

Tuesday, March 23

When prayer seems impossible that is no reason for panic or despair, for making a great effort, for attempting devices or techniques, for awaiting some mysterious and sovereign urge. It is enough to fall back on the most simple and childlike obedience asked of us, that of hearing the word.

... Obedience in Christ is the opposite to a duty or obligation. There is not compulsion. There is the hearing of a word which I receive and which commands me, before which it is mine to obey without pressure or penalty. There is not a duty of prayer. There is an understanding of a responsibility, an entering into communion and dialogue...

Hence this commandment, since it is of God, calls us to a free obedience, to a voluntary consent, to a response that one cannot hesitate to call spontaneous, even though incited. There is no question of duty or of threats...

Obedience is in no sense a submissive, passive, insipid, feeble attitude. Obedience is an active struggle with all that impedes the reality of life in Christ: hence, in this connection, with every obstacle to prayer.

Jacques Ellul