

“The Righteous Shall Live by Faith”

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Galatians 3:1–14 (ESV)

¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”

⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.¹

Today we’re going to talk a bit about blessings and curses. We understand blessings. A lot of people say they are blessed. Some people say a blessing for the meal they are about to eat. Some men ask for a father’s blessing in order to marry his daughter.

However, not a lot of people talk about curses. We may think of cursing in terms of swearing. We may think someone is cursed if they don’t get what they want. Some Red Sox fans talked about the “Curse of the Bambino,” because after Babe Ruth, the “Bambino,” was sold to the Yankees, the Red Sox didn’t win a World Series until 2004.

But what do these words really mean? To bless someone is “to confer prosperity or happiness upon” or “to invoke divine care for” someone.² Who doesn’t want to be happy, to have prosperity, and to receive care from God? I think we understand and desire blessing.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version.

² *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

A curse is the opposite of a blessing. To curse is “to bring great evil upon” or “to call upon divine or supernatural power to send injury upon” someone.³ To curse someone is to wish that person was anything but happy and prosperous. To curse someone is to wish him or her harm.

The concept of blessings and curses is an important concept in the Bible. When God created the world, he blessed the animals (Gen. 1:22) and then he blessed the people he had made (Gen. 1:28; 5:2; 9:1). Everything was good in the beginning, and God wanted his creation to prosper. He wanted his people to be happy.

Yet when sin entered the world, God cursed his creation. He cursed the serpent, who is Satan (Gen. 3:14), and he cursed the ground (Gen. 3:17). He also cursed Cain, the first murderer (Gen. 4:11). That may sound very harsh, but we must remember that sin is a very evil thing. God was right to curse people and to curse the world because of sin. The curse that God has put on the world leads to a hard life that ends in death, and death is the wages for our sin (Rom. 6:23).

This theme continues through the Bible. After the Flood, God blessed Noah and his sons (Gen. 9:1), but he also cursed Canaan, a descendant of Noah (Gen. 9:25). God promised he would bless Abraham and make him a blessing. In fact, all the families of the world would be blessed through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; also Gen. 18:18; 22:17-18). And God blessed Abraham’s descendants (Gen. 26:1-4, 12; 28:3-4; 35:9-11).

Eventually, God brought Abraham’s descendants, the Israelites, into the Promised Land. He made a covenant with them. If they obeyed his commandments, they would be his treasured possession and a kingdom of priests and a royal nation (Exod. 19:5-6). If they obeyed, they would be blessed. God would dwell with them and he would be there God, and they would be his people (Lev. 26:11-12).⁴ God would give them prosperity and he would defeat their enemies (Deut. 28:1-8, 11-12). If they disobeyed, they would be cursed with famine and destruction. Their enemies would come into the land and kill them and enslave them.⁵ When Israelites disobeyed, they would be “cut off” from God’s people.

All of this may seem very foreign to people today. The concept of blessings and curses may seem to be old-fashioned or ancient. But people today are still “cut off” for various reasons. If you make a mistake at work, you can be “cut off.” If you do something wrong in a

³ Ibid.

⁴ Covenant blessings are described in Leviticus 26:3-13 and Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

⁵ Covenant curses are described in Leviticus 26:14-39 and Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

relationship, you can be “cut off.” People are “cut off” from jobs or employment today if they hold the so-called “wrong” beliefs regarding controversial topics. For example, if you’re a microbiologist teaching at a university, you may be denied tenure if you want to teach both neo-Darwinian evolution and Intelligent Design theory. We have seen people “cut off” for their views on marriage (Brandon Eich, Kelvin Cochran).

On the other hand, if you perform well in your job, or if you hold the right political beliefs, you may be “blessed” by your employer or by society. People can be blessed or cursed because of all kinds of issues, including work performance, looks, beliefs, political affiliation, and much more.

The key questions we want to ask are, How can we be blessed by God? How can we receive divine care and favor? How can we be right with God? How can we avoid being “cut off” from him? To put it in simple terms, how can we live with him forever and avoid being cursed with condemnation?

To answer these questions, we’ll look at Galatians 3:1-14. In this passage, Paul tells us how we can’t receive God’s blessing (through obedience to the law), how we can receive God’s blessing (through faith), and how we can avoid receiving a curse from God.

Let’s first look at verses 1-6:

¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— ⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

Paul begins by calling the Galatians foolish. Why? Because apparently they’ve come under the spell of false teachers who have led them to believe that they must obey the Mosaic law of the Old Testament in order to be Christians. Perhaps he says “bewitched” to imply that these false teachers are under the influence of an evil power. In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul talks about “false apostles” and then says that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (see vv. 13-14). The point is that false teaching can seem good, but it is evil.

Paul then asks five rhetorical questions. He's not asking these questions to get answers. He's asking them to make a point.

Paul says that Jesus was “publicly portrayed as crucified” before their eyes. They didn't see Jesus crucified—Paul planted churches in Galatia roughly fifteen years after Jesus died. And they certainly didn't have video then. Paul is talking about his preaching. He told them about Jesus' death on the cross. Why then are they fooled into thinking they need to add to Jesus' sacrificial death?

Then he asks if they received the Holy Spirit by obeying the law or through responding to the gospel message in faith.⁶ The Holy Spirit comes to Christians at the time they believe.⁷ He is the third person of the Trinity, who empowers the Christian life from the very beginning. Of course, the Holy Spirit did not come to them because they obeyed the law. The Holy Spirit came because of God's grace. He is not a gift that can be earned. What's ironic is that when people become Christians, when they receive the Spirit, they do start to obey God. Whenever you see the word “hear” in the Bible, it implies obedience, not just hearing something. But the motivation to obey comes out of gratitude. Obedience shouldn't be motivated by trying to earn salvation.

Then Paul asks, in verse 3, Since your life as a Christian began by the Spirit, will it be completed by the flesh? The “flesh” refers to human effort apart from the Holy Spirit. He's asking if they will become mature Christians through obedience to the law, or through reliance upon the Spirit. Paul's answer is obviously the latter: only relying on the Spirit, through faith, and resting on the grace of God will lead to maturity. He who began a good work in us will bring it to completion (Phil. 1:6).

Paul then refers to their suffering—was it in vain? Since they had become Christians, they faced opposition. Now they seem to be turning back against the gospel because of these false teachers. If they did so, Paul's work would be in vain. Turning their backs on the Spirit and God's grace would show that they didn't understand Paul's gospel message in the first place.

In verse 5, he asks if God gives the Spirit and works miracles because of their “works of the law,” their trying to do all that the Mosaic law told them to do, or because of their hearing with faith. Again, the answer is obvious. God gives the Spirit and performs miracles because he

⁶ See Rom. 10:14-17.

⁷ See 2 Cor. 1:22 and Eph. 1:13-14.

decides to, and this comes when people respond in faith, not when they try to earn God's favor through obedience.

You may wonder at this point: isn't obedience a good thing? Shouldn't we obey God? Yes, we should. It's good and right to obey. But what matters is why we're obeying. What is your motivation for doing anything? Is it to earn something? Or is it because you trust and love God, and because you are thankful for what he's done for you? In Romans 9:30-32, Paul writes,

³⁰What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. ³²Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works.

Not all Israel obeyed because they were trying to earn salvation. The great example of faith, Abraham, did not obey God because he was trying to earn something. How do we know this? Before Abraham performed his greatest acts of obedience, he "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness" (Gal. 3:5; Gen. 15:6).

When God called Abraham, he was 75 years old. Abraham didn't have any children, yet God told him that he would have many descendants. When Abraham wondered how this could be, God told him, "your very own son shall be your heir" (Gen. 15:4). And then, this is what we read in Genesis 15:5-6:

⁵And he [God] brought him [Abraham] outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Abraham trusted that God could do the impossible. God could give an old man and his wife, who were far beyond the age of childbearing, a son. The passage doesn't say it, but I think that when Abraham saw the stars in the sky, he realized that the God who made the stars could give make him the father of a multitude.

It was only after that point that God made a covenant with Abraham. And Abraham obeyed God. He circumcised himself at age 99, which is no small act of obedience.⁸ And after his promised son, Isaac, was born, he was prepared to sacrifice him.⁹ He did this because he

⁸ Genesis 17.

⁹ Genesis 22.

trusted that “God will provide” (Gen. 22:8). That’s what real faith looks like. It trusts that God can do the impossible. He can wipe out all of our sins. He can bless people who deserve curses. He can create life out of death. He can give hope where there is none.

So Abraham’s righteousness was based on his faith, his trust in God’s promises. And his being counted righteous—even though he was a flawed, sinful person like you and me—came before his great acts of obedience and before God made a covenant with him. In fact, Abraham came from a family of idolatrous people (Josh. 24:2). So our righteous standing in God’s eyes doesn’t come through our own performance, but in trusting God. Ultimately, our righteousness is based on our trusting in Jesus’ perfect righteousness. Like Abraham, we aren’t righteous on our own. And we’re not righteous because we trust in God, as if that were a righteous act. But if you have faith in Jesus, you are credited with his righteousness. It’s an alien righteousness, one that we’re clothed in, not based on our works.

Who are the offspring of Abraham? Who are all these descendants that God promised to him? Well, if you are a Christian, then you are a child of Abraham. As the song goes, “Father Abraham had many sons, many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you, so let’s just praise the Lord. Hallelujah!” That’s what Paul is getting at in the next few verses.

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”
⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

The false teachers who taught the Galatians that they had to become Jewish in order to become Christians probably believed they were the true children of Abraham. That attitude is seen by unbelieving Jews in the Gospels. When they came to John the Baptist, he called them a brood of vipers, which is another way of saying they were sons of the devil. He said, “Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham” (Luke 3:8). When Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Jesus, Jesus told him that he had to be born again—he had to receive the Holy Spirit—in order to become part of the kingdom of God (John 3:1-8). When the Pharisees told Jesus that they were sons of Abraham, he told them they were sons of the devil, because they were liars and had murderous thoughts (John 8:39-47). The true children of Abraham are not biological ones; they are the one people of God, people of faith.

Paul says that “the Scripture” preached the gospel to Abraham. That’s stunning in all kinds of ways. First of all, we tend to think of the gospel as only a New Testament reality. But Paul says the gospel was preached to Abraham, about two thousand years before the time of Jesus. It’s also stunning because Paul says “the Scripture” preached the gospel. He doesn’t say, “God preached the gospel.” That’s one of the times in the Bible when God and the Scripture are linked together so closely that they are inseparable. Scripture is God’s Word, and what Scripture does, God does.¹⁰

What Scripture does Paul have in mind? It’s hard to say. Perhaps he is thinking of the promises God made to Abraham. Promises such as these:

² . . . I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:2-3)

Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him (Gen. 18:18).¹¹

God’s plan was always to bless the nations, or the Gentiles, through Abraham. Those who have faith in God receive the blessing of God, along with Abraham. To be clear, since the time Jesus came, one must believe in Jesus in order to receive this blessing. When Paul mentions faith, he doesn’t mean some generic faith. He means trust in Jesus Christ, the kind of faith that transforms one’s life. It’s the kind of faith that leads someone to become more like Jesus. And the blessing is likely justification, the declaration by God that we are not guilty, and that we have the righteousness of Jesus credited to our account.

So far, Paul has made it clear that we can’t earn a blessing from God through obedience to the law. He has also made it clear that God’s blessing only comes through faith, just as it came to Abraham. Now we see why the law can’t earn that blessing, and why God doesn’t have to curse sinners who have faith. Let’s look at verses 10-14:

¹⁰ See also Romans 9:17, which cites Exodus 9:16. There, Paul says, “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’” Think about that: “the Scripture” says, “I have raised you up.” The “I,” of course, is God. Consider the reversal of this trend: when Jesus quotes Genesis 2:24, which is a bit of narrative written by Moses, he says, “Have you not read that he who created them . . . said” (Matt. 19:4-5). There, Jesus attributes the words of the Bible to the Creator.

¹¹ It’s also possible that Paul has Genesis 22:16-18 and 26:4-5 in mind.

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Paul says that all who rely on their doing the law are cursed. Why? Because anyone who does not do *all* the law is cursed. Paul basically says the same thing in Galatians 5:3: “I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.”¹² Here, in verse 10, he quotes Deuteronomy 27:26. Here is the logic of Paul’s argument:

- 1.) Those who do all the law will escape the curse.
- 2.) But no one obeys all the law.
- 3.) Therefore, all who depend on the law are cursed.

Paul knows that no human being—no one other than Jesus—can obey all the law. There are apparently 613 laws in the Old Testament law, and no one obeyed them all. We all fail at the most basic ones, like, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exod. 20:3) or, “You shall not covet” (Exod. 20:17), the first and the last of the Ten Commandments. We fail to obey commands such as, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5) and, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18). Therefore, we are all deserving of the curse.¹³

What is the curse? Douglas Moo puts it like this: “To be ‘under a curse’ is to be under God’s judgment for failure to live up to his covenant requirements.”¹⁴ We deserve judgment, which means we deserve death—eternal death. How can we escape the curse? We can only escape by being justified. But Paul says that justification can’t come by the law. Instead, “The righteous shall live by faith.” There, Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4. In that context, the prophet Habakkuk is complaining to God because of the wickedness in Judah during his day. God tells

¹² See also James 2:10: “For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.”

¹³ One might ask how the Mosaic law should affect Gentiles, since God covenanted with Israel, not all nations. Paul sometimes writes as though the law would condemn Jews and Gentiles, as in Rom. 6:14-15; 7:4. We can also observe that though the nations did not receive the law, the prophets often condemned them for their transgressions. For example, see Amos 1-2.

¹⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 201.

him that judgment will come through the Babylonians. Even though things looked bad in Habakkuk's day, righteous ones would live by their faith. They would find life by trusting in God.

In verse 12, Paul says the law is not of faith, and then he quotes Leviticus 18:5. It seems that he's saying that those who rely on their own obedience are not trusting in God. Instead, they are trusting in their own performance. Those who do the law will live, but the problem remains: We can't do the whole law. Leviticus 18:26-29 describes what will happen to those who don't obey:

²⁶ But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you ²⁷ (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), ²⁸ lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. ²⁹ For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people.

We all deserve to be cut off from God. But God did something amazing: he sent his Son to become a curse for us. In verse 13, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 21:23. Deuteronomy 21:22-23 says this:

²² “And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

If a man broke the law and received the death penalty, he could be hanged on a tree or a pole as an example. But he couldn't remain hanging over night because a hanged man is cursed by God, and this curse could spread to the entire land. This was written well before there was such a thing as crucifixion. Yet, later, Jews used this verse to refer to those who were crucified.¹⁵ Paul uses this passage to illustrate what Jesus did when he died on the “tree,” the cross. Jesus became the curse for us so that we don't have to be cursed. We deserve the death penalty, but Jesus died in our place. And Jesus wasn't simply cursed for our sake. He *became* a curse. That is very similar to what we find in 2 Corinthians 5:21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Jesus became sin and

¹⁵ Moo cites Qumran scrolls (11QT^a [11Q19] 64.7–12; 4QpNah [4Q169] frgs. 3–4, col. 1, lines 5–8) and Josephus (*Antiquities* 13.380) in *Galatians*, 223.

was treated as sin on the cross. In other words, God destroyed the sins of his people on the cross when Jesus was crucified. And when he was hanged on that cross, an accursed tree became a tree of life.¹⁶

Paul makes clear that all of this was anticipated in the Old Testament. The inclusion of Gentiles, the blessing of the nations, justification by faith alone, and even Jesus' death were prophesied in the Old Testament. Consider Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 describes what the suffering servant of Israel would do by dying for his people. He would be "pierced for our transgressions" and "crushed for our iniquities" (v. 5). Verse 11 says:

Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

And verse 8 says this:

By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that *he was cut off* out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?

Jesus was "cut off" from "the land of the living" so that we don't have to be. He was cursed on our behalf. He *became* a curse for us and received the penalty that we deserve.

Who receives this blessing? According to verse 14, it is those who are "in Christ Jesus." People who are united to Jesus are declared righteous. They are truly blessed. Those who are united to Christ have faith in him and they have the Holy Spirit, which was promised in the Old Testament.¹⁷ The Holy Spirit is the one who causes us to be born again into new creatures (John 3:5-8). He is the one who causes us to confess that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3). He is the one who produces righteous fruit within us.

This passage should cause us to praise God for his grace. We should praise him for the blessing that he gives to his people. We should praise God that Jesus became a curse so that we don't have to be cursed.

If you are here today and you are not a Christian, I hope that this message is clear to you. You cannot be reconciled to God and you cannot receive his blessing if you are trusting in your

¹⁶ Perhaps that is why the cross is referred to as a "tree" in Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; 1 Pet. 2:24.

¹⁷ See Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 36:22-32; Joel 2:28-32. This "promise" is referred to in Acts 1:4; 2:33, 39.

own performance. If you think you're a good person and deserve God's blessing, you need to understand this message. None of us are good. None of us deserve God's blessing. We deserve the curse.¹⁸ The only way to receive that blessing is to put your trust in Jesus. Confess to God that you have sinned against him. Confess that you can't save yourself. Confess that your only hope is Jesus. If you want to know more, please come see me.

If you are a Christian today, do you understand this message? Will you tell others about it? Also, are you continuing to trust not in your own obedience, but in Jesus alone? It's common for Christians to fall back into the idea that they are earning something through their good works.

I also want us to consider *why* we obey God. We ought to obey God. And there are many commandments in the New Testament for us to obey, but our motivation matters as much as our actions. Are we obeying to get something from God, or are we obeying because we love God?

To help us think about this, consider this story. It's attributed to the great preacher, Charles Spurgeon:

Once upon a time there was a gardener who grew an enormous carrot. He took it to his king and said, "My lord, this is the greatest carrot I've ever grown or ever will grow; therefore, I want to present it to you as a token of my love and respect for you." The king was touched and discerned the man's heart, so as he turned to go, the king said, "Wait! You are clearly a good steward of the earth. I own a plot of land right next to yours. I want to give it to you freely as a gift, so you can garden it all." The gardener was amazed and delighted and went home rejoicing. But there was a nobleman at the king's court who overheard all this, and he said, "My! If that is what you get for a carrot, what if you gave the king something better?" The next day the nobleman came before the king, and he was leading a handsome black stallion. He bowed low and said, "My lord, I breed horses, and this is the greatest horse I've ever bred or ever will; therefore, I want to present it to you as a token of my love and respect for you." But the king discerned his heart and said, "Thank you," and took the horse and simply dismissed him. The nobleman was perplexed so the king said, "Let me explain. That gardener was giving *me* the carrot, but you were giving *yourself* the horse."¹⁹

The first man gave to the king out of love. The second man gave to the king in order to earn something. Why do *we* give to the King? If we are giving to get something out of God, we're really just giving to ourselves. That's part of why the law doesn't work: if we don't obey out of faith and love and gratitude, we're just being selfish. And laws don't have the power to change our hearts.

¹⁸ Consider also 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed."

¹⁹ Timothy Keller, *Gospel in Life: Grace Changes Everything* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 17.

However, when we have faith, when we have the Holy Spirit, and when we see what Jesus has done for us, we can obey with the right motives. One old hymn put it this way:

To see the law by Christ fulfilled,
And hear His pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child,
And duty into choice.²⁰

When we realize the blessing we have in Christ, when we walk in faith as Abraham did, we will long to act like children who obey God because we want to, because we love him.

²⁰ William Cowper, "Love Constraining to Obedience."