

The Importance of Obedience

Obedience is a central theme throughout the Bible, demonstrating how God desires His people to respond to His commands. From the earliest chapters of Genesis to the teachings of Jesus, obedience is presented as a key element in a healthy relationship with God.

1. What is Obedience?

At its core, obedience means doing what God asks without hesitation or resistance. In the Bible, obedience is not just an external act but an expression of inner devotion to God. Jesus teaches that obedience flows from love:

“If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

This verse reveals that true obedience is a response of love toward God. It is not a duty performed out of fear but a joyful submission to God’s will because we trust in His wisdom and goodness.

2. Obedience Brings Blessings

God promises blessings to those who obey Him. These blessings go beyond material gains and reflect spiritual, emotional, and relational prosperity. In the Old Testament, God repeatedly assures the Israelites that obedience will lead to blessings:

“If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands...all these blessings will come upon you” (Deuteronomy 28:1–2).

The blessings include prosperity, peace, and divine favour. In the New Testament, Jesus connects obedience to joy:

“If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:10–11).

Obedience brings not only joy in God’s presence but also fulfilment in our spiritual journey. When we obey, we experience the peace of knowing we are living in alignment with God’s will.

3. The Cost of Disobedience

While obedience brings blessings, disobedience brings consequences. The Bible is full of examples showing that turning away from God’s commands leads to hardship. For instance, Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden introduced sin and death into the world (Genesis 3:6–7). Their choice to disregard God’s instruction resulted in separation from God and the curse of death.

The Israelites also suffered due to disobedience. In the book of Judges, whenever the Israelites turned away from God’s ways, they faced oppression and defeat. But when they repented, God graciously delivered them. In 1 Samuel 15, King Saul’s failure to fully obey God’s command led to God’s rejection of him as king. Samuel told Saul:

“To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22).

This highlights that outward religious acts are meaningless without a heart of obedience.

4. Obedience and Trust in God

Obedience is closely linked to trust. When we obey God, we acknowledge that His ways are higher than ours and that He has our best interests at heart. Trusting God requires letting go of our own understanding and following His direction, even when we don’t fully comprehend His plan.

Abraham’s story is a powerful example, when God asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Abraham obeyed without question. His obedience reflected complete trust in God’s character and promises. Proverbs 3:5–6 emphasizes this connection between trust and obedience:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

5. Obedience in the New Testament

The New Testament continues to emphasize the importance of obedience, particularly in the life of Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate example of obedience to the Father. He was obedient even unto death on the cross (Philippians 2:8). He calls His followers to imitate His example, showing that true discipleship involves obedience.

In Matthew 7:21, Jesus makes it clear that obedience is essential to entering the Kingdom of God:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

It is not enough to speak of love for God; our actions must reflect that love through obedience.

6. Obedience to God’s Word

Obedience involves more than just following commands; it requires a heart that is attentive to God’s Word. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, Paul speaks of taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ. This shows that obedience is not only about actions but also about our inner thoughts and attitudes. True obedience means submitting our minds and hearts to God, allowing His Word to shape every area of our lives.

7. Conclusion

Through obedience, we express our love, trust, and devotion to God, and we open ourselves to His guidance, joy, and peace. While obedience can be challenging, especially in moments of uncertainty or suffering, it is always worth it. Jesus, our ultimate example, obeyed even unto death, and He calls us to follow Him in faithful obedience. As we trust in God’s wisdom and live according to His Word, we will experience the blessings that come from a life surrendered to His will.

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