

LIVING AS CHILDREN OF GOD

STUDY FOUR – GROWING TO LOVE OBEDIENCE

Lesson Summary: God's children will develop a love for his commandments. We see the wisdom of the law as a part of God's order of the universe.

A Introduction – Lessons from Previous Weeks

1. God has adopted us
2. We should bear a family resemblance
3. Our motivation for change is our adoption.
4. Our aim is God's character
5. To change, we need to reflect deeply on truth about God and ourselves.
6. The Holy Spirit, present in every believer, initiates, empowers and guides this change.
7. We may encourage or resist this force, to our benefit or detriment.

B Progress Report – How is everyone doing?

C What prompts the Love required for obedience?

1. Review Luke 7:36-50
 - i) ⁴⁷Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—**for** she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”
 - (a) Support for alternative translation of “therefore”
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
2. The source of Simon's obedience is not love, but obligation. This can result in:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

D Jesus as a model of obedience.

1. **Hebrews 5:7-9** In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him...
2. His public ministry begins and ends with acts of extreme obedience
 - i) _____
 - ii) _____
3. Obedience characterized by listening to God through all suffering and in serving others, not in legalistic compliance with laws or accepted rules of decent behavior.

E What does our obedience consist of?

1. **Luke 10:26-28** Jesus said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” ²⁷ The man answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And Jesus said, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.
2. **1 John 3:23** And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.
 - i) Obedience has two components: _____ and _____

3. **1 John 5:1-3** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.
 - i) All who believe that Jesus is Christ are _____
 - ii) All who love the father, will also love _____
 - iii) All who love God's children, will be _____
 - (a) The fruit of belief is _____ and _____.
 - Fruit is evidence of life in a tree, not the source of life.
4. Two ways to cultivate a love of obedience:
 - i) Focus on relationship with your father (prayer, scripture, listening)
 - ii) Focus on relationships with your brothers (prayer, service, charity, random acts of kindness)

F Freedom in Obedience (Psalm 119)

³² *I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!*

³³ *Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end.*

³⁴ *Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.*

³⁵ *Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.*

³⁶ *Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!*

³⁷ *Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.*

³⁸ *Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared.*

1. The psalmist believes that God must initiate the change required for obedience. He asks God to take action:
 - i) _____
 - ii) _____
 - iii) _____
 - iv) _____
 - v) _____
 - vi) _____
 - vii) _____
2. The psalmist believes that "freedom" from God's commandments is actually enslavement to something else (verse 37). When you resist God's authority, what are you choosing to enslave yourself to? _____
(Think of those things which cause you anxiety or fear when threatened.)

⁴⁴ *I will keep your law continually, forever and ever,*

⁴⁵ *and I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts.*

⁴⁶ *I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame,*

⁴⁷ *for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love.*

⁴⁸ *I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.*

⁴⁹ *Remember your word to your servant, in which you have made me hope.*

3. The psalmist does not understand freedom in negative terms (i.e. freedom is a lack of restrictions, or freedom is removal of any barriers to the pursuit of our heart's desires). Instead, the psalmist sees God's laws as giving him _____ (vs. 44-45)
 - i) The psalmist experiences freedom when bound to God's law the same way a fish experiences freedom while constrained to the water.
 - ii) In this way, God's laws are not tests of obedience, but life preservers
4. Because the psalmist sees God commandments as life giving and freeing, he loves both the law and the lawgiver.

G Life Story – Change in God’s children.

H Application – Sins of the Tongue

1. **Ephesians 4:25-32** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
2. Increase chances of real change by focusing your effort
 - i) Sins of The Tongue > Gossip, Slander > One Outlet > One Target
 - ii) Why Gossip and Slander?
 - (a) The very act changes the way you feel about the target, even as you are speaking. This destroys the love between brothers and makes obedience in other areas more difficult.
3. What do you want to change:
 - i) Name your favorite target:_____
 - ii) Name your preferred outlet:_____
 - iii) What do you dislike about your target (why do you choose to hurt them vs. someone else)?

 - iv) What do you get out of the experience (how does it make you feel better)?

4. Possible Strategies:
 - i) Keep your focus of change on this one person, at least until you have real change.
 - ii) Pray for God to change your heart, and to reveal the root of your dislike, and the void you are trying to fill.
 - iii) Ask your preferred outlet to become your accountability partner.

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

Read Psalm 19:

1. It appears that verses 1-6 are on one topic, 7-14 on another.

What is the topic of 1-6? _____. What is the topic of 1-7? _____

What common thread(s) hold these together?

2. What are some of the ways the law is described?

3. Is there anything in the description that would be surprising to some people?

The Mosaic law, and especially the Ten Commandments, reveal God’s character and values.

See the attached sheets, which show how the Commandments:

(A.) Glorify God by revealing his character and

(B.) Are for our good.

THE COMMANDMENTS GLORIFY GOD
BY REFLECTING GOD'S CHARACTER

The Commandment:

Reflect God's Character in that:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. "You shall have no other gods before me." | <i>God is the only God. God is pre-eminent.</i> |
| 2. "You shall not make for yourself an idol." | <i>No image except man is sufficient to represent God.</i> |
| 3. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord." | <i>God's name reflects his character, which is honorable.</i> |
| 4. Remember the Sabbath by keeping it holy." | <i>God rested after the Sabbath; God values relationship as well as work.</i> |
| 5. "Honor your father and mother." | <i>God bestows honor on all humankind, but especially those he has put in authority.</i> |
| 6. You shall not murder." | <i>God is a life-giving God.</i> |
| 7. "You shall not commit adultery." | <i>God is a faithful, promise-keeping God.</i> |
| 8. "You shall not steal." | <i>God is a generous God, who supplies our needs.</i> |
| 9. "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor." | <i>God is a truthful God; indeed He is truth.</i> |
| 10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house... wife...or anything else." | <i>The generous God supplies our needs.</i> |

THE COMMANDMENTS ARE FOR MY GOOD

The Commandment:

Is for My Good Because:

1. "You shall have no other gods before me." *I was created to be satisfied in God, and will not be satisfied in any other god.*
2. "You shall not make for yourself an idol." *Pursuit of other gods distracts me from real satisfaction.*
3. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord." *My words reflect my heart; if my heart is right, my words honor God.*
4. Remember the Sabbath by keeping it holy." *The Sabbath was made for my benefit, to allow me to enjoy rest and relationship.*
5. "Honor your father and mother." *God provides representatives on earth to teach and guide; honoring them enables me to honor the God who provided them; and to live long in the land.*
6. You shall not murder." *We are made in God's image; preserving others ennoble me by reflecting God's life-giving character and secures a livable society for myself and others.*
7. "You shall not commit adultery." *Marital faithfulness reflects God's covenantal character; preserves marriages and society for myself and others.*
8. "You shall not steal." *Dealing honestly with one another causes us to prosper individually and as a society.*
9. "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor." *Truth-telling builds a just society and allows us to live openly before one another.*
10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house... wife...or anything else." *Relying on the generous God supplies our needs and keeps our focus on the true source of satisfaction.*