

# “Give IT Up!”

## **Serving and Surrendering Myself To God**

This morning I want to continue with the idea of our theme for 2006 which is – “Give It Up”. How many of us this morning understand that there is an “IT” within all of us. It may be sin, it may be control, it may be an attitude, it may be an object, it may be an experience – whatever IT may be, we all know that there is something that tends to frequently pop it way back into our lives, that does all it can to cause us to question God, to question his sovereignty, to question if he truly does care, to take our eyes off of God and to distract us.

I remember that as my children were toddlers, there was always something that had their attention. And once they saw that one thing, it didn't matter what you wanted them to do, they were going after it. Even with the constant “No's” they were locked on like a laser guided missile. As a parent we had to constantly redirect, remove the object so that it was distracting anymore, change the environment of the child, to use it as a training ground.

Although we may not be toddlers anymore, I think we can agree that there are things that we tend to lock on to that despite the “abort” signal that we receive from the Holy Spirit, we zero in like a missile and ignore or become distracted from God and his plan. Anyone here know what I mean? We have become more consumed with what we want as opposed to what is best for us.

This may be a struggle for us because of our lack of self-control, this may be a struggle for us because our faith isn't strong, this may be a struggle for us because we have a fallen sinful nature, but whatever it may be, God's wants to protect us, to guide us, to lead us into his future and plan, and he can't do it if we choose to ignore him.

If God doesn't have our attention, if he doesn't have our consideration, if he can't redirect us, then his process of transformation for our lives will be limited (not because he is conditional but) because he chooses to grant us a free will, and based on how we respond, that will ultimately decide the progression of our transformation.

It is in the issue of obedience that great men and women of God fall or stand. It is obedience that determines God's blessing or the natural consequences. Obedience is what moves mountains, and follows God into a promise of impact and influence on this world. So this morning, how I respond to God – my attention, my willingness to follow, my willingness to learn from him, my willingness to set every distraction aside – truly does show how important he is to me.

Paul is wanting to teach the church in Ephesus the importance of submission and honor in the Christian faith. Last week, he used the analogy of the Husband/Wife relationship and today we find that he moves to the Child/Parent relationship in **Ephesians 6:1-4**:

*1 Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord,\* for this is the right thing to do. 2 “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: 3 If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.” 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.*

## 1. Obey

That term obey here comes from the same word submit that Paul used in **Ephesians 5:21** where he said:

*21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Paul is trying to communicate that there is a change that must take place within all of us – that of being self-centered to being God-focused and others-serving. To get our eyes off from ourselves to putting them on those around us and God.

The difference between the word **submit** in verse 21 and the word obey here in Ephesians 6:1 however is the **idea of choosing to come alongside yet understanding that I have something to learn from you and therefore I voluntarily position myself under you guidance.**

Whether kids will admit it or not, they have a lot to learn from their parents. Whether or not we like it or not, we have a lot to learn from our spiritual parents (pastors and teachers) and ultimate Father God. One of the things I have learned as being a pastor is that the more I study and learn, the more I realize that there is so much more to learn. I am never done learning, so I position myself as a student to come and learn and follow people whom I feel God has put in my life.

Even at times as I read through the Scriptures, God with his still small voice will speak to me and I position myself under his teaching and under his direction because I know I have so much to learn from him.

As adults, I know that we know we have so much more to learn. I know that we need guidance and support and direction, yet until we are willing to become teachable and humble, ready to listen, then we will always run around in circles like a dog whose tail is nailed to the floor.

*Hebrews 12:9-11*

*9 Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?\**

*10 For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. 11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But*

*afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.*

*2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2*

*16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. 17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. Colossians 3:16-17*

*13 For the Lord's sake, respect all human authority—whether the king as head of state, 14 or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right. 15 It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. 16 For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. 17 Respect everyone, and love your Christian brothers and sisters. \* Fear God, and respect the king. 1 Peter 2:13-16*

*20 Wisdom shouts in the streets. She cries out in the public square. 21 She calls to the crowds along the main street, to those gathered in front of the city gate: 22 "How long, you simpletons, will you insist on being simpleminded? How long will you mockers relish your mocking? How long will you fools hate knowledge? 23*

*Come and listen to my counsel. I'll share my heart with you and make you wise. 24 "I called you so often, but you wouldn't come. I reached out to you, but you paid no attention. 25 You ignored my advice and rejected the correction I offered. 26 So I will laugh when you are in trouble! I will mock you when disaster overtakes you— 27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster engulfs you like a cyclone, and anguish and distress overwhelm you. Proverbs 1:20-27*

*20 My son, obey your father's commands, and don't neglect your mother's instruction.*

*21 Keep their words always in your heart. Tie them around your neck. 22 When you walk, their counsel will lead you. When you sleep, they will protect you. When you wake up, they will advise you. 23 For their command is a lamp and their instruction a light; their corrective discipline is the way to life. Proverbs 6:2-23*