



GROW

CHRISTIAN LIVING

LESSON 7: OBEDIENCE



HOPE
CHURCH

Objectives

- To understand Biblical truths about obedience and disobedience.
- To understand the rewards of a life of humble obedience to God.
- To understand the consequences of our disobedience to God.
- To learn how to develop an obedient attitude.
- To recognize the characteristics of true Christ-like obedience.

Guidelines To Use This Lesson

- Read through the whole lesson to gain a better understanding of the main points that could be drawn out and linked with the introduction.
- Read through bible verses within the lesson prior to teaching so as to be able to effectively teach your mentee.
- Share about your own experiences where you have shown gentleness and care or taught, rebuked or corrected with your mentee.
- Share relevant testimonies.
- Consider illustrations that you could include in your sharing to help facilitate greater comprehension.
- Ask questions at different points of the lesson.
- Encourage your mentee to start a prayer journal to remind them to pray and also remember the prayers God has answered.

Introduction

In today's society, obedience is often perceived in a negative light. When faced with a set of rules or commands, people feel a sense of burden or inferiority. But obedience that is pleasing to God is one that understands the joy and freedom of walking in righteousness.

Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honour
Proverbs 21:21

Imagine a city where no law or regulation was enforced. Anyone could do anything they wish, from stealing to killing, without having to face the consequences of their actions. A city like that would be full of chaos! If people were a law unto themselves, society, as we know it, would fall apart. Likewise, as Christians, if we lived according to our own law and desires, we would spiral into spiritual destruction.

A life that is truly transformed by Christ is one of humble and unconditional obedience to God. In other words, obedience is an attitude that reveals the outworking of a real and genuine faith. It is so important to have a Biblical understanding of obedience and the benefits it offers in order to wholeheartedly follow God and His appointed leaders.

This session will offer a deeper understanding of the reasons to obey God's word and will help us develop an attitude of faithful submission to His commands.

The Truth about Disobedience

The effects of disobedience can be easily seen in the lives of children.

Children who have not learnt to obey are restless. They are constantly evaluating whether or not they want to obey their teachers and parents. They spend so much energy resisting instruction or authority that they often miss out on the joy of learning. This is commonly underpinned by strained relationships and a lack of trust towards those in authority over them.

Conversely, children who understand the value of obedience are secure. They are not bound by the constant fear of being caught or punished. There is a freedom

to learn and carry out their work effectively while enjoying positive relationships with those whom they obey.

It is no different in our Christian walk. Learning to see the value of obedience will lead to a life of freedom, peace and intimacy with our Father in heaven.

While this may come intuitively to most of us, obeying God's commands can still be a struggle for many believers. To overcome this, it is important to understand the forces underpinning disobedience.

1. Disobedience is rebellion against God

Satan is the originator of rebellion against divine authority.

The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

1 John 3:8

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Ephesians 2:1-2

Scripture clearly reveals that disobedience against God is to submit to Satan's work and influence in our hearts. Each time we compromise or reject God's law, it bears serious consequences as it allows the Devil to strengthen his foothold in our hearts.

2. Every sin stem from disobedience

The first sin ever committed was an act of disobedience to God. By this first act, the roots of sin and rebellion were embedded in the human heart.

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Romans 5:19

To disobey God is akin to obeying Satan. As followers of Christ, we need to guard against any thought or attitude that stands against the word of God and posture our hearts in faithful obedience to Him.

Reflection Station

Are there things in your life that you know are not right before God? Confess it to Him today. Ask Him to help you pursue righteousness.

The Truth about Obedience

Christ-like obedience is a willingness and deliberate choice to do what God desires and commands regardless of convenience or cost.

Obedience is grounded in:

1. God's love for us

How we view God will influence the nature of our obedience to Him. Is He a loving and compassionate Father to you? Or simply a divine and powerful being to fear and appease?

We need to understand that every command and principle in Scripture is intended for our good. In love, Christ died for us that we may know the Father's heart in all His commands and precepts. What He desires from us is not a forced submission, but for us to truly know the righteousness, peace, joy and freedom that is ours in the Holy Spirit. Like a father disciplines and sets boundaries for his child out of love, God too establishes His commands for our ultimate joy and fulfilment.

2. Our love for God

"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me."

John 14:21a

One of the clearest ways we demonstrate love for a person is through our actions. To obey and submit to God's word is to honour and love Him. Sometimes we think

that we have to do something great like being a powerful preacher or planting a church to show our love for God. But the Lord is not after our accomplishments first. He desires a people who would walk humbly in His ways and treasure His commands in their hearts.

We may not always fully understand God's word, but we can trust that all His commands and instructions are ultimately for our good.

3. Fearing the Lord

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul...

Deuteronomy 10:12

An important aspect of obedience is a healthy fear of God. By nature, God is fully just and perfectly holy. He is completely set apart from anyone or anything. As such, His standards are there to set believers apart from the sinful ways of the world.

A healthy fear of the Lord is to have a conscious awareness of God's righteousness and majesty. It is to recognize the sheer repulsiveness of our sin in light of God's holiness, and to desire obedience and right standing with God.

When we disobey the Lord, we not only go against God's authority as our Lord and King, but we lose the peace and joy that is ours in Christ Jesus.

4. Obedience is not blind submission

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"

Isaiah 55:9

As believers, we are not called to submit to every person in every situation. Obedience on its own is not what God asks for. His will is that we live according to His standards of righteousness and love. Thus, obedience is measured and dictated by the Word of God.

Obedience should lead to righteousness, not sin. In discerning who to follow and when to submit, the Bible must always be the ultimately authority.

5. Obedience is evidence of a genuine faith

*If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,”
but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?
In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

James 2:16-17

*Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: Whoever wants to
be my disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me.*

Mark 8:34

It is one thing to say that we believe in Jesus, but it is another thing to follow in His footsteps. A person may be well-versed in the Bible and openly profess to follow Jesus, but if they do not obey His commands, what kind of faith is that?

Obedience is the hallmark of a genuine disciple of Christ.

6. Obedience is the pathway to freedom

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves
be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

Galatians 5:1

*Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are
slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to
obedience, which leads to righteousness?*

Romans 6:16

God's laws are ultimately intended for our benefit. They are set in place to protect us and keep us away from sin, guilt and condemnation.

Living according to His word enables a life of peace and freedom. When we abide in Christ and obey scripture, God shapes us into the men and women he desires us to be. We are no longer a slave to our sinful nature. Just like how a train must run on its tracks in order to reach its destination, we as believers must live within the boundaries of God's law to fulfil our potential in Christ.

However, it can feel like obedience is a burden rather than a liberating thing. While it sometimes may feel this way, we need to understand that scripture is not a mere set of rules for moral living. It is the inspired word of God that has real power to transform lives and free us from bondage to sin. Through our obedience, we open ourselves to a life of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Our

Father does not desire mere slaves to His word. He desires children who delight in His ways and blessings!

Reflection Station

Does obeying God's word feel like a burden? Confess to Him. Ask Him to help you know the joy and freedom that comes through obedience.

7. Obeying God means submitting to His appointed leaders

While many of us do not have difficulty submitting to God, some may feel uncomfortable with the thought of submitting to leaders. This discomfort could be due to prior negative experiences with authority or having witnessed first-hand how people have abused their power to take advantage of others. However, abuse of authority does not mean that authority in itself is wrong. Authority, when used for good, can be extremely beneficial.

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

Romans 13:1-2

Scripture is clear that all authority is established by God. He has deliberately placed individuals in positions of authority according to His will. Now, this does not imply that the people in authority are without flaw or weakness. But it is important for us to honour and trust in our spiritual leaders, knowing they have been entrusted to watch over us.

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Hebrews 13:17

We are to obey them as long as they are leading us within the boundaries of biblical principles. Even when they fail to do so, we should still continue to have an attitude of honour towards them, giving them due respect, but we should not do anything that contradicts biblical principles.

Likewise, when we are given positions of spiritual authority, it is vital to maintain a humble and obedient attitude towards the Lord and our leaders over us. This is so those under our care will be protected.

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:2-3

Reflection Station

How can you learn to submit to God and your leaders in times when you do not fully agree?

8. Obedience is an attitude that grows with maturity

A person may think “I will not do anything unless the Lord Himself tells me. Nobody else can tell me what to do.” While this might be driven by a sincere desire to do God’s will, often it reflects a false obedience to the Lord. A person with an attitude of humble submission to God would not have this kind of selective and self-centred mindset.

As we mature in our faith, we begin to understand the importance of obeying God and the leaders to whom He has given authority. We learn that God does not solely teach us through His Word, but many times through other people. The more we mature spiritually, the readier we become to obey our leaders and to do His will.

Why Should I Obey?

Today, many believe that God is like an oppressive headmaster and that Christianity is just a school of restrictions that deprive us of freedom and happiness. The world has bought deeply into the lie that “following our heart” and doing our own thing is more fulfilling than pursuing God’s will.

However, in Christ comes the great revelation that we are no longer bound to succumb to our selfish nature and that true fulfilment and satisfaction is found in wholehearted obedience to God. He is our ultimate source of freedom, joy and peace!

Below are several benefits of a life of humble obedience.

1. Increased fruitfulness and blessing

Few people would say they enjoy the hard labour of cultivating a flower and vegetable garden. Yet, every year when the flowers bloom and the vegetables are harvested, many enjoy what has been produced.

Living in obedience to the Lord doesn’t guarantee an easy life. But it does come with the promise of great fruitfulness and blessing in due time.

Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:8-9

No man by their own efforts can guarantee an abundant life. We cannot even be sure of tomorrow. But we can have confidence in the fact that those who obey the Lord will find that their lives and ministries will naturally be blessed.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Throughout the Bible, we observe the principle of obedience followed by subsequent blessing and disobedience preceding punishment.

For example, Adam's disobedience resulted in God's curse:

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

Genesis 3:17-18

Abraham's faith-filled obedience led to God's blessing:

"I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Genesis 22:17-18

God's promise of blessing if Israel would obey Him:

"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession."

Exodus 19:5

In fact, this promise of blessing on the condition of Israel's faithfulness and obedience is a recurring theme throughout scripture.

"If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Isaiah 1:19-20

"Tell them that this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Cursed is the one who does not obey the terms of this covenant—the terms I commanded your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the iron-smelting furnace.' I said, 'Obey me and do everything I command you, and you will be my people, and I will be your God. Then I will fulfil the oath I swore to your ancestors, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey'—the land you possess today."

Jeremiah 11:3-5

Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

Hebrews 5:8-9

The Lord is faithful to bless those who obey Him. It may not always be immediate, but we can take heart that the time of harvest and abundance will come.

2. Greater intimacy with God

“Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

John 14:21

Our obedience enables us to encounter Jesus. The more we keep His word, the more Jesus will reveal Himself to us. This is further emphasised in **verse 23**:

Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”

John 14:23

God delights in our obedience because it shows that we truly desire to follow Him and trust His plans for us.

Jesus obeyed His Father’s will perfectly, and we know that He was closer to God than anyone ever was or will be. As we remain in the Father’s will and commands, He will eventually become closer to us in every aspect of our lives. We will begin to understand why He delights in certain things, and why He abhors sin.

An attitude of humble submission allows the Holy Spirit to transform us in the likeness of Jesus and reveals the heart of the Father.

3. Greater perseverance amidst trials and temptations

No-one enjoys a trial or test when it is happening, but many savour the feeling of accomplishment when they succeed and their hard work pays off.

Whether we realize it or not, everyone is obedient to something. It could either be our own desires and the world’s values, or the ways of the Lord. In His desire to see us be transformed into His image, God often allows challenges in our lives to grow our obedience and perseverance.

Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

Deuteronomy 8:2

Our wholehearted obedience in times of temptation and stress develops a Christlike character in us. We begin to understand what Christ endured and achieved through His suffering, and the glory that resulted. Great is the reward in heaven for those who remain steadfast in the Lord under trial.

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12

4. Restoring spiritual authority

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Genesis 1:28

In the beginning, God had vested His authority in Adam and Eve to rule over the earth. However, this right was removed when they disobeyed and fell into sin.

Today, every believer has been given authority in Christ Jesus to carry out God's work on earth. We have God's authority to heal the sick, cast out demons and perform signs and wonders.

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Matthew 10:1

“And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;”

Mark 16:17

When we received Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we became co-heirs of God's kingdom. We will one day reign with Christ and inherit His glory. But His kingdom's reign in our lives extend only as much as we are willing to submit those aspects of our lives. More authority is given to those who are willing to submit to authority.

Jesus served as the greatest example of a person who obeyed and subsequently received God's authority and honour.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name

Philippians 2:8-9

As a result of Christ's obedience and sacrifice, the Lord exalted Him to the highest place. Before we can truly live in the spiritual authority that God has purposed for us, we must remain obedient to His word.

What if I Disobey?

Below are several consequences of disobedience to God.

1. Encountering unnecessary harm

In the children's story of Little Red Riding Hood, little Red Riding Hood was on her way to her grandmother's house. Her mother told her not to stop to talk to anyone but she disobeyed by speaking to a wolf. As a result, the wolf found out that the girl's grandmother was sick. The wolf ate the grandmother and attacked the little girl when she arrived. Fortunately, a passing hunter heard their cries for help and rescued them.

While this may be a simple childish story, the moral is that all of Riding Hood's trouble could have been avoided if she obeyed her mother's instruction. As previously discussed, all of God's commands and instructions are ultimately for our good. Thus, disobeying them would naturally bring about harm to ourselves.

In 1 Samuel 15, we see how God had rejected King Saul and removed the kingdom from him because of his arrogance. If he had only remained faithful to God, his life would have been much different.

For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.

1 Samuel 15:23

2. Missing out on God's blessings

Throughout scripture, it is clear that God's blessings are conditional upon our obedience to Him.

An entire generation of Israelites missed out on the blessings of living in the Promised Land because they had sinned and rebelled against the Lord.

Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?

Hebrews 3:16-18

3. Forfeiting our right to reign with Christ

As discussed earlier, every person who puts their faith in Jesus and receives the Holy Spirit will be considered co-heirs with Christ and inherit His glory.

Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:17

This is an incredible promise!

However, if we continue in our sin and deliberately reject God's ways, we lose this promise over our lives.

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Hebrews 10:26-27

4. Lacking in vision and purpose

“Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint”

Proverbs 29:18

During the time of Judges, the Israelites lived without vision or purpose. One day they would worship the Lord, the next they would worship Baal. It was a time of bloody battles, betrayal, civil injustice and many dehumanizing acts. Some of what we read in Judges is uplifting, but much of the book contains sad or enraging stories.

This is the result of a people with no discipline, who were a law unto themselves.

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

Judges 17:6

Following after God not only gives us purpose in life, it prevents us from ruining our lives by doing as we please.

The Apostle Paul understood this well when he exhorted the Corinthian church to remain disciplined in their faith in order to achieve the crown of life.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.

1 Corinthians 9:24-26

All that Paul did in his life was an obedient response to what God had commanded him to do. Let us examine our motives for everything we do. Do we have a clear vision and purpose in God?

Reflection Station

Do you have a clear vision of what God desires for your life? Write it down.

Cultivating an Attitude of Obedience

Throughout scripture, it is clear how God's blessings are conditional upon man's obedience. Many times, the people of Israel were warned of the consequences of rebellion as well as the rewards if they remained faithful (see **Deuteronomy 27**, **Joshua 24**).

Having a deep understanding of the principles of obedience will spur a natural desire to obey the Lord. Below are some ways to cultivate an attitude of obedience.

5. Recognising and repenting of stubborn mindsets

Sometimes the biggest hindrance in our relationship with God is our own stubborn mindset. It is human nature to go astray and to want to do things our own way.

This is shown all throughout scripture; in the Israelites of Moses's lifetime and in the Pharisees of Jesus's lifetime. In the Old Testament, we observe again and again how the Israelites disobeyed God's laws and disregarded His grace. Eventually, God allowed them to follow their stubborn ways and face the consequences.

But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and said, "Because this nation has violated the covenant I ordained for their ancestors and has not listened to me

Judges 2:19-20

God had lifted His hand of protection and blessing over Israel because they continued to reject His commands.

Reflection Station

How are you like the people of Israel?

In what areas of your life are you continuously rejecting God today?

6. Seeking humility

Pride grows when we begin to rely on ourselves rather than on God's grace. In today's world where religion is deemed irrelevant and many secular values are seen as 'progressive', it is easy to think that we know better than God. This is a lie

the devil has been promoting since the beginning of creation, when he caused Eve to doubt God's words and authority (see **Genesis 3**).

We enter dangerous waters the moment we reject the truth of God's word and trust in our own judgment instead. When we believe that our way is better than God's, we start making the same mistake as Eve in the Garden of Eden. When we ignore the sincere advice of our spiritual leaders, we may harbour pride in our hearts and become vulnerable to the devil's schemes, just like Eve.

7. Allowing God to transform our hearts

The Lord delights in our asking when it is in line with His plan and purpose for our lives. When we ask Him to transform us into the men/women He desires, He is faithful to do so.

God's grace is this: He not only gives us the ability to do what He wants us to do, but also the DESIRE to do so.

Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose.

Philippians 2:12-13

8. Honouring, forgiving and supporting our spiritual leaders

Honouring God involves honouring those whom He has called to lead and shepherd others. Sometimes it can be easy to criticise and find fault in our leaders. But we must understand that our words are not merely words. They are reflections of what is really inside our hearts.

A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Luke 6:45

If we are often critical of the decisions made by those leading us, it is wise to ask the Spirit to search our hearts for the reason why we feel that way. It could be that we are harbouring resentment in our hearts.

As we guard our hearts and mouths with all diligence, we will find it easier to understand and support our leaders in their decisions.

It is important to keep in mind that a title doesn't make someone perfect. Leaders can make mistakes or say things that aren't always right. It is times like these that we must learn to show grace while discerning God's heart for them.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another
Colossians 3:13

Our spiritual leaders have a responsibility to correct us when we go astray. Their hope should always be that we grow closer to Jesus, which often requires continual repentance when we mess up. How we respond to correction reveals a lot about our maturity and humility. To effectively cultivate an obedient and godly lifestyle, we need the covering, correction and support of our spiritual mentors and leaders.

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4:22-24

What does Christ-Like Obedience Look Like?

1. Following wholeheartedly

Christ-like obedience is unreserved and wholehearted. Though Jesus's crucifixion was no easy task, He willingly and fully surrendered to the Father's will.

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."
Luke 22:42

King Hezekiah too was blessed as a result of his wholehearted obedience to the Lord.

In everything that he undertook in the service of God's temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.
2 Chronicles 31:21

2. Trusting in faith

Unquestioning obedience may seem like blind faith to some and illogical to others. But many times the reality is that God's promises and plans far exceed our comprehension. Our obedience should not depend on how much we understand a situation, but how much we trust in the promises and character of God.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8-9

In **Luke 5**, when Jesus asked Peter to let down his nets, Peter had no idea why. The request (coming from an inexperienced fisherman) made no sense whatsoever. Yet, Peter obeyed and ended up with a miraculously enormous catch of fish.

He said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

Luke 5:4-5

Christ-like obedience often requires trusting in faith that God is in control and will bring us through.

3. Persevering amidst opposition

True obedience perseveres to the very end, even in the face of intense difficulty. Jesus set an example in this by being obedient even to the point of death on a cross. The early apostles and disciples too, despite ongoing persecution, did not shrink back from what they knew was the truth.

God doesn't only desire people to start the race; He wants us to finish the race. Let us hold on to Christ and rely heavily on His Holy Spirit to strengthen us in our trials and struggles.

"My food," said Jesus "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

John 4:34

4. Acting immediately

Often the devil tries to hinder God's work by delaying our obedience. We may be tempted to make excuses when opportunities come our way or put off what we know God wants us to do now. Common excuses may include:

- “I will serve when I feel I’m ready or capable”
- “I don’t have enough time right now”
- “I think somebody else is more suitable than I am”

We need to recognize that it is a great privilege to serve the King of kings and be used by Him. When we observe the lives of the early disciples, we see how God can use those with an obedient spirit and who do not hesitate to respond.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Matthew 4:21-22

In **Acts**, Aeneas obeyed immediately when Peter instructed him to stand up in faith and he was healed.

*“Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.”
Immediately Aeneas got up.*

Acts 9:34

Reflection Station

How quickly do you respond to God’s voice? What causes you to hesitate?

5. Obeying unconditionally

Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus made it very clear to His disciples that they were to obey everything He had commanded them and to teach others to do so too. No command or instruction is left optional or irrelevant.

*“...and teaching them to obey **everything** I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*
Matthew 28:20

Conclusion

True and godly obedience may not always be easy or straightforward, but we can take heart that it will always lead to great reward in eternity. The Holy Spirit is our helper and He will enable us to follow in the way of everlasting life. While the world may tell us to be a law unto ourselves, God’s word is the only way to true and lasting freedom, joy and fulfilment.

Discussion Point

Read Deuteronomy 28. Look at the various components of your life and evaluate how much God has blessed that aspect of your life. Are there areas that need to be yielded to Him?

Some aspects to consider:

- Where you live (v3, 16)
- Your children (v4, 18)
- Your work (v4, 18)
- Your daily resources (v5, 17)
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