



## Doctrine 9: Obedient faith

*We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.*

### Big ideas

- **Obedience to God is our choice and God has given us freedom to love.**
- **We need to continue to trust and obey God throughout our life.**
- **We need to guard and nurture our relationship with God.**

“*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*”

*(John 15:4).*

Jesus' love is steadfast and will never fail. However, God has created us with the freedom to love and respond to him. This freedom to live by grace includes the freedom to turn away.

Like a healthy marriage, our relationship with God needs ongoing care, attention, trust and communication. This involves the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, service and worship with the body of Christ. These disciplines help us to continue to meet with God, hear his word and cooperate with the work of the Spirit.

There is regular encouragement in scripture to develop and nurture a life of obedient faith:

“*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching*”  
*(Hebrews 10:23–25).*

“*But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life*”  
*(Jude 20–21).*



God wants us to live holy and obedient lives. However, God knows our weaknesses and promises that:

“ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins*” (1 John 1:9).

If we get to a point where we don't even try to obey God, we have a problem. We must honestly ask ourselves whether our disobedience comes from a heart that has hardened towards God. Deliberate ongoing disobedience can result in loss of connection with Christ.

## Problem of pain

People can reject or drift away from God when they experience pain, disappointment, rejection or persecution. What can give us faith, hope and peace through the difficult times? Here are some ways the Bible talks about suffering:

- Jesus knows what pain and suffering are like (Hebrews 2:18)
- God is present with us in our pain as our comforter and refuge (Psalm 46:1)
- Christians can expect trouble in this world (John 16:33)
- Our character can be improved through suffering (Hebrews 12:7)
- In the new heaven and new earth, God will wipe every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:1–4)

## Putting belief into practice

*I will uphold the sanctity of marriage and of family life.*

*I will be true to the principles and practices of The Salvation Army, loyal to its leaders, and I will show the spirit of salvationism whether in times of popularity or persecution.*

There are values and behaviours the Bible teaches that our society will say are outdated, silly or foolish. Continued obedient faith means living by God's teachings even if you are out of step with popular views. This can be difficult in Australian culture and can lead to prison or death in other countries around the world.

## Discuss

- How is our relationship with God like a healthy marriage?
- What are values of the world that make it difficult to continue to trust and obey God?
- How can we help and support one another to continue to trust and obey and grow in our relationship with God?