



DAILY OBEDIENCE

by Whitney Davis

Ezra Taft Benson said, “When obedience ceases to be an irritant and becomes our quest, in that moment God will endow us with power.” Knowing Jesus leads to loving and trusting Him. We can walk successfully in obedience to Jesus out of a heart of love and trust. This foundation causes the believer to obey not out of duty or fear but out of a heart full of love, faith, and devotion.

Let’s explore some Old Testament and New Testament examples that will help us see how important it is to make obedience in our daily living a quest of our faith.

1.) THOUGHTS ON OBEDIENCE FROM SAUL

Read: 1 Samuel 15:3, 9, 19-22

Have you ever heard the phrase, “obedience is greater than sacrifice”? In 1 Samuel 15, we find the story of

King Saul choosing to offer a sacrifice to God over obedience to Him. At the beginning of the chapter, the prophet Samuel gave a specific message to Saul. God wants him to destroy the entire Amalekite nation because the nation had opposed Israel. So, Saul gathered an army and killed them all, except for the Amalekite king, Agag, whom they held captive. Only the worthless livestock was destroyed, and the lives of the best animals were spared. God became angry with Saul, and Saul’s justification was that he had saved the best livestock to offer as a sacrifice. While this may seem noble, Saul wasn’t obedient to the original command. Any sacrifice Saul could offer would not be an adequate substitution for obedience. The root of sacrifice is obligation, but obedience is rooted in love. Sacrifice may check off some box on a list we have created ourselves, but we have to watch our motives.

Sacrifice and obedience reveal two different heart conditions: one tends to result from a sense of duty, and the other flows out of a heart of love and trust. Sacrifice tends to be self-focused, while obedience is God-focused. Partial obedience is not obedience. The more we know Jesus, the more we love Him. It is out of this love for the Father that our obedience follows. There is only one sufficient sacrifice: the death of Jesus on the cross. Our obedience is far better than sacrifice because it reveals a heart that is in love with Jesus.

2.) THOUGHTS ON OBEDIENCE FROM PAUL

Read: Romans 6:16

Paul, whose original name was Saul, first shows up in the Bible at Stephen's stoning (Acts 7:58). Initially, he was known for persecuting the church. Saul encountered Christ on the road to Damascus and had a dramatic transformation, even a name change from Saul to Paul. Paul became a champion of the gospel after his conversion. His teaching proclaimed that we are no longer under the law of Moses, and that God's grace will always cover our sins. So why should Christians not indulge in sin and disobedience?

In Romans 6, Paul explains that we are not slaves to sin anymore because our old self has been crucified (vv. 17-18). He suggests that we still have a daily choice: will we walk in obedience and not let sin reign in our bodies or continue in disobedience and sin? Our old habits and ways of thinking still come naturally to us, but Paul urges us to stop giving ourselves over to that evil nature instead of surrendering to God. If we are alive in Christ, we should not live like sin still owns us. Continuing to walk in disobedience leads to a life of voluntary slavery. Instead, we should live as slaves to righteousness. Sin always leads to death, while walking in obedience to Christ leads to freedom. Paul went on to be so radically changed that instead of stamping out Christianity, his mission became to see the gospel spread throughout the Roman world. Despite having

once been a slave to sin, Paul now walked out a life of obedience. His story gives us hope. The poor choices we have made in the past do not have to rule our lives anymore. The transforming work of Jesus makes us new. We choose obedience from a heart of love for Christ, and that leads to righteousness.

3.) THOUGHTS ON DAILY OBEDIENCE

Read: Titus 3:1-7

Why is obedience hard for us? We know that Christ considers our obedience greater than our sacrifice. We also know that living a life of obedience to Christ leads to righteousness. So, let's explore how this knowledge impacts our daily lives. To obey Jesus, we must know what He expects of His followers. It is impossible to live a life of obedience without spending time in the Word of God. We must be committed to a lifetime of learning to know Jesus more and more. When we discover what He commands, we must not be "hearers" only, but also "doers" of what is instructed. In Titus 3, Paul relays instructions for godly living. We are reminded to live obedient and kind lives, showing respect and humility to all people, including those in authority (v. 1). We are told to be ready for every good work and to speak evil of no one.

We know that we were once disobedient, deceived, foolish, living in hate and envy, and serving selfish pleasures. But, praise the Lord, we are now free from that bondage by the kindness and mercy of our Savior. The same grace that has been extended to us, we then must extend to others.

We should avoid foolish controversy and arguments because they are not beneficial. The truth of God's mercy is profitable and will spur us on in doing good. We are even cautioned to guard our thought life. We are to "pull down strongholds, cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-6).

Walking in obedience every day means dying to our sinful nature, thoughts, and actions, and choosing to walk in obedience. It means laying aside our selfish desires and fixing our eyes on Jesus. It means spending time every day in prayer, worship, and study of the Word. Our homes, our work, and our relationships with others should all be impacted by our commitment to walk in obedience. To obey Jesus out of a heart that loves and trusts him leads to righteousness.

As women, we are often sacrificial by nature. Be on guard to live in balance, and don't lose sight of the importance of living a life of obedience

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) How would you define obedience to Christ?
- 2) Are there times you have perhaps chosen sacrifice over obedience? Explain.
- 3) What does actively choosing to obey God look like in your day-to-day life?
- 4) Relationships can be difficult. How can we demonstrate obedience in our relationships with others even when it's a difficult situation?

CALL TO ACTION:

- 1.) Take some time this week to reflect on how you demonstrate obedience to the Father. Write out your thoughts on what you learn through this reflection and what you can improve?
- 2.) Learn to be faithful in the little things, as Jesus said in Luke 16:10. Make good use of your time this week, redeeming the moments by taking advantage of opportunities to share your faith, to pray, or to read scripture.

Commit this week to daily obedience to Christ.

MEMORIZE:

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.” Psalm 1:1-2

**lesson from The Journey unit 4, lesson 5 – for more, visit iphc.org/thejourney*