

Lesson # 6 – The Priorities Regarding Obedience.

Introduction

A. The Meaning of Obedience.

1. The words in the Old and New Testament translated "obey" and "obedience" are derived from words meaning "to hear". A great lesson is taught by this, namely, that obedience is of the heart - the inner man - and that this is the foundation of all external activity.
2. An illustration of this would be Paul's statement in Romans 6:17
" . . . but ye have obeyed (to hear under) from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you "

B. The Characteristics of Obedience.

1. The attitude of the heart: "I will do the will of God".
2. The action in daily life: "These specific commands I will obey today".

I. Orientation: One Facet of Obedience is that it is Evidence.

A. Obedience is an evidence of salvation.

Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.
Matthew 7:21

And hereby 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 whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected, hereby know we that we are in Him. I John 2:3-5

Observation: This does not mean that we earn heaven by obedience.
It does mean that obedience is a characteristic of all those who are born again. This is a demonstration of the reality of the grace of God.

B. Obedience is an evidence of love and fear.

O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! Deut. 5:29

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Ecc. 12:13

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous. I John 5:3

Observation: Our actions reveal the attitude of the heart. All genuine obedience springs out of a loving reverence for God.

C. Obedience is an evidence of dedication.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him, for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Hebrews 11:5

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. Ezra 7:10

Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I (Paul) was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Acts 26:19

Observation: The key to why each of these men lived the way they did is found in their prior choice to do God's will. There are few things more important for the Christian than a sincere dedication to God to do His will. When we make that choice God will teach us and enable us to live in accordance with His Word.

II. Illustration: The Life of King Saul.

A. Saul's privilege and potentiality.

1. He was chosen by God, I Samuel 9:15-27.
2. He was anointed by God, I Samuel 10:1-10.
3. He was led by the Holy Spirit, I Samuel 11:1-6.
4. He was made King over God's people, I Samuel 11:12-15.
5. He was given great promises, I Samuel 12:1-14.
6. He was given great prophets such as Samuel, I Samuel 12:16-25.
7. He was given great leaders such as David, I Samuel 18:2
8. He had a humble attitude of trust in the early years of his life, I Samuel 15:17.

B. Saul's failure.

1. He became impatient with God and with Samuel and rashly went beyond his authority and offered a sacrifice, I Samuel 13:8-14.

2. He made a rash vow, in the midst of a victory over the Philistines and his army forced him to back down, I Samuel 14:21-46.
3. He failed to obey God's command regarding the Amalekites and gave way to the people. He had become weak and proud, I Samuel 15:1-35
4. He lost the anointing of the Holy Spirit, I Samuel 16:14.
5. He was made vulnerable to the torment of evil spirits, I Samuel 16:14-23; 18:10; 19:9.
6. He sought to establish his kingdom for himself and Jonathan by killing David, I Samuel 19-27.
7. He lost fellowship with God to such an extent that he could not obtain an answer to prayer, I Samuel 28:6.
8. He disobeyed God's command and sought wisdom by consulting a witch, I Samuel 28:7-25; I Chronicles 10:13,14.
9. He lost his life to the enemy he could have conquered in the will of God, I Samuel 31:1-13.

Summary:

And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king. I Sami 15:22,23

III. Exposition: The Believer May Please God.

A. The importance of pleasing God.

1. The believer is exhorted to please God, I Thess. 4:1.

Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk (live) and to please God, so ye would abound more and more,

2. God works in us to enable us to please Him, Philippians 2:12,13.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.

3. Pleasing God is the standard for daily life, I Thess. 2:4.

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

4. Pleasing God is doing His will, Hebrews 13:20,21.

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect (equipped) in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight
. . . .

5. Pleasing God is the basis for a successful prayer life, I John 3:22.

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

B. That which is pleasing to God.

1. Obedience is pleasing to God, I Samuel 15:22.

And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.

2. Uprightness is pleasing to God, I Chronicles 29:17.

I know also, my God, that Thou triest the heart and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart, I have willingly offered all these things

3. Reverence and hope in divine mercy is pleasing to God, Psalm 147:11.

The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.

4. Prayer is pleasing to God, Proverbs 15:8.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.

5. Praise and thanksgiving are pleasing to God, Hebrews 13:15,16..

By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

IV. Warning: The Believer May Displease God.

- A. Complaining is displeasing to God, Numbers 11:1.

And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord, and the Lord heard it, and His anger was kindled and the fire of the Lord burnt among them and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.

B. Immorality is displeasing to God, I Samuel 11:27.

And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her (Bathsheba) to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

C. Hypocritical religious activity is displeasing to God, Isaiah 1:11-14.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord . . . I delight not in the blood of bullocks . . . Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto Me . . . your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth

D. Doubt and unbelief is displeasing to God, Hebrews 10:38; 11:6.

Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in Him . . . But without faith it is impossible to please Him

V. Application: The Importance of Choosing to Obey God.

A. This will be the key to spiritual growth and maturity, Rom. 12:1,2.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

B. This will be the key to spiritual success, II Peter 1:8.

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Let us make the decision of faith and Love - "I will do the will of God!"