

Is Obedience-based Discipleship Biblical?

Alex Kocman, Scott Dunford

Alex Kocman: This week on the show:

Scott Dunford: So when you're questioning the idea of obedience-based discipleship, the examples we see in Acts are of a teacher. I mean not only does the great commission tell us to teach but you see this example laid out over and over again. It wasn't enough that the Ethiopian eunuch was doing a discovery Bible study through the book of Isaiah, he needed someone to come and explain it to him, and God sent him someone to come and explain it to him.

Alex Kocman: Welcome to The Missions Podcast, the show that explores your hard questions on missions, theology, and practice to help goers think and thinkers go. I'm Alex Kocman, Director of Advancement and Communications with ABWE, joined again in the flesh by Scott W. Dunford.

Scott Dunford: Yes.

Alex Kocman: West Coast Advancement Coordinator and Pastor of Redeemer Church in Fremont, California. Scott, how are you?

Scott Dunford: I am doing great.

Alex Kocman: That is great.

Scott Dunford: It's a good time to be serving the Lord. I always feel like I'm blessed to be in this place serving the Lord, and great to be talking about missions and discipleship.

Alex Kocman: It's a blessing, it's great to talk about it, it's a privilege and an honor. And you're, you are, you're in a beautiful spot in life, a beautiful place in the country. And we are excited to be diving into another conversation about a missiological topic today. You know sometimes we have some topics and interviews that kind of color in the edges of missions, right, and sometimes it's not directly missiological but today is. Today is right on target –

Scott Dunford: Yes.

Alex Kocman: with what we exist to do, which is to bridge the conversation between things that we tend to take for granted in theological conversation, with then putting shoe leather to our faith on the mission field. And that's what we're gonna do today. But first, just to note if this show is in any way a blessing to you, we want to invite you to be a part of advancing that mission of bridging theology and practice, and helping goers think and thinkers go. And so you can do that at missionspodcast.com/support. Although the biggest way you can help is also by leaving a positive rating and a five-star review and sharing this show with a friend. That, more than anything else helps get this content in front of others who can be blessed by it.

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Well, Scott, we're gonna set the table here. But there's this author, I think you know him, and there's an article out there –

Scott Dunford: I do.

Alex Kocman: by the name of “Is Obedience-Based Discipleship Biblical”? So maybe you want to set the table as well there, and of course we'll have to define that term too.

Scott Dunford: Yeah, so it's written by Alex J. Kocman, so that, you kind of like buried the lead on that one.

Alex Kocman: Oh.

Scott Dunford: But I'm excited about talking about it because we even just to hear that discussion, “Is obedience-based discipleship biblical?” People might have a lot of questions. First of all, I wanna just, you know give me a quick answer on a couple of these. One, Alex, do you think obedience to Jesus is a good thing?

Alex Kocman: I highly recommend it, in fact.

Scott Dunford: You do recommend it?

Alex Kocman: Yeah.

Scott Dunford: Okay, good. And do you think discipleship is a good thing?

Alex Kocman: Also highly recommended, required actually.

Scott Dunford: So would you say, and you would say that obedience is biblical and discipleship is biblical?

Alex Kocman: And obedience is inextricable from discipleship.

Scott Dunford: So you're not, you're not even like antinomian. You –

Alex Kocman: I, if I –

[Laughter]

Yeah, I'm the worst antino – ask my wife. Ask her if I'm closer to legalism or antinomianism, I'm sure she'll give you an answer.

Scott Dunford: Yeah, so you think God has given laws that Christians must obey? And even the world must obey? Right, so all those things are true. So what it does, what this discussion kind of highlights, I think, is that – and thanks for playing, I'm not setting you up by asking you loaded questions 'cause it might even feel like that, Alex. But I think what it highlights is that when we get into certain missiological discussions that a lot more has to get unpacked than simply just the definition of words as we might read them in the Bible. Like 'cause you read obedience, you read discipleship, you read, you know, yeah, I'm all about all of those things. So when

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you're questioning the idea of what is obedience-based discipleship, how are you understanding obedience-based discipleship as it's used in a technical sense?

Alex Kocman: Yeah, I'm understanding obedience-based discipleship, yes, as a loaded term. But I'm really using it to refer to this methodology in missions that is basically saying that the way to lead unbelievers, particularly in majority religious contexts, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, to faith in Jesus is to bring them into a journey of putting into practice Jesus' practical teachings. That's probably the simplest definition. Is that a fair enough definition from your standpoint?

Scott Dunford: Yeah, I think so. It seems like there's, when practitioners and missiologists are talking about it, it seems like there's maybe two streams. You can correct me, 'cause you do quote in your article from a couple of the authors that have actually interacted with you and I a little bit and not extensively –

Alex Kocman: Yeah.

Scott Dunford: We welcome them to come on the show and talk about that more, but Jerry Trousdale and *Miraculous Movements*, how hundreds of thousands of Muslims are falling in love with Jesus. That kind of goes along with *Winds in the House of Islam* by – Alex, help me out here.

Alex Kocman: David Garrison.

Scott Dunford: Yeah, David Garrison. And then of course really probably what I understand is really one of the standard works on disciple making movements, David and Paul Watson in their book *Contagious Disciple Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery*, they've kind of become in a lot of mission circles, kind of the standard for how we think about it. And they, it seems like they're kind of going in two streams that are kind of heading in the same way. One is, and you help me to make sure that I'm explaining this correctly, one is that the best way to get the gospel into places that are really resistant to the gospel is not by a missionary like you or I going in there and starting Bible studies and teaching the word of God to the local people. The best way is to come alongside of someone who is maybe interested, sometimes that person is called a person of peace, to sit down with them and give them a little bit of coaching on this is how you study the Bible. And then send them off on their own to go ahead and start leading discovery Bible study or facilitating, I think, is the word that they use, facilitating a discovery Bible study. And then begin implementing the teachings of Jesus.

And they're describing how this just leads to people's lives being transformed and changed and eventually they become believers. They form what we would maybe on the outside call a church and societies are

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transformed, mosques are turned into churches, all of these kinds of things. And that's one stream. Am I explaining that relatively accurately?

Alex Kocman: Yeah, I mean, you know, there, well, let's talk about the other stream. And then we'll dive into both of those.

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Alex Kocman: Yeah.

Scott Dunford: Yeah, the other stream that I've seen talked about and critiqued is a little more what I think obedience and discipleship we would have understanding of is that discipleship actually would be referring to believers who are being, who are growing in their faith. But the emphasis for them is less on teaching them doctrine; in fact, doctrine's kind of like poo poed. And instead, so instead of us sitting down and taking them through theology, through historical theology, through systematic theology, teaching them yes, what Jesus taught but also what Paul and Peter and the rest of the epistles teach, getting them into the meatier things of the word. Instead of focusing on training, teaching, instead the focus is more on what does Jesus command people to do and then going ahead and begin by just doing that. So that side of obedience-based discipleship is more elevating practice and deemphasizing theology.

Alex Kocman: Yeah.

Scott Dunford: And certainly we would have, all of us have a problem going, "Yeah, your heads are full of theology but you don't do anything for Jesus."

Alex Kocman: Sure.

Scott Dunford: We would reject that. So am I explaining those two streams and how would you want to clarify that?

Alex Kocman: Yeah, I don't know if there's necessarily two streams. I would be tempted to say there's the technical understanding of OBD as advocated by, by it's proponents and by it's practitioners. And then there's a, maybe a downgraded version of it which is what you described, which is a broader, nontechnical use of that term that is a lot closer to being sound, solid practice, right? Basically emphasizing the crucial role of obedience to the Lordship of Christ as a disciple, period. That's the heart of discipleship in many ways. And so what I would want to do then is lean in on what I think is problematic with that first stream, and that first camp that you described.

Scott Dunford: Mm-hmm.

Alex Kocman: And this is not just sort recognizing, "Hey we've got some people that are too egg-headed about theology." This is about saying how can we catalyze explosive growth as fast as possible by means that we can control. Now maybe people might push back against me saying that, but I think it does

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boil down to that kind of a pragmatism because Trousdale and Watson, the Watson's, Paul and David Watson, talk about obedience-based discipleship resulting in four generations of church plants for a "minimum of 100 indigenous churches within three years," which is either revival rivaling the type of growth that you see in the book of Acts, right?

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Alex Kocman: Or something has been lost along the way, and perhaps we're trying to reverse engineer some of these kinds of movements. But I think that the critical distinction and maybe this is what we can hone in on, is what is discipleship? Let's leave the obedience thing aside for now, what is discipleship? Can you disciple someone who is unconverted? And the pure practitioners would say yes, discipleship prior to conversion is the key here. We need to be discipling people into habitual obedience to Jesus and then conversion will happen later at some point, however they understand conversion, assuming they would understand it the way that we understand it, that a person is regenerated by an act of the Spirit of God opening their hearts to the gospel, right? Whereas I would say that discipleship is only valid as discipleship if it's from a heart of faith because whatever is not done in faith is sin. And that's where we can get into some of the other confusions. But I would locate the confusion up at the headwaters there on really can you decouple conversion and discipleship? Obedience-based discipleship does, and I would advocate we can't decouple those things.

Scott Dunford: I agree and I can understand how from one perspective you could say, "Well, disciple means a follower of Jesus, and Jesus calls people to follow him, and as he —" you see this in the Gospels, right? Where people are following them and they're growing in their understanding of who Jesus is. And then sometimes they're falling away and sometimes they're continuing to follow.

Alex Kocman: Sure.

Scott Dunford: Or even a guy like Judas who is not just a disciple, he's also considered an apostle and he turns out to be a fraud the whole time and he's lost, right? But when you look at Matthew 28 it does seem like, when Jesus is saying, "Make disciples," he's not just saying bring people along on a process, he's saying reach people who are committing to follow Jesus who are converted. Is that how you would read Matthew 28, in that way?

Alex Kocman: Yeah, well, you're right, if I can actually back of Matthew 28 for just a second.

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Alex Kocman: I think you are right, it's making disciples of all nations, baptizing them, teaching them, right? It assumes that discipleship means bringing people into communities where they're obeying Jesus and practicing the

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ordinances, which means they've heard the word and they believe, right? So if you wanna go to that text. But I think the emotional freight of the argument for obedience-based discipleship is people looking at the Gospels and some of the examples that you gave with the disciples as, number one as normative, but then number two, as representing this concept of people being disciplined prior to conversion.

Number one, I don't think that's doing justice to the continuity of redemptive history. So we're assuming that his disciples were unregenerate until the day of Pentecost; that would be a radical departure from how the churches understood salvation to work both sides of the cross, frankly. But secondly –

Scott Dunford: Right, right.

Alex Kocman: it's simply not true, and I go through in the article. Number one, Jesus' ministry began with a theophany, a recognition of his identity at his baptism. "This is My Son in whom I'm well pleased." Jesus' ministry doesn't begin with, "Hey, let's just look at the law of Moses and I'm gonna teach you what it means." Now that's early, and that happens with the Sermon on the Mount.

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Alex Kocman: But Jesus is publicly endorsed as the divine son at the beginning of his ministry, not at the end after they had experimented with the Sermon on the Mount for a while. That's number one.

Scott Dunford: Right.

Alex Kocman: Number two, Jesus recognized his disciples as regenerate in John 15, "Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you," he says in the upper room in John 13. John 15 makes statements like that. Third, the disciples confessed Christ's identity. You have Peter saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God," and Jesus says that upon this rock, which I personally to take his confession of faith, I will build my church in Matthew 16. And then yes, they are ignorant, this is fourth. Yes, they're ignorant of exactly what Jesus is going to do in his death, burial, and resurrection. They didn't get it, right? There's that messianic secret –

Scott Dunford: Right.

Alex Kocman: and you see that their eyes have to be opened to that in Luke 24, and other places like that. But then that's where we go to okay, but that's before the events had happened. What happens in the book of Acts? How did the apostles understand Matthew 28? Just to bring it full circle, 'cause you brought up our marching orders in Matthew 28. What we shouldn't be doing is only reading back into the Gospels, specifically into the synoptics and saying, "Well, how did Jesus bring these followers along?" But how did the apostles and the first century church understand the great

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commission? What did they think Jesus meant when he said, “Go make disciples of all nations?”

Scott Dunford:

Right.

Alex Kocman:

And you see this pattern in the book of Acts of they stand publicly, they proclaim the risen Christ as crucified and risen, Savior, Lord, and Judge. They command people to come to repentance and faith, it says multiple times, you have it in Acts chapter 2, you have it with Lydia, you have it elsewhere, that those who are appointed to eternal life respond in faith and then they're baptized. And then those who are baptized in confession of faith are numbered among the disciples, and then they commit themselves to continued learning and obedience to his commands. And I think what we're fundamentally doing is turning it on its head, that order.

Scott Dunford:

And I think going along with it, the examples that we see in Acts and, are of a teacher. I mean not only do I, not only does the great commission talk, tell us to teach, but you see this example laid out over and over again. And you know it's, it wasn't just, it wasn't enough that the Ethiopian eunuch was doing a discovery Bible study through the book of Isaiah, he needed someone to come and explain it to him. And God sent him someone to come and explain it to him. And I can imagine some of the rebuttals that we might get to that statement of well, maybe Philip was closer culture to the Ethiopian eunuch, but not really. Like yes, the Ethiopian eunuch was a convert of sorts and heading to the temple and probably there to worship. But you see over and over again where outside culture people come in, proclaim the gospel, and teach someone from another culture. And this idea that only someone from the inside the culture can share the good news of Christ and disciple someone is just not scriptural. It's just not.

Alex Kocman:

Yeah.

Scott Dunford:

Even though we might like the idea and think it might be useful to have someone within the culture being able to do it, you can't use that as our baseline for how missions should be done.

Alex Kocman:

Right, I mean we kind of gave a theological analysis of OBD just now, but there is the cultural and the missiological analysis there too that we can get into. Theologically the argument goes, yeah, we've created this construct of being so conversion oriented that we're not seeing what Jesus is doing. And he's just teaching people to obey him, and people are on this organic journey of discovery that eventually culminates in conversion and let's do it the way Jesus did and that's, that's usually some way of how it's framed. But the reason that that argument takes root is because this is being employed in places where we have works-centric religion that are defining the culture. And there's this temptation to say that whether it's conversion, whether it's the penal substitutionary atonement aspect of the gospel, justification, all those things, right? The temptation is to say that

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that's western, but this is the ancient Near Eastern way of thinking, and look how nicely it meshes with Islam.

Well, let's just take Islam for some, for instance. There's nothing very radical for a Muslim about saying, "Yeah, I want to learn how to follow the commands of prophet Isa." A good Muslim would agree to do that. That's not conversion and that's not salvation, it's not.

Scott Dunford: No.

Alex Kocman: And perhaps the reason that sometimes it catches on so easily, it's one thing to use that as an open door early in a relationship and early in a conversation, and maybe that's a nuance that we can add here. But as far as groups of unconverted Muslims not being instructed by a missionary, a missionary is not proclaiming the gospel to them, but they're gathering on their own with minimal input from a missionary, and they're only being given the imperatives drawn from New Testament stories, parables, and being told, "Go apply this to your life, see you next week." And if we're expecting those types of discussion groups of Muslims to become churches, what we're missing is these are people inculcated in works righteousness.

Scott Dunford: Right.

Alex Kocman: And they're accustomed to doing that, that's why this methodology can spread so well is because they're accustomed to living that way. You're taking people that – right?

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Alex Kocman: The covenant of works, that law wiring is deep within whether you're Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or secularist. And so you're coming in, you're saying, "Hey, here's another law to follow." Well guess what? Someone programmed for law keeping and self-justification is potentially gonna latch onto that.

Scott Dunford: Well, you didn't, you linked to this speech or this lecture in your article, you didn't quote from this section particularly, but there's that section where you linked to David Watson's speech on especially using unbelievers to facilitate these studies, to use his words. And he makes it a strong point that we don't disciple, missionaries don't disciple people, scriptures disciple people. I would love to put that to you, Alex, and say, "What would your response be if you could sit down and say, 'This is my response to that?'" Does the Bible disciple people or do teachers disciple people?

Alex Kocman: I don't feed my baby, my spoon does. Right? I don't record a podcast, my computer does. Right, there's different means and you know there's instrumental causes, there's effective causes, there's multiple levels of causation that you could get into. At the end of the day, the Holy Spirit is

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accomplishing it. Christ in the person of the Spirit is accomplishing his mission through his word, yes, but it's always through his word proclaimed, preached. I love the text in Nehemiah at the restoration following the exile where the people gather, there's the reading of the book of the law, Ezra stands up, I believe it's chapter eight and he gives the sense.

Scott Dunford: Mm-hmm.

Alex Kocman: And we know that became the basis for weekly gathering in the synagogue

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Scott Dunford: Yes.

Alex Kocman: of what we would call exegetical preaching or expository preaching. God uses his word when someone, an ordinary human stands up, opens their mouth, and gives the sense of what it means.

Scott Dunford: Does God give evangelists to the church today? I think we say yes. Does he give teachers to the church today?

Alex Kocman: Yes.

Scott Dunford: Yes. Does he give prophets and all these things that we went through? Does he give these to the church?

Alex Kocman: Yeah, Ephesians 4 is an –

Scott Dunford: If he doesn't give –

Alex Kocman: [inaudible].

Scott Dunford: this to the church and –

Alex Kocman: That's a great point.

Scott Dunford: you know I get it, like we have different people listening in and I, you know, and I even sometimes think on a spectrum of how, what gifts are for today and what ones aren't. But these proponents do not argue that, like the gifts, that these gifts are for the church.

Alex Kocman: There aren't a lot of cessationists doing OBD and DMM, yes.

Scott Dunford: No, and even if they were though, you still come down to say – no, I'm not hearing anyone out there, no theologian out there's saying, "God isn't giving pastors and teachers to the church today." So to say God just uses the scriptures to disciple people, I mean you made a good, I mean you used great analogies and an absurdity there to kind of point out the silliness of that, in my opinion. But God, we see that God uses people, he uses these means of people to teach. And to say to a missionary, I think we're doing really damage when we say to a missionary, "You do not have the responsibility to evangelize. You just set up a little study and let

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them do it.” Or, “You don’t have the responsibility to train.” And we’re really short circuiting what missions can and should do.

And I wanna add one more point to this, ‘cause sometimes you and I quibble about little things about western theology and things like that. But I think we’re in lock step agreement –

Alex Kocman: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Scott Dunford: on the main ideas here. And I had a really good discussion with one of my sons the other day. Like maybe last year in his school he was having lots of conversations with Muslims and Mormons. And he was getting into some of these doctrines of like the Trinity and the deity of Christ and he’s reading scripture and trying to understand it. And at one point I came to him and said you know, like, “I’m excited about your reading the Bible, but some of these things you’re gonna have to do some theology too, not just simply reading the text.” Because, and he did, he grabbed a couple theology books, he started reading them, and he suddenly, scriptures are coming together in ways that he wasn’t able to do just simply reading through John. Like I, and I preached through John 8 last week, but I wasn’t really preaching John 8, I was preaching from Acts, Exodus chapter 3.

John 8 only makes sense, or only makes sense if you also understand the context of Exodus chapter 3. Jesus talking about before Abraham was, I am, and going into these I am statements and connecting the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to himself only makes sense when you are able to connect these passages together. And that’s the work of theology.

Alex Kocman: Yeah.

Scott Dunford: You know that’s why I’m sitting here looking at, you know, Basil the Great on the Holy Spirit and Cyril of Alexandria and the unity of Christ. You know like I read those guys because they help me to make those connections and see things. And that’s what the whole, these guys you know are eastern, some of these were easterners anyway which is kind of also interesting.

Alex Kocman: Sure.

Scott Dunford: But the point is is that the teaching and the connections doesn’t just happen by sitting down with John chapter 8. Yeah, the Holy Spirit works through that, no question do I think people can be saved that way. But the normal way, the normative means is for God to use teachers who are equipped and trained by others to pass on the faith to the next generation.

Alex Kocman: You used a key word there, which is normative. So I would, back up for a second. I would say we’re not biblicists in the sense of *solo scriptura*, scripture and nothing else.

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Scott Dunford:

Right.

Alex Kocman:

We want to be biblical, but we believe in *sola scripture*, scripture is the highest authority, not as scripture with the only useful thing to say whatsoever, or, or with no other sources.

Scott Dunford:

Right.

Alex Kocman:

So there's this debate raging right now on what we would call, I would call classical theism, right, the classical understanding of who God is and his essential attributes. And without getting into all of this, we're seeing at the same time people like Arius in church history who we regard as heretics, not only did they not regard themselves as heretics, they all had their Bible verses.

Scott Dunford:

Yeah.

Alex Kocman:

And that's the thing.

Scott Dunford:

Yeah.

Alex Kocman:

Some of the arguments for certain methodologies don't, not just this one but methodological arguments like these in general whether we're talking about OBD, DMM, CPM, they're all pretty biblicists arguments.

Scott Dunford:

Yeah.

Alex Kocman:

They're arguments that are made on the basis of usually narrative texts without really any attempt to bring in church history, how the church has understood these things, are there systematic things at play in our systematic theologizing on things like the nature of conversion, the nature of the new birth, the nature of the church, as a community of those professing faith.

Scott Dunford:

Yeah.

Alex Kocman:

And the reason I'm so passionate about it is because this is not new, number one; and number two, it really does get at the heart of the gospel.

Scott Dunford:

Yeah.

Alex Kocman:

And if we wanna kind of land this plane, that's where I'd like to land it is getting at the heart of the gospel. We started this out by saying I think you and I both, we'd flesh it out in different ways. But you and I both have a theology with a high regard for God's law. God's law is a transcript of his character, his moral character. And even when it comes to the things that were particular to his people under the old covenant, we don't throw that away, we're gonna try to apply the principles from that as much as we possibly can 'cause we believe it reflects an unchanging God who has standards. We believe that, we have a high regard for God's law, and we have no problem with Jesus as Lord and talking about obedience to him as

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integral to what it means to follow him as a disciple. The gospel is not “Follow Jesus by obeying his commands.”

Scott Dunford:

Right.

Alex Kocman:

The good news is that you can't, and he's done for you what you cannot do for yourself. And that is not what's being communicated when what's being communicated is simply that this Christianity thing is simply signing up for a different set of imperatives to follow. And real quick, Scott, let me just read this. This is a quote from J. Gresham Machen, I might have read this on the show before so our listeners who have heard me harp on this before, y'all can just skip forward thirty seconds on your podcast app or however you choose to listen. But this is from Christianity and liberalism. This is about 100 years ago, right, that this is written, and he's dealing with the fundamentalist, modernist controversies and he's on the cusp of that. People don't realize that Machen, though, he had a heart for missions and it comes out in places like this and others. But he says, “According to modern liberalism,” and he's referring to theological liberalism there that was denying the resurrection, that was denying miracles, things like that. It says, “According to modern liberalism, faith is essentially the same as ‘making Christ master’ in one's life. At least it's by making Christ master in the life that the welfare of men is sought.” Notice, with welfare of man, think of all the social gospel movement that started then, and of course we still wrestle with it today. But this effort to redefine Christianity's impact in society is purely just that of do-gooding and not much else.

Scott Dunford:

Mm-hmm.

Alex Kocman:

That's something of what he's getting at there. He goes on, “But that simply means that salvation is thought to be obtained by our own obedience to the commands of Christ. Such teaching is just a sublimated form of legalism.” Okay, so stop right there.

Scott Dunford:

Mm-hmm.

Alex Kocman:

So I think a lot of us these days don't have incredible difficulty dismissing certain things as legalism. You know if you walk into a church and you're told you can only use this Bible translation or else you're hell bound, or we're gonna go ahead and measure your clothing and if it doesn't meet a certain narrowly defined set of specifications, we're gonna cast you outside the kingdom. Okay, we can pretty much recognize legalism when we see it happening there. But legalism is also you go to the attractional megachurch and all their preaching is twelve ways to have a happier life and they're never preaching Christ crucified, that's legalism too.

Scott Dunford:

Mm-hmm.

Alex Kocman:

It's laws to follow, whether positive or negative, it's laws to follow. And obedience-based discipleship in the technical sense that we're discussing it

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today can be guilty of the same sort of legalism too, 'cause again it's replacing law, rather, it's putting law in the place of good news. Let me finish reading this quote and I'll let you get the last word, Scott. Machen says, "Not the sacrifice of Christ, but our own obedience to God's law is the ground of hope. In this way the whole achievement of the Reformation has been given up, and there has been a return to the religion of the Middle Ages."

Scott Dunford: Mm.

Alex Kocman: Bottom line is what, the reason we go into all the world is because we have good news. And yeah, you know what, God's law, Christ's commands, that is the best way to live.

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Alex Kocman: And it can be a useful tool in pre-evangelism. We wanna see how we live differently, we wanna talk about the ways that Christians live differently, but what converts the soul is the good news of Christ crucified and risen and the Holy Spirit taking a dead heart and opening someone's heart and eyes to that.

Scott Dunford: Yeah.

Alex Kocman: And then a life of obedience follows from that.

Scott Dunford: Right, no, I think that you nailed it. I highly recommend this article. Thankfully if you type in obedience-based discipleship, you know what the number one article is that comes up on Google is yours.

Alex Kocman: Wow.

Scott Dunford: So good job, ABWE analytics team for helping the search engine optimization do its thing. But go ahead and check out that article, something to think about. But it, really hope that we start thinking through these things because these are the ideas that are being pushed out there. We want to make sure that we continue to come back to biblical teaching. But also recognizing that a lot of our missionary friends, I think even these gentlemen that we even referenced by name today, they love Jesus. They wanna follow Christ. But if you go down a line of thinking and don't have some check to that, you can easily find yourself talking and doing some things that are really out of line and are gonna cause some real damage I think in the lives of the people we're trying to reach if we're not careful. So thank you for putting the good effort in there, Alex, and helping us think through this idea of discipleship and obedience and law I think in a more, hopefully in a more biblical way.

Alex Kocman: Well, thanks, Scott, for the chance to talk about it. And thanks to Matthew, one of our listeners, for asking us in email if we would do something specifically on obedience-based discipleship. We've talked around it

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before, but we've never just focused in on that, so thanks, Matt, for your loyal listening. And we're appreciative of you. And if you have a question or a suggestion for a future topic of conversation, let us know.

Alex@missionspodcast.com, Alex@missionspodcast.com. And that website, missionspodcast.com is where you can go for more content. Of course, we do ask again that if you believe in the show, you go to the support tab on the website, but most of all that you leave a positive rating and a five-star review, help us bless others. Thank you so much for listening. Scott, thanks for doing this together, always a pleasure.

Scott Dunford:

Yes.

Alex Kocman:

And for everyone out there, we will see you next week.

[End of Audio]