



CONNECT

**FIRST STEPS - LESSON 15: OBEDIENCE TO
GOD AND LEADERS**



Objectives

- New believers to understand the real meaning of obedience according to the Bible.
- New believers to cultivate an obedient attitude.

Introduction

Former NFL quarterback Roger Staubach, who led the Dallas Cowboys to win two Super Bowls, once admitted he was frustrated with the fact that he did not get to call his own plays, which many quarterbacks (usually the leader of the team) did in his day. In American football a play is a "plan of action" or "strategy" used to move the ball down the field. Instead, Coach Tom Landry sent every play in himself. Yet even though Staubach considered Coach Landry a genius when it came to football, his pride told him he should be the one calling the shots. Later on in his career, Staubach saw his error. He said, "I faced up to the issue of obedience. Once I learned to obey, there was harmony, fulfilment, and victory."

It can be hard sometimes to let someone else call the shots, especially when we think we know how to handle the situation better than he or she does. But the reality is, even when we do not realise it, others often see things more clearly than we do. That is a very good picture of why obedience to God's commands is so crucial. Even when we feel like we can go our own way and have things turn out better, God sees what we do not see. He knows how life works infinitely better than we do! Life always works best when we follow God's ways. Lean into Him in obedience and He will never let you down!

Why Does God Want Us To Be Obedient?

Obedience is a basic principle of the Christian life. The disobedience of Adam and Eve resulted in mankind being under the influence of Satan and sin (Genesis 3). Jesus was obedient to the heavenly Father to die on the cross.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:8

This one act of sacrificial obedience has brought blessings to the world. We therefore must understand the matter of obedience. God desires for mankind to be blessed. Just as every earthly father wants to give good things to his children, our heavenly Father also wants to bless us. He teaches us that obedience will bring blessings and prosperity to His children.

1. Obedience is a way to show our love to God

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

2. Obedience brings blessing to our lives

God will bless our family, work, finances and relationships.

If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the Lord your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your ancestors. He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land—your grain, new wine and olive oil—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you. You will be blessed more than any other people; none of your men or women will be childless, nor will any of your livestock be without young. The Lord will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all who hate you.

Deuteronomy 7:12-15

Abraham obeyed God. He was willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac, as a burnt offering on the mountain. As a result, God promised Abraham that He would bless him and make his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Through his offspring all nations on earth would be blessed, because he had obeyed God.

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 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 22:15-18

What Does The Bible Tell Us About Obedience?

We start our Christian lives by turning away from our sins and following our Lord Jesus Christ. Our obedience needs to be to God and His Word because:

1. The Bible commands us to obey God

Obey the Lord your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today.
Deuteronomy 27:10

2. The Bible shows that Jesus obeyed the Father

The Lord Jesus Christ humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on the cross in order to fulfil the plan of the Father.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!
Philippians 2:8

3. God rewards obedience

He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”
Luke 11:28

4. Obedience demonstrates our faith

We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.
1 John 2:3-6

5. When we truly obey God and His Word, we will obey our leaders

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.
Romans 13:1

6. The Bible encourages us to listen to our leaders' counsel and correction that are in line with the Bible and be a joy to them

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep 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 live in an independent age, where people pride themselves in their self-sufficiency. To many, subjection is a sign of weakness or inadequacy. This is not a spiritual mindset at all. Jesus had to be subjected to authorities in His life, and so must we.

Reflection Station

1. To whom should I submit?

The Bible speaks of obedience to:

A) Parents

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Colossians 3:20

B) Governing authorities such as presidents, kings, prime ministers, leaders at different level of the government

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

1 Peter 2:13-14

This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.

Romans 13:6-7

C) Bosses or employers

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

Colossians 3:22

D) Pastors and church leaders at every level

Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Obeying Our Leaders

There is a direct correlation between obeying God and obeying our leaders. Obeying God and obeying our leaders must come hand in hand. The word of God commands us to obey our leaders and to submit to their authority. We should obey church leaders whom God appoints to take care of us, protect and teach us. They are the ones who lead us to the will and the plan of God. Leaders must give an account to God.

1. God appoints human authority as His agent to provide for spiritual covering

God delegates His authority to spiritual agents – His leaders. In principle, God covers every believer. In practice, He appoints leaders to represent Him in providing spiritual covering.

Let us look at the life of Paul as an example. Paul was the spiritual leader to the believers in Corinth. He did not appoint himself but he received authority from God to oversee them.

So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it.

2 Corinthians 10:8

Paul recognises that the authority that God has given him is for building up and not tearing down.

This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

2 Corinthians 13:10

2. Spiritual covering is received through submission

God appoints overseers to provide spiritual covering over a church or a group of churches. Leaders are tasked by God to provide spiritual covering over members of the local church. The main task of an overseer is to take care of God's flock.

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.

1 Peter 5:2

God uses leaders to help us grow to maturity. We must learn how to overlook our leaders' minor faults and learn how to submit to their care, for in learning to submit to them, it shows that we are submitting to Christ.

3. We should obey our leaders as long as their advice is in line with the Bible

Ultimately, the goal is to obey God. We obey God by obeying our leaders. If our leaders disobey God, we cannot obey them in their disobedience. If any leader instructs us to do something that contradicts the Bible, we cannot obey their instruction because we must first obey God. However, we must maintain an attitude of respect, honour and submission to them, because they are still leaders under God. We honour God by honouring the positions of authority. For example, we should respect all policemen even when a certain policeman may involve in corruption. We cannot follow the corrupt policeman's instruction to do something corrupt.

Mentor Chat

1. What are the results of submission to leaders?

When we obey God, His Word, and leaders whom He appoints, His blessings will be abundantly poured out upon our lives. Obedience can help us:

A) To develop Godly character and habits

Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

1 Peter 1:13-14

B) To gain wisdom and understanding

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Proverbs 9:10

C) To receive spiritual protection

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep 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

D) To receive advice and guidance from God

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

Psalms 32:8

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.

Proverbs 3:5-6

E) Become successful, free from negative consequences

If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the Lord your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your ancestors. He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land—your grain, new wine and olive oil—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you. You will be blessed more than any other people; none of your men or women will be childless, nor will any of your livestock be without young. The Lord will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all who hate you.

Deuteronomy 7:12-15

Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended.

Romans 13:2-3

Conclusion

Obedience is a willingness to cooperate with God and with spiritual leaders that are able to point us to godly directions and plans. It is crucial that we recognise authority and direction from God and our leaders. Obedience in the Christian faith is not something to be done out of mere obligation but out of the love we have for God.

I believe Christians often perceive obedience to God as some test designed just to see if we are really committed to Him. But what if it is designed as God's way of giving us what is best for us?

Graig Groeschel

Great moves of God are usually preceded by simple acts of OBEDIENCE.

Steven Furtick

Memory Verse

HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR LEADERS AND SUBMIT TO THEIR AUTHORITY, BECAUSE THEY KEEP 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



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