



DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

Obedience Leads to a Life of Victory... By Gareth

- The general concept of obedience both in the Old and New testament relates to hearing or hearkening to a higher authority.
- "True 'hearing,' or obedience, involves the physical hearing that inspires the hearer, and a belief or trust that in turn motivates the hearer to act in accordance with the speaker's desires." Thus, biblical obedience to God means to hear, trust, submit and surrender to God and his Word.
- From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible has a lot to say about obedience. In the story of the Ten Commandments, we see just how important the concept of obedience is to God. *Deuteronomy 11:26-28* sums it up like this: "*Obey and you will be blessed. Disobey and you will be cursed.*" In the New Testament, we learn through the example of Jesus Christ believers are called to a life of obedience.
- **Jesus Calls Us to Obey**
- In Jesus Christ, we find the perfect model of obedience. As his disciples, we follow Christ's example as well as his commands. Our motivation for obedience is love: *If you love me, you will keep my commandments.* (*John 14:15, ESV*)
- **Obedience Is an Act of Worship**
- While the Bible places a strong emphasis on obedience, it's critical to remember that believers are not justified (made righteous) by obedience. Salvation is a free gift of God, and we can do nothing to merit it. True Christian obedience flows from a heart of gratitude for the grace we have received from the Lord:

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. (*Romans 12:1, NLT*)
- **God Rewards Obedience**
- Over and over again we read in the Bible that God blesses and rewards obedience:

And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed - all because you have obeyed me. (*Genesis 22:18, NLT*)
- Jesus replied, "*But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice.*" (*Luke 11:28, NLT*)
- But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. (*James 1:22-25, NLT*)
- **Obedience to God Proves Our Love**
- The books of 1 and 2 John clearly explain that obedience to God demonstrates love for God. Loving God implies following his commands: By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

WEEKLY EVENTS/NOTICES

Week 26

- For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments (*1 John 5:2–3, ESV*). Love means doing what God has commanded us, and he has commanded us to love one another, just as you heard from the beginning. (*2 John 6, NLT*)

- ***Obedience to God Demonstrates Faith***

- When we obey God, we show our trust and faith in him: And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. If someone claims, "*I know God,*" but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. (*1 John 2:3–6, NLT*)

- ***Obedience Is Better Than Sacrifice***

- The phrase "*obedience is better than sacrifice*," has often perplexed Christians. It can only be understood from an Old Testament perspective. The law required the Israelite people to offer sacrifices to God, but those sacrifices and offerings were never intended to take the place of obedience.
- But Samuel replied, "*What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the command of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.*" (*1 Samuel 15:22–23, NLT*)

- ***Disobedience Leads to Sin and Death***

- The disobedience of Adam brought sin and death into the world. This is the basis of the term "original sin." *But Christ's perfect obedience restores fellowship with God for everyone who believes in him: For as by the one man's [Adam's] disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's [Christ's] obedience the many will be made righteous.* (*Romans 5:19, ESV*)
- *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.* (*1 Corinthians 15:22, ESV*)

- ***Through Obedience, We Experience the Blessings of Holy Living***

- Only Jesus Christ is perfect, therefore, only he could walk in sinless, perfect obedience. But as we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us from within, we grow in holiness. This is the process of sanctification, which can also be described as spiritual growth. The more we read God's Word, spend time with Jesus, and allow the Holy Spirit to change us from within, the more we grow in obedience and holiness as Christians:
- Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the LORD. Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts. They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths. You have charged us to keep your commandments carefully. Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your decrees! Then I will not be ashamed when I compare my life with your commands. As I learn your righteous regulations, I will thank you by living as I should! I will obey your decrees. Please don't give up on me! (*Psalm 119:1–8, NLT*)
- Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God. (*2 Corinthians 7:1, NLT*)
- The verse above says, "*Let us work toward complete holiness.*" We don't learn obedience overnight; it's a lifelong process that we pursue by making it a daily goal. ■