
God's Method of Teaching Obedience

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

Only God knows the loss that comes from disobeying Him. He alone is aware of forfeited blessing due to a lack of submission to His authority. There is no compromise in obedience. The direction of God is plain and in understandable language. It is written out for us in a book. God inspired holy men, moved by the Holy Spirit, to communicate the very WORDS OF GOD. Our lack of knowledge of God's direction is no excuse for resistance to His authority.

Our first encounter with obedience are the demands of our father and mother. The majority of our generation knows little of absolute obedience. One of the main reason lies with unfaithful parents. They have not assumed their God-given responsibility to teach obedience by demonstration and example. This was one of the main themes within the Old Testament. Its importance is stated in the call of Abraham who was to begin the nation that would bring forth the promised Messiah. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19).

Abraham's action was so important in God's sight that his children's obedience was the determining factor in choosing him. "THAT THE LORD MAY BRING UPON ABRAHAM THAT WHICH HE HATH SPOKEN OF HIM."

In the New Testament absolute obedience is demanded of God on the part of both children and parents. It is the one commandment with a promise attached. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise). That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1-4).

Children are to be prepared for a lifetime by parents who have taught them complete obedience. God has placed children under their parent's absolute control. Here is God's method of teaching this very important exercise. All parents will answer to God for such vital training. How can we expect children to respect and obey their teachers and the law of the land?

Such action is not innate for the sons of Adam and Eve. Obedience is the consequence of training.

Here are some questions for you to answer. Be honest about them! You must come to your own conclusion as to your failure or success in this God-given responsibility.

As A Parent

1. Do you believe that God has given you the sole responsibility to teach your child to obey you?
2. Are you afraid of what your child's reaction might be?
3. If you are faithful in proper training, will God take care of the reaction of your children?

4. Do you show love before, during and after correction?
5. Do you praise your children twice as much as you correct them?
6. How many times do you tell your child to do something? Why more than once? Does he or she have a hearing problem, a mental deficiency that he cannot understand direction?
7. Can your child run to his mother or father when he dislikes your direction?
8. Do you carefully analyze the situation before giving instructions?
9. Can your child talk you out of directions and punishment easily?
10. Does your child obey because you force him to or because of his love and respect for you?
11. Are you free in giving adequate reasons for your stated direction?
12. Do you believe the Biblical principle of suffering for wrong doing and disobedience? Do you administer it?
13. Do you believe that self expression supersedes your authority?
14. Do you allow some emotional display to motivate surrender to your child's desire?
15. Do you know better than the child or does he or she maneuver you to a compromise in your demands?
16. Do your children have sufficient admiration and confidence in you to listen carefully to your opinion and stated direction?
17. Are the commands for your ease or for their benefit?
18. Are you personally under God's commandments? Do you think for one moment that your children do not know the answer to this question?
19. Do you hesitate to take a positive stand on any issue with your children because you are afraid of their reaction or lack of understanding? Try this out in our dealing with God.
20. As a father, are you the strong voice in your home? Do you lead in spiritual matters? Then don't expect to lead in other areas.
21. When a questionable issue is faced with your children and outsiders, do you look objectively at the situation or automatically take your children's part? (Your children know!)
22. Do you think for one moment you are fooling your children by the way you live?
23. Are your children fooling you? Do you know who they really are? Unless parents make it their business to observe closely, they are the last ones to know their own children's actual spiritual condition and character.
24. Do you maintain a family altar? If not, prayer and Bible reading will mean little to your children.
25. Do your children see you obey the law of the land and the directives of the Bible?
26. Do your children get their way by crying and pouting?
 - Are you governed by your own emotions, circumstances, or by Biblical principles?

Very few children rise above the spiritual level of their parents. There are a few exceptions, but most do not raise the standard of the home they were reared in. Parents, you have only a few years to teach by love and demonstration what absolute obedience means. Don't miss this vital part of family training. Their eternal destiny in Heaven or Hell is determined by their willingness to allow the Lord Jesus Christ to reign supreme in their lives. They

will never meet a lowly Jesus who will go along with their plans. No such person is in the Bible. If He is not Lord of their lives, He is not Lord at all. If God cannot give them complete directions, He cannot shower His love and grace upon them. May God help you to instruct your children in the importance of obedience. If they do not obey you, there is less chance of their learning and practicing it during an entire lifetime.

Parent's Direction

Complete direction for parents is in the Bible. The principle of suffering for disobedience is throughout the entire Bible beginning in the Garden of Eden.

"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck" (Proverbs 6:20, 21). "Keep my commandments, and live, and my law as the apple of thine eye" (Proverbs 7:2).

"Good understanding giveth favor, but the way of transgressors is hard. Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction, but he that regardeth reproof shall be honored. He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him early" (Proverbs 13:15, 18, 24). Here is a message for grandmothers and grandfathers" "Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers" (Proverbs 17:6). "Even a child is know by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Proverbs 20:11).

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15). "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Proverbs 29:15, 17). "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Proverbs 19:18).

The Bible is filled with commands that demand obedience. Remember, when we believe we automatically obey. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, PREPARED an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, OBEYED; and he went out, not knowing where he went" (Hebrews 11:7,9).

"Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, and faithful God who keepeth covenant and mercy with them who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generation" (Duet. 7:9). "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee" (Duet. 28:1,15). "Keep, therefore, the words of this covenant, and do them that ye may prosper in all that ye do" (Deut. 22:9).

Demonstration

The Bible is one continuous story of man's demonstration of disobedience in the Bible along with suffering. The Garden scene is the first and most prominent. Evident blessing always followed obedience. God commands us to pray. One character in the Old Testament would rather spend time with hungry lions than miss his prayer time. Three young men were willing to die in a blast furnace (they expected to) than disobey God and bow before a pagan image. Obedience was VERY IMPORTANT to them. How important is it to you? Sufficient to attend a Bible teaching church with regularity? To list God's commandments and begin to obey them?

On God's great screen of events down through history there are many graphic demonstrations of the consequence of disobedience. Have you noticed them? How can we ever forget Adam and Eve? A great king committed adultery and murder and we all know the consequence evident in his entire family. Blessings and judgment fill the Biblical account of men and women. You don't for one moment entertain the thought that maybe God's holy demands of absolute obedience have changed. They have not! No one, including both of us, will get by with disobedience.

Heaven is not ours on the basis of obedience. We are saved by Grace through faith in the one person who alone obeyed His heavenly Father. In Regeneration that follows our repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, we are given the Spirit of Christ who generates the same obedience within us that was in the One who died for us. Obedience is one of the greatest proofs of knowing Him. "And by this we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; by this know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:3-5).

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