

## Without Doubt, There Is No Faith - William Moore

I believe there to exist a range of the values of different kinds of human obedience. Within that range, forceful obedience ranks lowest. This is tortured obedience. Obedience forced by the crack of a whip or the threat of harm. Above forceful obedience sits mindless obedience. This is obedience through lack of critical thought, or through willing conformity to the habits and routines of a majority. Above mindless obedience comes scientific obedience. Scientific obedience is obedience that has been extracted through the proof of the observability, repeatability, and measurability of various physical phenomena. This is a higher and more noble form of obedience because it requires curiosity, effort, and understanding in order to achieve. However, it is dependent on proof, and only that of which the human mind is capable of understanding. The highest level of obedience is chosen obedience to that which we cannot prove. It requires faith, and understanding that there exists a world beyond human comprehension. It requires a humility in accepting that despite all of our wonderful abilities, we are untrustworthy as our own leaders. We are fallible beyond repair and that there exists something beyond ourselves that is much more trustworthy of our worship. It is a conscious choice to believe in that which cannot be proven, although there is plenty of evidence. The last step from evidence to verdict is faith.

Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote in *The Brothers Karamazov*, a wonderful depiction of a second coming of Christ in the 16th century during the Spanish Inquisition. He uses Ivan Karamazov, an atheistic writer, as the author of a novel in which Jesus returns to the world only to be told by the Grand Inquisitor that he was wrong to save humanity. That humans are unable to shoulder the burden of spiritual freedom and consciousness and are as a result, tortured by it. The inquisitor explains that Jesus gave humans the option to use their free will in choosing to accept the gift of his sacrifice and, in turn, to worship him. There is only value behind the worship if it is freely given, just as love is. He explains that Jesus did not want to perform some over-bearing display of power that could leave no doubt of his divinity for all to see and know for the rest of time because then he would only have succeeded in creating a population of slaves subdued by a show of power. At best they would be scientifically obedient. Jesus wants chosen obedience, which is why he left room for doubt. He wants people to choose to worship him out of the love required to bridge the gap between the plentiful evidence he has given us of His divinity and ultimate acceptance of him as our lord and savior. That step only has value if there is no proof of it to comfort our human minds. There needs to be the possibility of being wrong in order for there to be any courage, boldness, or tested love in the worship.

It is that very ability, which is unique to humans, that God has blessed us with. We have the ability to make decisions that are counter to fleshly desires. We do not have to be slaves to instinct like insects are. We do not have to mindlessly follow the masses as herd animals do. God gave us the gift of rational thought. We have the ability to operate on a plane above that of the beasts and animals that occupy this earth as we do. And by nature of us having the ability to act beyond our animalistic desires, it is my contention that we actually ought to. Or else we waste so much of the gift of the human spirit that we have been blessed with. What a shame it would be not to fully experience all that our carefully crafted minds and bodies are capable of. Marcus Aurelius wrote this on the matter: "At break of day, when you are reluctant to get up, have this thought ready to mind: 'I am getting up for a man's work. Do I still resent it, if I am going out to do what I was born for? Or was I created to wrap myself in blankets and

keep warm?’ ‘But this is more pleasant.’ Were you then born for pleasure - all for feeling, not for action?’  
- *Meditations* book 5 page 49.

Through Aurelius we understand the importance of using our rational minds, however I believe there exists, still, a level of function beyond this. Humans are inherently fallible. We do not have all the answers, nor are we capable of fully understanding all the intricate truths of the universe we have been brought into. What we can observe, however, is that there is a wonderful order to things. The perfect function of nature to bring forth life indicates careful and thoughtful design. Out of the complete chaos that could exist from the countless ingredients that make up this universe, they have been collected in a manner that produces life. Not just human life, but life all around us in the plants and animals. And not just order here on earth but order into the cosmos. In the planets and their moons, in the suns and stars. I’d find it entirely prideful to believe that the limited human mind is capable of understanding the full scope of this seemingly never ending expanse of time and space, connected through the use of energy of many forms, naive not to credit an intentional and knowing force as its creator, and most of all, arrogant not to then submit to this creator, and entrust one’s life to Him.

Entrusting your life to God does not mean that it is an aimless roll of the dice. Faith is not random or lucky. It still utilizes all of the wonderful human gifts of discernment, rational thought, and scientific discovery to come to a decision. It is simply the action of remaining obedient to the force of truth even when our human whims, emotions, and false thoughts pull us away. It is a commitment that endures beyond our emotions and intellect. CS Lewis said in *Mere Christianity* that “faith is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods.”