

~ 1st Obstacle: Submitting Our Will ~

I. 1st Obstacle – Submitting to man’s will

- Two types of Submission

- A) Willing
- B) Unwilling

- Both are effective to get the job done. However, unwilling has negative consequences.

A) Unwilling Submission “Giving to Pressure”

- Attained by Force

B) Willing Submission “Seeking Relief”

- Attained by Free Choice

Just like our horses, there are 2 ways that we submit our will to God. There is willing and there is unwilling. Willing means that we gladly submit our will and would have it no other way. Unwilling means that we submit our will because we know it is the right thing to do, and we know that if we don’t, we will regret it. However, deep down the unwilling individuals would rather be somewhere else, doing something different. Martin Black says, “There is a difference between giving to pressure and seeking relief.” Although they are totally different, from a distance they may look the same. We may get by for a time, but a horse has trouble operating through unwilling submission. There is always a chance that they will rebel against our will, and follow their own will.

God has made 2 covenants with His people. One takes on the form of willing submission and the other takes on the form of unwilling submission. These 2 forms of submission are known as the “Old Covenant” and the “New Covenant” in the Bible. Abraham was the father of God’s children, and through his seed started a covenant between man and God. God told Abraham, **“I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you” (Genesis 17:7).** **“My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant” (Genesis 17:13-14).** The first covenant dealt with the flesh. The covenant was marked by the flesh and upheld through the flesh. It was through this covenant that the law came.

The law consisted of Commandments from God and rules for holy living. This law was given to Moses, and his people were to follow it “religiously.” It was sin that kept God’s people from God, after the fall of man, the first covenant was an attempt to keep God’s children from sin through the law.

However, the first covenant could not be upheld through the flesh, through the will power of man. **“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Romans 7:5 KJV).** The law was an attempt to bring man into righteousness and into unity with God. However, it only brought more sin and

death. There needed to be another way to keep God's children from sin, and allow fellowship with Him. This new way came through Jesus Christ, and His Spirit living within us. **"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature (*flesh*) but according to the Spirit"** (Romans 8:1-4).

This is the New Covenant: **"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more. By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear"** (Hebrews 8:10-13).

There are 3 parts to the New Covenant. 1) His laws will be in our mind and heart; 2) We will not need to be taught by man, for all shall know God; and 3) God will no longer remember our sin.

The "New Covenant" is life in the Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ living inside us. **"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"** (Romans 8:9 KJV). By receiving the Spirit of Christ we become sons of God. We become heirs to the promises of the Old Covenant, but we are not under the law of the Old Covenant.

"For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by the promise" (Galatians 4:22-23 KJV). What is the promise? **"For as many are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"** (Romans 8:14 KJV). And if we are sons of God then we are joint heirs with Christ. **"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together"** (Romans 8:16-17 KJV).

If we are the sons of God and joint heirs with Christ, then we are entitled to a birthright, our inheritance. **"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory"** (Ephesians 1:13-14).

This is the New Covenant, life in the Spirit. We are no longer under the bondage of the law, the Old Covenant, **". . .(for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God"** (Hebrews 7:19). Through Christ living inside us, He has the

ability to change our unwilling submission into willing submission. However, just like our horses we have to make a decision as to which law we will fall under. We are the sons of God and have the right to an inheritance, but we still have to make a choice to go and receive it. Unwilling submission in some ways appears easier. It is often easier to fall into our flesh. However, in the long run it requires much more work, and perfection is never attainable. Willing submission can take longer to learn, to learn to operate in the Spirit. However, in the long run we will live the life God intended, living in the perfect will of God.

Under the “Old Covenant” we are slaves to sin. However, under the “New Covenant” we have life through Christ. In Tom Dorrance’s book, Tom’s students tell what they have learned from Tom. One student quoted Tom saying, “You need to be the horse’s master, but he is not the slave, rather your willing partner.” It is a choice we make with our horse and it is a choice we make with God, whether we will be a slave or a partner. Slaves run the risk of rebellion into disobedience. But partners, although they may mess up, want nothing more than to please their companion. Through the New Covenant we are no longer a slave, but a willing partner. It is through the New Covenant that man and God may become one through Christ: True Unity, between man and God.