

Testament of Devotion

Holy Obedience

1. Within the silences of the soul an eternal drama is ever being enacted... It is the drama of the lost sheep wandering in the wilderness, restless and lonely, feebly searching, while over the hills comes the Shepherd. For the Shepherd's heart is restless until the sheep are found and embraced. (page 25)
2. Meister Eckhart wrote: "There are plenty to follow our Lord half-way, but not the other half. They will give up possessions, friends, and honors, but it touches them too closely to disown themselves." It is just this astonishing life which is willing to follow the Divine the other half, sincerely...which intends complete obedience, without any reservations...But when such a commitment comes in a human life, God breaks through, miracles are wrought, world-renewing divine forces are released, history changes. (page 26)
3. There is nothing more important now than to have the human race endowed with just such committed lives...To this extraordinary life I call you...not as a lovely ideal...but as a serious, concrete program of life to be lived here and now...by you and by me...Religion as a dull habit is not that for which Jesus lived and died. (page 26-27)
4. The life that intends to be wholly obedient, wholly submissive, wholly listening, is astonishing in its completeness. Its joys are ravishing, its peace profound, its humility the deepest, its power world-shaking, its love enveloping, its simplicity that of a trusting child. (page 28)
5. Let us dare to venture together into the inner sanctuary of the soul, where God meets us in awful immediacy. (page 29)
6. In awful solemnity the Divine Presence is in all, exquisitely loving, infinitely patient, tenderly smiling...Gladly, urgently, promptly one leaps to do God's bidding, ready to run and not be weary and to walk and not faint. (pages 30-31)
7. Our interest ...is in the life of complete obedience to the Divine, not in amazing revelations of God's glory graciously granted only to some.. Listening and alert obedience remains as the core of a God-intoxicated life, as the abiding pattern of sober, work-a-day living. (page 32)
8. In contrast to the passive route to complete obedience most people must follow...the active way, wherein we must struggle...wherein the will must be subjected bit by bit...to the divine Will. (page 32)
9. **The first step** to obedience...is the flaming vision of the wonder of such a life, a vision which comes occasionally to us all through biographies of the saints, through the journals of Fox and early Friends, through...a flash of illumination or, in Fox's language, a great opening. (page 32-33)
10. **The second step** to holy obedience is this: Begin where you are. Obey now...live this present moment, this present hour...in utter submission and openness toward the Spirit. Listen outwardly to

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these words, but behind the scenes, in the deeper levels of your life where you are all alone with God...keep up a silent prayer, "Guide my thoughts where I dare not let them go...Thy will be done."
(page 33)

11. **The third step** in holy obedience is this: If you slip and stumble and forget God... and assert your old proud self, and rely upon your own clever wisdom, don't spend too much time in anguished regrets...but begin again, just where you are. (page 34)
12. **A fourth consideration** in holy obedience is this: Don't grit your teeth and clench your fists and say, "I will! I will!" Relax. Take hands off. Submit yourself to God. Learn to live in the passive voice...For "I will" spells not obedience. (page 34)
13. Humility...rests upon the disclosure of the consummate wonder of God, upon finding that only God counts, that all our own self-originated intentions are works of straw...For as God gives obedience so God graciously gives to us what measure of humility we will accept. (page 35-36)
14. But there is something about deepest humility which makes us bold...No longer do we hesitate and shuffle and apologize because we are weak, lowly creatures and the world is a pack of snarling wolves among whom we are sent as sheep by the Shepherd. (page 36-37)
15. Out of utter humility and self-forgetfulness comes the thunder of the prophets...Be not fooled by the world's power. Imposing institutions of war and imperialism and greed are wholly vulnerable for they, and we, are forever in the hands of God. (page 37)
16. Another fruit of holy obedience is entrance into suffering...we live in an epoch of tragic sorrows...and holy obedience must walk in this world, not aloof and preoccupied, but stained with sorrow's travail. (page 39-40)
17. The heart is stretched through suffering, and enlarged (so) that one may be prepared to enter into the anguish of others...By inner persuasions the Divine draws us to a few very definite tasks, *our* tasks, ...Then we see that nothing matters, and that everything matters, and that this my task matters for me and for (all). (page 41)
18. The last fruit of holy obedience is the simplicity of the trusting child...This amazing simplification comes when we "center down," when life is lived with singleness of eye, from a holy Center where the breath and stillness of Eternity are heavy upon us and we are wholly yielded to the Spirit. (page 46)
19. We are called to put our hands trustingly in God's hand and walk the holy way, in no anxiety, assuredly resting in the Spirit...For the simplified person loves God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength and abides trustingly in that love. Then indeed do we love our neighbors. (page 46)

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