

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



Obedience in the Life of the Believer

KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 2:15-16 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 12:15 | John 14:15, 21, 23-24 | Ephesians 6:1-3

SUMMARY

The first lesson on obedience is found in the very beginning of the Bible.

Adam and Eve lived in a perfect environment surrounded with beauty and abundance; and when the Lord placed them in the garden, He gave only one prohibition: “From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:17). If they had obeyed Him, they would have continued to live in the midst of all His blessings; but since they disobeyed, they suffered the consequences of violating His command.

SERMON POINTS

This same principle of obedience still applies to us today. Blessings come with obedience, but disobedience brings problems, heartaches, and burdens.

Obedience is the first lesson we should teach in the home.

Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” The pattern that the Lord established in the home flows from the order He instituted in the Garden of Eden. Just as almighty God is our authority and we are to obey Him, so children are to honor and obey their parents.

Our obedience to the Lord includes faithfully teaching our children to obey us. If we submit to God’s authority as we raise our children, they too will learn to follow the Lord. However, if we tell them to obey us,

but we ourselves neglect God’s commands, they will see the inconsistency and experience internal conflict, confusion, frustration, and ultimately disobedience.

Obedience starts in the morning.

Each day should begin with prayer asking God for a sensitive spirit. We need His help to rightly interact with people and deal with the circumstances we encounter. When we begin the morning with a sincere desire to obey the Lord, we’ll be reminded to continually turn to Him for guidance and strength throughout the day.

An obedient life is not one of perfection.

We won’t always make the right choices and do what God wants, but a godly person who desires to obey will immediately feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit. When we are filled and controlled by the Spirit, our first response to sin will be confession and repentance. And if we’ve offended someone else, we will quickly go to that person and ask forgiveness. But if we delay, thinking, “I’ll take care of this tomorrow,” we may end up putting it off for weeks, months, or even years. And that is disobedience.

The opposite of obedience is rebellion.

Since God is our ultimate authority, any time we choose not to heed His commands, we are rebelling against Him. Then we wonder why we’re experiencing trouble and conflicts. Samuel told God’s people, “If you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers” (1 Sam. 12:15). This is a valuable lesson that

we need to pass down to our children. Sometimes the anger and conflicts in the home are the result of parents not following the Lord, and children not obeying their parents.

Obedience is doing what God says, how he says, and when He says to do it.

Oftentimes we'd prefer to redefine these terms, but the elimination of any one of them results in disobedience. Partial obedience is still rebellion against the Lord. For example, suppose we believe that God wants us to give a certain portion of our income to Him, but instead of giving Him the full amount, we decide to give less. Or maybe He calls us into ministry, missions, or some other area of service, but we delay or alter our response to the call. Instead of becoming a missionary, we decide to focus on becoming financially successful so we can give more money to the Lord's work. Or maybe we sidestep God's clear call to preach the gospel and opt to teach Sunday school instead.

Anytime we dictate the terms of our obedience, we are not doing what the Lord has told us to do. We may think that offering an alternate form of obedience ought to please Him, but it won't. Because God loves us, He wants us to follow His commands so we can receive the blessings that follow. This is the only way to spare us from the negative consequences that inevitably come with disobedience.

Obedience is the proof of our love for Christ.

Three times in the fourteenth chapter of John, Jesus equates loving Him with obedience (vv. 15, 21, 23). Many of us claim to love Christ, yet we'd have to admit that our actions don't always support our assertion. Our love for Him should motivate and prompt us to keep His Word and please Him in all we do.

Obedience is not only the will of God, but it's the best way to live.

The Lord gave us His commandments for our own good. Any time we try to manipulate or maneuver around them, we are settling for second best. We can

never improve on what God has said. Like a loving Father, He protects us by giving us rules to guide our lives. And if we go astray, He provides stinging consequences, which motivate us to return to the path of obedience.

When we follow the Lord's instructions, they influence every area of our lives. Each day as we encounter various situations, we'll ask ourselves, "What has God said about this?" For instance, if someone wrongs us at work, we'll remember that Jesus said to forgive others. Although we may not be able to quote a verse, we'll know what's right and wrong. Furthermore, we have the Holy Spirit living within us who prompts us to do what's right. And if we sin, He convicts us with deep sorrow over our disobedience so we will repent and change. In our own strength, we can't overcome our sins, but the Spirit gives us the power to develop godly attitudes, actions, and habits.

What is our motivation for obedience?

- **A reverence for who God is.** He deserves our obedience because He is our holy, sovereign Lord who gave His only begotten Son to die on the cross so we could be forgiven.
- **A desire to please Him.** If we revere and love Him, we won't want to displease Him in any area of our lives. Furthermore, disobedience never gives us what we truly want—peace, joy, and happiness. Even if the path of obedience is painful, it is still the best option.

RESPONSE

- Think about a time you fully obeyed the Lord in a difficult situation. How did God work in your life?
- Now consider an occasion when you either disobeyed or partially obeyed. What consequences resulted? How did it affect you?

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