

The Importance of Obedience

A Meditation for Twelve Step Recovery

Why is it necessary to be obedient to God in our daily lives? As we continue on in working the Twelve Steps, we need to look at the place obedience has in our success or failure. Those who have been actually "working" the Steps and have stuck with the program have begun to realize that the Steps will only work for us if we follow their instructions honestly and completely - no short cuts or half measures (remember, "Half measures availed us nothing"). This also takes us back to Step 3 - "Made a decision to **turn our will and our lives** over to the care of God", because if we REALLY turn our lives and our will over to God, it means we will now **obey HIS WILL** and **we will let Him direct our lives**. We will look more at doing God's will when we get to Step 11, but the principle of obeying God is necessary for ALL of the Steps to work in your life. If you think just coming to meetings and playing around with some of the ideas and principles that are taught in the Twelve Steps is going to make you successful, you will be disappointed. Also, we see many people dropping out of the program in the middle: some balk and procrastinate at doing the Fourth Step inventory, some don't want to get rid of all their shortcomings and character defects, and some stop short at making amends. Wherever they have hit a rough spot, they have let it impede their progress, rather than just humbling themselves and asking God to help them GET OVER the rough spot.

Are you one of those who have hit a rough spot and can't seem to get back on track? If you really meant it when you turned your WILL and your LIFE over to the care of God, then you are going to have to re-examine your motives and the choices you have made since then. You may need to make a rededication of your life to the Lord, and make a DECISION to follow Him and OBEY Him in every area of your life.

The following are some examples from the Bible of the importance of obeying God, even in seeming "little" areas. In I Samuel 15:1-28, we see an incident from the life of Saul, the first king of Israel. He did not obey God completely, but **made some "minor adjustments" to the command** that God had given him. Then, when God's prophet, Samuel, came to Saul and accused him of disobedience, Saul blamed the people of Israel, saying THEY had disobeyed, and made excuses saying that they had just saved out the best of the goods to give as a sacrifice to God. Making excuses, blaming others, or compromising in any way is NOT the kind of obedience that God blesses. The Lord wants us to obey Him without questioning, grumbling, or making adjustments of our own.

• **I Samuel 15: 22-23** "Has 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**....For **rebellion** is as the sin of witchcraft, and **stubbornness** is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."

In Jeremiah 38-40 there are two other incidents of someone either obeying or disobeying God. God's prophet gave King Zedekiah specific instructions **what to do to save his life**, and WARNED him of what would be the consequences of disobeying, but the king disobeyed anyway (Jer. 38:17-18). The king was afraid that he would be hurt if he did what God said, but Jeremiah the prophet said that what he feared would NOT happen if he would only obey God (vs. 19-20). The sad thing is, everything the king was trying to hold onto by disregarding God's instructions, was lost anyway (Jer. 39:4-8). Zedekiah thought he had a better plan than what God had said to do; he thought he was smarter than God. Then, there was an Ethiopian named Ebed-Melech (Jer. 38:7-13) who trusted God and showed compassion to His prophet, Jeremiah. The Lord protected Ebed-Melech and kept him safe (Jer. 39:16-18) even when all of Israel was being punished for their disobedience (Jer. 40:1-3).

•**Jeremiah 38:20** "But Jeremiah said, 'They shall not deliver you [*to your enemies*]. **Please, obey the voice of the Lord** which I speak to you. So it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live.'"

•**Proverbs 3:5-7** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do **NOT lean (rely, trust) on your own understanding** ; in all your ways acknowledge (obey) Him, and He shall direct your paths. **Do not be wise in your own eyes**; fear the Lord and depart from evil."

What does it mean to lean on your own understanding or be wise in your own eyes? It means you think you can come up with a better plan than God, or you can figure it out on your own. You CANNOT trust your own intellect or emotions (your heart) to tell you what to do in a crisis situation, or in just the daily walk of life. You MUST know what God's word says to do, and you must do it.

•**Proverbs 14:12** "There is a **WAY which SEEMS right** to a man, but its end is the way of death."

•**Jeremiah 17:9** "The **HEART is deceitful** above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

How much better to be one who obeys God without questioning! He blesses that kind of obedience. The blessings of God will not and cannot come into our lives if we are disobedient, because most of the wonderful promises of God's protection, healing or providing of our needs are **CONDITIONAL to our OBEDIENCE to Him** in some way or another.

•**Matthew 7:24-27** "Therefore whoever **hears** these sayings of Mine, and **DOES them**, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was **founded on the rock**. Now everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and **does NOT do them**, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And **great was its fall**."

•**John 9:6-7** "When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "**Go, wash in the pool of Siloam**" (which is translated **Sent**). **So he went** and washed, and came back seeing.

•**John 2:5** "His mother said to the servants, "**Whatever He says to you, do it**."

Definition: "Pool of Siloam" (which is translated SENT). So he WENT — The man DID WHAT JESUS TOLD HIM to DO - he WENT where Jesus SENT him. No matter how crazy it may seem to you, you need to be the same way - **DO whatever God says to DO in His word! GO wherever God tells you to GO!** To obey God's word without always trying to argue with Him or "figure out HOW it works" is true FAITH, and the way to have God's blessings in your life.

Definition: "Whatever He SAYS to you, DO it" — Mary had no idea **what** Jesus would do, but **she had FAITH that He would take care of the situation**. WE SHOULD HAVE this **SAME KIND OF FAITH**. That means, we don't have to try to figure out how the Lord will DO IT, or try to tell Him HOW He has to answer our prayers, but just TRUST HIM. Also, true OBEDIENCE is to obey God's commands that we read in His word, even when we don't fully understand them.