioritize the Least/Last/Lost

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work prioritizes the least, the last and the lost.

Throughout the Old Testament God made it very clear through the Law and the Prophets that He has a special concern for those who are weak and suffering. There is a refrain of commands to care for orphans, widows, the destitute, the mistreated, foreigners, the helpless. There is also a refrain of concern for the "nations" or "Gentiles." The idea behind this word both in the New and Old Testaments is that of ethnolinguistic people groups. From the call of Abraham in Genesis 12 straight through to Revelation 5 and 7, God communicates a deep concern that **ALL** people groups come to know Him and serve Him. Guess what? God still cares for the weak and suffering. God also still wants people from **EVERY** people group to come to know Him and serve Him. Unfortunately there are more weak and suffering people than ever. In fact, there will always be weak and suffering people until Jesus returns; as Jesus noted in John 12:8a, "You will always have the poor among you." We know, however, that isn't the case regarding the people groups. All of them will hear before Jesus returns. In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." [ObeyGC²](#) intends to make sure there are no people groups without an ongoing witness. This is one its priority goals.

Luke 14:12-14

12 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Rev 5:9b-10

"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.

10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Effective

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is effective.

I don't know what your perception of God is, but believe it or not, He cares about return on investment (ROI). This is somewhat difficult to comprehend sometimes because He seems to make some strange decisions such as entrusting His work on earth to His followers instead of simply doing it Himself. But I digress...

Whether it is the parable of the talents or the parable of the sower and the seed or another of Jesus' teachings, He repeatedly makes it clear that He is looking for results and reproductivity at the end of the day. Of course, faithfulness and obedience are the bottom line. There is some truth to the old saying, "Evangelism is sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results up to God." On the other hand, God gave us brains and creativity and abilities and wisdom for a purpose. He wants us to use them or rather to invest them for maximum benefit for His Kingdom. That was the whole point of the parable of the talents. God wants fruit in our lives and from our ministries.

There are several ways we can increase our fruit (besides the obvious ones of maximizing all the abilities God has given us and all the abilities we can recruit or borrow from others). We can remain in His Word and have His Word in us. We can remain in Him and have His Spirit in us. We can submit to His discipline. We can pray. Jesus summed all this up beautifully in John 15.

John 15:1-8

15:1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

Local Ownership

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work have local ownership.

This is important in order that the work might have continuity, sustainability, and the capacity for scalability and reproductivity. Local people in every place need to "buy in" if the work is going to continue, grow and expand. Local resources must be maximized and developed. No project is going to prosper in the long term which depends on outside resources, whether it is people, money, or anything else.

This means that local people need to be involved from the beginning of the process. They need to be involved in the research phase, the planning phase, and the execution phase. Not just involved, but leading or at least co-leading. The church, if it exists, needs to be a key player from the beginning. If it doesn't exist, planting a church should be one of the early goals. [Community leaders](#) in general should be involved and consulted (on the non-"spiritual" aspects) whether or not they are Christians.

Titus 1:5

5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

Rom 13:1-5

13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

Titus 3:1-2

3:1 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, 2 to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

Transferable

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is transferable.

This implies that work should be simple, appropriate and sticky. I discussed the concept of simplicity in the entry on [viralocity](#) and gave an example of appropriateness in the entry on [oral-friendly](#). Appropriateness can also deal with issues of language, education level, income level, socioeconomic factors, ethnolinguistic factors and so on. The question is whether or not work is able to be replicated in a natural fashion.

Stickiness refers to the idea of being memorable and, in a sense, life-changing. Someone once said something like this: "The human mind, once it encounters a new idea can never be the same as it was before." The degree to which this is true for an idea is related to its stickiness. Stickiness also is determined by the "purple cow" effect, that is, how notable and novel something is. The Gospel of the Kingdom is sticky.

Simplicity and appropriateness determine *if* something is transferable. Stickiness relates more to *whether* something is transferred or not.

1 Cor 1:18-25

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

Do No Harm

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work does no harm.

The Hippocratic Oath refers to the oath taken by medical doctors and one of the key phrases is that they will "do no harm" in their medical service. It dates back to the Greek Hippocrates. Just as that oath is a cornerstone of medical ethics, we should have a similar attitude in our ministry for the Kingdom. Unfortunately, much harm has been done in the name of the Kingdom which has crippled and disabled and demotivated the very people who were intended to be helped. Often this is in terms of creating dependency or at least an attitude of helplessness among people who are being served. Dependency is a huge topic. One of my favorite writers on the subject, Glen Schwarz, has a website that is a great place to acquaint yourself with the basics of the topic. You can access a list of articles on that website at <http://www.wmausa.org/98600.ihtml>. Much of the plight of sub-Saharan Africa today can be largely attributed to poorly conceived efforts to help there. That happens to be where Glen lived and served for a number of years so he has seen this problem up close. The greatest tragedy of dependency is that it creates a pattern of looking out for help rather than up (to God) and inwardly to see how to use what God has already given.

Isa 31:1
Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help,
who rely on horses,
who trust in the multitude of their chariots
and in the great strength of their horsemen,
but do not look to the Holy One of Israel,
or seek help from the LORD.

Listen and Learn Before Acting

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that one should listen and learn before acting.

This is not only a principle in good missiology, but a good principle for life in general as well. First, we will be better received if we do this. We should always go as learners before training others. This is definitely not an issue of becoming a subject matter expert on something. Training is all about taking someone from where they are to where you want them to be in knowledge, attitude and ability. Being a subject matter expert in some field only enables you to know where you want to get someone to. It does not equip you to know where you are taking them from. That requires *learning from them*. It requires *relationship*. Your training or serving cannot be appropriate without this process.

James 1:19

19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

1 Thess 2:6b-8

As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, ⁷ but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸ We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

Do and Train

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that people should both do ministry and train others to do it.

This means to live it as well as speak it. Practice it and pass it on. Apply it and not simply theorize about it. There is a name for people who only teach others without having experienced something themselves: hypocrite. Many people have heard the old saying, "Those who can't do, teach. Those who can't teach, administrate." Unfortunately, this saying probably brings specific people to mind for each of us. That is not God's intention, however. God wants us all to be learners and doers and trainers of others. We can learn from anyone. There is no truly great person who is too proud

to learn from others. Everyone has things they are good at and areas of weakness or ignorance. God designed us in this way so we could help one another and learn from one another. Humility really is the key to growth.

Also, God is a wise investor. He gives more insight to those who pass on the insights He's given them. He reveals more of Himself to those who reveal Him to others. He gives more to those who give away what He has given them. This principle is clearly taught in the parable of the talents and is repeated in one way or another throughout Scripture. For example, Luke 12:48 "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." Or Matthew 10:8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." Or 2 Timothy 2:2 "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." Or Matthew 28:19-20a "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." You get the idea...

Matt 5:17-19

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Ex 18:20

20 Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.

Ezra 7:9b-10

The good hand of his God was upon him.

10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel. (NAS)

Presence Before Projects

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that presence should precede projects.

This was the pattern of Jesus' ministry. This was the pattern of Paul's ministry. The presence does not have to be of you personally, but it should be of someone personally if we are talking about discipling someone and not merely announcing the Good News to them. The same principle applies for other forms of ministry besides the "spiritual"

forms. In any sort of ministry it is next to impossible to equip people to help themselves and others without a relational presence. First people need to learn how to use what God has given them more effectively. Then they need to learn how to increase their resources and abilities so they can continue to grow and develop. Then they need to learn how to help others do these things. Then and only then (in a development situation) is it the ideal time to consider applying outside resources into a problem. Any time prior to this is disempowering. (Of course these considerations do not apply in a rescue/relief situation, but we often use relief approaches when development approaches are called for. The difference is that a relief situation is a life-saving operation and generally is an acute rather than chronic one.)

Luke 22:24-27

24 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

1 Thess 1:4-7

4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

1 Thess 2:10-12

10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Team-based

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is team-based.

Have you ever noticed that Jesus always sent His disciples out in pairs? Have you noticed that all the missionary journeys recorded in the Bible were team affairs? Teamwork and cooperation seem to be at a premium throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Ask Moses about it. Jethro helped save him from a nervous breakdown with his advice on how to establish a ministry team. God designed the

church, His body, to function interdependently as well, which requires teamwork and cooperation if we are to accomplish what He intends for us. The wisest man in the world had a little to say about it as well in Ecclesiastes:

Eccl 4:9-12

9 Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their work:
10 If one falls down,
his friend can help him up.
But pity the man who falls
and has no one to help him up!
11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
12 Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

1 Cor 3:5-9

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe-as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

1 Cor 12:14-27

14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Respects the Church

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work always respects the church.

This not only applies to the universal Church with a capital "C" but also to local congregations. The church is the bride of Christ. If we love Christ we need to respect and love and honor His bride. One doesn't come without the other. We can't love the Head without loving the body. They are one (or will be), just as the Father and the Son are one. (Jesus said that, by the way, not me.) In a practical way this means that the local church, if it exists, should be included and involved both in the planning and leading and doing of the work. In their community they are the God-ordained representatives of the Kingdom. If they don't have a vision for the work, do what you can to help increase their vision. If their approach is all "wrong" and not [ObeyGC²](#)-like then do what you can to help them grow into [ObeyGC²](#)-ness. If only a small part of the church is interested or even spiritually alive then do what you can to help the entire body understand their calling and fulfill it. Of course, the path of planting new churches is *always* a good one, but involve existing churches in the process if you can...a local parent is always better than a distant one. God honors the church. God will exalt His church and grant her authority in His Kingdom. Let's get started working with Him on it right now!

Eph 5:23-28

Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Col 1:18

18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Involves Every Member

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work involves every member.

That is, every member of the church. This is for practical as well as theological reasons. Practically speaking, "Many hands make light work." One of the major reasons the giants of spiritual lostness, self-centered leadership, poverty, illness and ignorance are so large and so widespread and so severe is that in many respects only "professionals" have been engaged in battling them. Most ordinary people are not

involved in dealing with medical issues because they view that as the realm of medical professionals. Most education issues are left to the educational professionals. Most church-planting is left to religious professionals, and so on. There is not a good reason for this. There are basic but important contributions which can and should be made by ordinary people with basic equipping in all these areas. If more people were making such contributions then the professionals could have a significant amount of their time and resources freed up to deal with the more advanced issues that do require professional intervention. Two billion people claim to be Christians. What if all of these were regularly using their discretionary time to minister in simple ways to battle these evil giants?

God has made it clear that as His family, His body, His bride, His followers, we are to be involved in meeting needs in these various areas. Jesus spent His time doing that. He taught His disciples to do that. The Bible tells us to do that. The Holy Spirit guides us to do that. There are a few fringe theologians who believe that Jesus' commands to His disciples, such as the Great Commission, were only given to the Twelve. If that is the case then we are "off the hook" so to speak. Unfortunately for those of us who are lazy, those people are regarded as crazy by most of the body of Christ and that thought would have been considered ludicrous throughout church history. The fact of the matter is that God intends for us all to be engaged in service for the Kingdom.

Eph 2:10

10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Transformational

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work is transformational.

This is related to the idea that work is [wholistic](#) but it goes beyond that. The wholism aspect is that all work has a spiritual aspect which transforms people.

Transformational, however also brings in the idea of "systems thinking" and the idea of being developmental. Systems thinking means we view situations in terms of the entire environment rather than viewing people as somehow separate from the environment or community in which they find themselves. Developmental thinking causes us to think of the process of helping people grow in their capacity to care for themselves and assist others. The result of taking a transformational approach is that we help people make changes that last and that are mutually reinforcing. We do not merely view persons wholistically but we view communities and environments and sometimes even nations wholistically as we respond to areas of need.

The bottom line is that God is concerned about a whole range of issues and of righting systemic wrongs. He wants us to be concerned as well and to act accordingly. He wants us to do so wholistically and developmentally.

Jonah 4:10-11

10 But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

Ex 3:7-8

7 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

1 Cor 9:9-10

9 For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? 10 Surely he says this for us, doesn't he?

Respects Local Community Leaders

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work respects local community leaders.

This makes good sense from a practical perspective as well as simply being the right thing to do. Since [ObeyGC²](#) work aims to be [transformational](#), it is concerned with the entire community environment. Local community leaders play a major role in shaping the local environment. Generally, the more they can "buy in" to work and the more [community-based](#) the work is, the better chance it has to continue and prosper over the long haul.

Respecting the local community leaders also sets a good example for local believers and provides a good witness for those who are not yet believers. Clearly God wants us to respect our leaders and we can best represent Him when we model that.

Rom 13:1-7

13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Exit Strategy (if not in home community)

One of the [ObeyGC² values](#) is that work has an exit strategy if it is not in one's home community.

This is essential in order to avoid dependency. I've discussed [dependency resources](#) in another entry, but I wanted to mention another book on the subject. Steve Saint, son of missionary martyr Nate Saint, has written a book called "The Great Omission" which describes dependency in a fresh way. An exit strategy touches on many of the other values I've discussed. It probably most directly relates to [reproducing](#), [scaling](#), [community-based](#), [viralocity](#), [training \(not teaching\)](#), [local ownership](#), [do no harm](#), and [transformational](#). The point is that work is not going to be as empowering or developmental as it needs to be if someone does not phase themselves out of the work and phase in local leadership and manpower. This process should begin from day one and be [intentional](#).

The training cycle summarizes this process: model, assist, watch and leave. At first you will do something or train something that is new. You are modeling. Then you will help a local person do or train that new thing. This is assisting. Then you will watch as they do it on their own and be available as a consultant. This is watching. Once they have demonstrated the ability to repeat these three stages in the next generation of learners, you leave. I like to compare this to teaching someone to ride a bicycle. The first step is the person seeing someone ride a bicycle (model). The next is holding the bicycle (assisting) while they pedal. The next step is watching them try and often fail and get back on and try again. When they have the skill learned and know the rules of the road, the trainer leaves. The learner can then help someone else learn to ride. The leaving is important! If my parents had to watch me every time I rode my bike, I wouldn't get to ride too often. (I'm in my 40's!)

Paul clearly used this pattern in his missionary activity, but that's a bit long to look into in a brief blog entry. These first verses are excerpts of his address to the leaders of the church he planted at Ephesus and give a glimpse into these stages.

Acts 20:25, 28, 32, 35

25 Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.

...

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his

own blood.

...

32 Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

...

35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

2 Tim 1:13

13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

1 Cor 11:1-2

11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.
