

Spiritual Obedience Brings Physical Victory

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Obedience in our spiritual life is a form of spiritual warfare, because obedience creates an atmosphere that brings righteousness to dark places.

Intuitively we know this. But I want to break it down into practical actions that will make it a continual reality in our lives. The bottom line is, it's supernatural, it doesn't make logical sense here on earth. We have to move beyond the natural to even discuss the topic of spiritual warfare.

But we see this over and over in the Bible - people doing normal things with supernatural results; people following Yehovah's instructions over here, and some miraculous thing happening over there. Maybe the two are completely unrelated in the physical realm. They're only related in the spiritual realm. The supernatural is brought about when we're walking in obedience in our spiritual life.

I've seen this in my workplace. In one position I had, my job was beyond me. The things that needed to happen to make everything work had been wrong for so long, it took supernatural events beyond my control to change the trajectory of how things operated there. I realized it wasn't as much about what I did on the job that mattered as it was what I was doing in my spiritual life that affected the needed changes.

Here are five things I've found have the biggest impact on changing and improving the climate around us:

- Keeping the commandments
- Keeping myself holy
- Guarding my own righteousness
- Aligning with Yehovah's purposes
- Waiting on the Lord

Let's look at the first one:

Keeping the Commandments

When we pursue God's commands, the spiritual results are compounded beyond what we can imagine. Joshua is a great case in point that illustrates this concept.

Just after Moses finished reiterating all the commands to the Israelites, he appointed Joshua to take his place in leading the people into the Promised Land. Then Moses died, and the Lord began to guide Joshua as the leader of the Israelites. ([Deut. 31:1-18](#))

Joshua had been to Canaan and back. Remember, he was one of the ten spies 40 years prior to this. He knew the giants that lay ahead, he'd crossed the Jordan River before, he'd seen the walls of Jericho, he was aware of the kings, the armies, and the numerous battles that were required to possess the Land.

If I were Joshua, I'd have been asking God how to outsmart the Canaanites, how to train up the warriors, what strategies our enemies were going to use against us.

But what instruction does God give him? It's in [Joshua 1:6-8](#):

"Be strong, be bold; for you will cause this people to inherit the land I swore to their fathers I would give them. Only be strong and very bold in taking care to follow all the Torah which Moshe my servant

ordered you to follow; do not turn from it either to the right or to the left; then you will succeed wherever you go. Yes, keep this book of the Torah on your lips, and meditate on it day and night, so that you will take care to act according to everything written in it. Then your undertakings will prosper, and you will succeed.”

God instructs him to follow the Torah that Moses taught him, meditate on it day and night and act according to everything written in it. Then, God will take care of the rest – he'll make the Israelites prosper, he'll make sure they succeed.

How can meditating on the Torah win physical battles with real enemies and real weapons? This doesn't make sense with human logic. But this is how the spirit realm works – we follow his commandments, he brings the victory. He guides us, he protects us, he compounds our efforts, he brings his will to earth and all his promises to fruition. When we are following his commands, he has our full attention day and night, his word and Spirit guide our every move, and it keeps us in his will and in the path of his blessing. This happens all throughout the book of Joshua.

And the opposite is true as well. Look at [Joshua 5:6](#):

“The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. For the LORD had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.”

That's really straightforward. They didn't obey, so they couldn't enter the Promised Land.

In the natural, how is it that obeying instructions -- keeping the Sabbath, bringing offerings, not eating certain things, getting rid of idols, and all those things they learned in the wilderness -- how do those things get them into the Promised Land? Normally doing these things doesn't mean we conquer land. What does one have to do with the other?

It would be as if my father instructed me to clean out the car, change the oil in it on a regular basis, keep it filled with gas every week, and take a nice leisurely drive every Saturday. Would doing those things lead me to, say - getting a promotion on my job? Or maybe someone giving me a piece of property or a nice cushy house? No, this is not normal. This is not logical in the physical world.

So this promise of obeying and entering the Promised Land that we read so matter of factly, is completely supernatural. If you do these things over here, all of this over here will happen; and if you don't do that, this won't happen.

This isn't just punishment, or a threat that, “if you don't do this, I won't give you that.” That's part of it, but when we do not participate spiritually, when we don't obey the commandments, we quench the Spirit, we hinder the spiritual realm that brings about Yehovah's will.

Let's continue on to [Joshua 5:7-8](#):

⁷ *“So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. ⁸ And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed. ⁹ Then the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.’”*

We see that this second generation was circumcised before they went into the Promised Land. What does circumcision have to do with the land? Nothing...in the natural; it's a physical act of spiritual obedience.

But look what verse 9 tells us: "Today I have rolled off from you the reproach of Egypt." Some verses say "the stigma of Egypt" or "the disgrace of Egypt." It's the shame of being slaves. The stigma associated with their 400-year history in Egypt would have been as victims, oppressed, weak, inferior.

This circumcision brought about a change in their identity. After circumcision, they would now see themselves as conquerors, mighty, unstoppable and fearsome. Others would see them differently as well. In fact, others already feared them. Remember when the two scouts were sent to Jericho, Rahab tells them that great fear had fallen on the city because of them. ([Josh 2:8-11](#)).

But most importantly, Yehovah saw them differently. They were on the path to becoming holy, set apart and righteous. This circumcision was an act of obedience and devotion that sealed their identity in Yehovah's eyes. It had nothing to do with the physical act of war, but purely obedience. They had won the spiritual battle first, which then had direct implications on the physical battle.

How does that happen? It's supernatural. It's a physical act that releases something in the Spirit realm, which then impacts our efforts in the natural.

Building the Tabernacle

We see this same pattern in Exodus when Yehovah instructs the building of the tabernacle. He gives Moses very specific instructions for building the tabernacle. It starts with the specific articles that are required:

"The LORD said to Moses, ² 'Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. ³ These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; ⁴ blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ⁵ ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; ⁶ olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; ⁷ and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. ⁸ Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. ⁹ Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.'" [Exodus 25:1-9](#)

Then Yehovah goes on to give Moses the instructions for putting it all together. Then there's the [golden calf incident](#), and Moses goes up the mountain [a second time](#). Finally, 10 chapters later Moses gives the people the instructions, and they build the tabernacle. Again, these very specific instructions are repeated. Look at [Exodus 35:4-9](#):

"Moses said to the whole Israelite community, 'This is what the LORD has commanded: ⁵ From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering of gold, silver and bronze; ⁶ blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ⁷ ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; ⁸ olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; ⁹ and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece.'"

Fast forward to [Exodus 40](#). In verse 33 Moses finishes setting up the tabernacle according to the very specific instructions. And then we have verses 34-35:

"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

Wow! isn't that what we all want? The glory of the Lord filling OUR temple?

Well, let me ask you... What if the Israelites had brought green yarn instead of blue? Or lamb's wool instead of a ram's? Or olive wood instead of acacia? What do you think would've happened? Nothing. The glory of the Lord would not have filled the tabernacle. It would've just been a big beautiful structure in the wilderness. But not a place where Yehovah dwelt. Why? Because, "*This is the law of the temple: All the surrounding area on top of the mountain will be most holy. Such is the law of the temple.*" Ezekiel 43:12

The law of our temple is complete holiness. Complete obedience is the way we participate in making and keeping ourselves holy. Only our obedience brings Yehovah's presence to us and to situations around us. Only our obedience can release the heavenly reality on earth, what we call "supernatural". This is not to say that Yehovah cannot work without us, but if we want to participate with him, obedience is a prerequisite.

The yarn, the linen, the gold – none of it has any power. We can't cobble together whatever we want or even make the most beautiful creation we know how and expect Yehovah to dwell in it. In the account of building the tabernacle, it's only in obeying Yehovah's instruction that brings his power. And that's the way it is in our lives. With all the expertise, good ideas and skill we could bring to a situation, obeying Yehovah's instruction in our spiritual lives is what brings his will on earth as it is in heaven – beyond human logic. Wood and gems and animal skins do not bring Yehovah's presence, only when we do with them exactly what he asks.

Our obedience matters in the spiritual realm. It releases the power of spiritual authority on earth. This is why obedience is a form of spiritual warfare - because it affects the spiritual climate, which changes circumstances on earth.

What if we could live in that reality all the time? What if we could increase our participation in bringing his will to earth and have a greater impact in the impossible situations around us? What if we could open the spiritual realm to release supernatural results?

Keeping Ourselves Holy

Obedience to the commandments is one of the keys. Keeping the commandments also keep us holy unto Yehovah, set apart and sanctified for him. Yehovah dwells in holiness, so when we walk in holiness with him, it changes the spiritual climate.

Leviticus 11:44-45:

"I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground. I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy."

Leviticus 19:2: *"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.'*"

So How do we do this? How do we keep ourselves holy?

Look at Psalm 24:3-6:

"Who may go up to the mountain of ADONAI? Who can stand in his holy place? ⁴ Those with clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. ⁵ They will receive a blessing from ADONAI and justice from God, who saves them. ⁶ Such is the character of those who seek him, of Ya'akov, who seeks your face."

Let's ponder verse 4:

- “Clean hands” – everything we do is for good, not evil.
- “Pure hearts” – our motives are right and honorable in all we do.
- “Do not lift up his soul to an idol” – nothing comes before our relationship with God, we put our trust in him alone.
- “Or swear by what is false” – dishonesty is completely opposite of truth, and God is truth. We must be completely open and honest with Him and truthful in our dealings with others.

When these things are true, verse 3 and 5 describes our reward:

- “We will receive a blessing from Adonai and justice from God.” This means we will be in right relationship with Him and, as a result, walking in the path of his blessing.
- “who saves them.” The word “save” here is “Yeshua.”
- We are able to “go up to the mountain of Adonai.” This refers to coming into his presence.
- And “stand in his holy place.” The word “standing” here implies that he sees us as blameless. We are able to stand in his holy presence. Ephesians 1:4 tells us: “He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” (Did David know when he wrote Ps. 24 that God’s son, would save us and make us blameless before him? He uses this word “salvation” in all its forms over and over in his writings.)

Related to holiness is righteousness.

Slaves of Righteousness

Romans 6:13-22:

“Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!¹⁶ Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one 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 have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.¹⁸ You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.¹⁹ I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves 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 of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.”

Paul is telling us that doing what is right and being righteous lead to holiness. Here's the definition of righteousness: living by a divine moral law, free from guilt or sin, an absolute quality of moral standards, correct or moral behavior.

But righteousness is more than just doing what is right. Righteousness starts in the heart. Doing what is right is a result of your heart condition and character. It's our perspective, having our heart in the right place, so that we are responding to life with righteousness and Godly motives.

"I, the Lord, search the heart and examine the mind to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve."

So as it pertains to holiness, we are to set our hearts straight in every situation and by doing so over and over, we become more and more like Yeshua – devoted and set apart for doing what is right and in accordance with Yehovah's will.

Obedience to righteousness brings us into holiness, where his presence can live through us.

Let's look at the next key to bringing God's will to our situations.

Aligning with His Purposes

Do you ever feel like things just aren't going well in your life? They aren't all they could be. Or, maybe there are things that seem to be going the opposite direction than you hoped they would or thought they should. Maybe it's a certain situation, maybe it's this phase in your life, maybe it's something you've been waiting on that just never seems to happen.

And then there are situations in which you feel called to, but they don't fit your paradigm or expectations. Maybe it's overwhelming, daunting or confusing.

This is how I felt in a job I once held. When I was asked to take the job, I had known for a long time that I was going to be called to a new opportunity. Yehovah had showed me this in several ways. I thought it would be a new job in a new place, maybe an opportunity in ministry, maybe it would be something outside of my career, in addition to my job. But never did I imagine it would be the job I was being offered and "encouraged" to move into.

My first (and second) answer was, "No thank you. That's way beyond me. I don't know anything about doing the things involved in that role. It's complicated with multiple constituents to please and complex issues, let alone the long hours and sleepless nights. It's too much!"

But I had been warned that this new opportunity would be something difficult, and I knew this was it. I had to do it. I knew that Yehovah put me at that organization, in my position four years earlier and arranged the specific players around me in order to get me to this opportunity.

Well, on the third request, I decided to take the job, but just temporarily until they found someone else. But after several months, they couldn't find anyone else they wanted. So I agreed to continue in the job through the summer, then make a decision as to whether to stay in the role or go back to my previous job, which was easy and enjoyable.

Through the summer, I wanted so much to go back to my old, easy job, but I knew Yehovah had called me to this. So I was struggling with this decision all summer. "Am I in this job temporarily, or am I supposed to somehow keep this up?" Finally I began to look at it through Yehovah's eyes, and asking, "What do you want to do in this place?"

I wrote down what I thought his purposes were for bringing me to this situation. I found seven things that he was trying to do. He wanted to lift the employees out of the oppression they'd been under for many years. He wanted to change the climate, uproot and correct the dysfunctional environment, restore the morale of the staff, bless the organization and its employees and customers. His goals were bigger than just knowing how to do the technical aspects of the job. They were relational, eternal and spiritual.

He was asking me to be part of that. Just like with [Esther](#), if I didn't participate He would have brought someone else, but he brought me to this place for this purpose - His purposes. I didn't need an agenda or my own plan to make it happen, I just needed to obey. He had big plans that I could be part of, if I could just get on board and do what he asked.

It was when I realized Yehovah's purposes for the organization that I finally got on board and committed to joining him.

A Case in Point

Let's look at [Exodus 13:17-18](#):

"¹⁷ When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." ¹⁸ So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle."

This tells us that Yehovah led the people out of Egypt on a back road because of their fear. If they felt threatened, they might change their mind and go back to Egypt – even though they were “ready for battle” (some translations say “fully armed”). The inference isn’t that they could’ve defeated the Philistines, but that they wouldn’t even fight due to their fear.

But what if they had not been afraid? This implies that if they hadn’t been afraid, they could have taken the direct route, likely defeated the Philistines and possibly arrived at the Promised Land in days instead of years. But their fear was greater than their faith, and they had not yet committed to what Yehovah had ahead for them, despite all they had seen him do in order for them to leave Egypt.

This is exactly what I was doing - considering turning back to my old job because I was afraid, even though I had seen miracles already since I had taken the job temporarily. But here’s the key - once I committed to Yehovah’s plan and stopped waffling on whether to continue in the role or not, that’s when he could really begin using me to deal with the difficult issues. I didn’t have to travel by the back roads anymore.

I remember, it was just before the Day of Atonement that year that I finally committed to the stay in the job. Right after that, during the ten days before the Day of Atonement (called the 10 Days of Awe) we fired a 12-year employee, who had been disrupting a whole department for years. In another department, we hired a new manager, replacing one who had been spreading bad morale for years. As a result, we had two employees resign that had shared in that negative environment. And, three employees gathered together and came against me.

That was a difficult 10 days. If I had not already gotten off the fence and committed to what Yehovah was doing there, I would have gone back to my old job that week. But because I knew his purposes and had aligned my understanding with what he was trying to do there, he was then able to begin the uprooting and restoration that needed to take place.

Our alignment with his purposes and commitment to his plan enables us to participate in bringing his will in difficult situations.

If you’re looking to change a situation, seek him for his purposes within that situation and commit to participating with him. It may require some battles and hardships, that’s why he needs you fully committed in order to use you there.

Waiting on the Lord

So far we've discussed keeping the commandments, which includes keeping ourselves holy and guarding our righteousness. And, we've talked about aligning our thinking and actions according to his purposes.

But it's not all about doing. Obeying and following him assumes we're hearing the Spirit's leading. So I want to talk about an important practice for increasing our ability to hear the Spirit: Waiting on the Lord.

Isaiah 40:31: "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Psalm 37:9: "For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth."

Psalm 27:14: "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!"

Waiting on the Lord can take many forms. Sometimes it's praying, and then not acting until the Lord reveals something to you. It can mean putting your hope in the Lord, or to look expectantly, or seeking Him for an answer.

And there's another way. In Hebrew there's a term called "Lees Pog." It means to soak up.

It's just *being* with the Father in peace and quietness – no discussion required. It's not for the purpose of asking anything, telling anything, showing or proving anything; not even blessing, honoring or praising. No action is necessary, except to concentrate on hearing his Spirit within you.

I had started doing this several years ago. Then a couple of years later Rabbi Kirt Schneider from "[Discovering the Jewish Jesus](#)" did a teaching on this, which I had never heard before. He perfectly described what I had learned. I will share an excerpt from his teaching here.

Psalm 23:1b: "He makes me lie down in green pastures, beside still waters. He restores my soul."

Psalm 4:4: "Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still."

Sometimes we can be so busy trying to do something for God - reading books, going to Bible studies, volunteering, ministering - and don't spend enough time just sitting before Him and soaking in his presence.

Imagine you wanted to share something very personal or meaningful about yourself with someone. You wouldn't do it while they were in the middle of something else, or when they were talking with someone else, or even while they were doing a good deed, like visiting someone who's sick, or helping out on Shabbat. No, you'd wait until you had their full attention, a time when they weren't distracted with other things.

Remember Martha and Mary. Martha was busy serving, preparing Yeshua a meal. Mary was sitting at Yeshua's feet. What does Yeshua say? "Martha, you are worried and upset about many things,⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." ([Luke 10:41-42](#))

Mary sitting at Yeshua's feet is "lees pog." She wasn't trying to do anything, but only to give her full attention to Yeshua. Sitting at his feet, just being with him.

This is a place of receiving from the Lord. Most of us don't need to be better doers, we need to be better receivers.

With lees pog, we're asking him to impart more of himself to us, to increase our awareness of his spirit within us and our capacity to receive him. We desire to increase the ability to bring his presence to our lives and the lives of those around us. These are the times where he reveals more of himself to us.

John 1:12: *"To as many as receive Him, He gave the right to become children of God."*

Many think of "receiving him" as a one-time thing, but it's about receiving him every day, all day long, like the air we breathe. The greater our receiving as we rest in Him, the greater the power and outflow of the person of Yeshua will be manifest from our lives.

Have you seen one of those chocolate fountains for fondue? It twirls around and you dip your fruit into the fountain? In order for it to work, you pour the chocolate in the base. You turn it on, and a little auger turns in a spiral and brings the chocolate up to the top of the fountain. Then it spills over the top, then it spills over the second layer and the third layer, so that several people can stand around it together and dip their fruit.

What if you put all the melted chocolate in the base, but you never turn it on? The auger never brings the chocolate up to the top of the fountain. The chocolate is still in there, but no one else gets the benefit of it.

This is what happens when you're receiving from the Lord. Waiting on the Lord and receiving from him is how his presence and his spirit begin overflowing to others in our lives. We have to be cultivating our awareness of him and practice hearing that still, small voice within our spirit, so that his spirit overflows from within us to others.

John 15:5: "If you will abide in me, you'll bear much fruit." Well that doesn't make sense with our logic. How can we be sitting still here and bear fruit over there?

It's supernatural. This is how the spirit realm operates. That's what we need to focus on - the things of the spirit. That then brings a change in the natural.

Recap

In [1 Corinthians 15:46](#) Paul explains that the natural comes first, then the spiritual. That's what's going on here. When we obey the things Yehovah has commanded us here in the natural, it releases the spiritual power needed to supernaturally accomplish his will.

So, in order to be an instrument of Yehovah's will and live in the power of his Spirit, these are five things I recommend:

- Keep the commandments
- Keep yourself holy
- Guard your righteousness
- Align with Yehovah's purposes
- Wait on the Lord, soak in his Spirit