

# LENT DEVOTION

Austin Christian Fellowship of India (ACFI)

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As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one’ (Romans 3:10). As we know, Righteousness ‘is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith’ (Philippians 3:9). That is when one has the right standing with God. That is the beginning of righteousness in a person. But that is not the end of it. The growth in righteousness begins then on. “For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous” (Romans 2:13). While ‘faith’ is the vehicle through which one is made righteous, ‘obedience’ is the vehicle through which a believer ‘grows’ in righteousness. It is the obedience to the unchanging ‘standards’ of God as revealed in His Word in view.

Obedience is not a matter of convenience and comfort but commitment. The Lord said to Joshua, “Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:7—8). A person does not become righteous by obeying a set of rules and regulation but it is the other way round. Obedience to the set of rules comes after he or she is made righteous in God. The believer doesn’t have to but want to obey the standards set by God. The obedience does not come out of compulsion but out of the desire to please God in response to what God has done in a believer's life. Obedience becomes an act of love toward God.

To put it simply, the “Book of the Law” for us is Scripture. The principles and precepts provided in the Scripture sets a higher standard to the believer than the mere moral and ethical values of a self-righteous person. For example, “Do not commit adultery” (Matthew 5:27 and Exodus 20:14) is not only a part of the Mosaic Law but also the law set up by the self-righteous people. But Jesus sets a higher standard to the above law and said: “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). The same is true of 'forgiveness' which is not given just one time but numerous times to the person who offends you! It is doing good, praying, and blessing those who do injustice to you. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). It is to this higher standard of moral and ethical law a believer commits and obeys. Obedience for a believer is not an obligation but a privilege.

