

What's Holding You Back? **“Disobedience”** (Part 6)

Intro: Story of daughter disrespecting her grandmother and refusing to apologize. (Share) Obedience isn't always easy, but it is our disobedience that holds us back...robs us of blessing...hinders the race God has for us. This has always been the case even from the beginning.

- Gen. 4: Story of Cain and Abel

Gen. 4:6-7 “Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.” (NLT)

- Often, the thing that holds us back is simply our unwillingness to do what we know God wants us to. Cain knew what he was supposed to do and refused to do so.
- It's not the things we don't know that usually trip us up on this race God has called us to run. It's the things we already know and refuse to do. This is what holds us back! This is what keeps us from becoming who God wants us to be...disobedience!
- So how do we move past the weight of disobedience? Is this even possible? C'mon! We're always going to struggle obeying God. True...but disobedience should not be the major characteristic of our lives. As followers of Christ, obedience should be the dominant characteristic not disobedience. Unfortunately, for many believers, disobedience is what dominates their lives. Why do I say this? Because statistically, most Christians live no different than unbelievers. (Divorce rate is the same / teen pregnancy / honesty surveys)
- So how do we throw off this weight? (Not sinless perfection...but a life characterized by obedience!)

I. Embrace God's Word As The Only Absolute Standard For Your Life

Ps. 119:160 “All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.” (NIV)

II Tim. 3:16-17 “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.” (NLT)

- Do you agree with how the Bible describes itself?
 - A. Settle the issue of absolute truth
 1. Most believers' lives are characterized by disobedience because of this issue right here. Only 32% of adults who attend bible based churches in America believe in absolute moral truth. Most believe truth is relative.
 2. How can we be committed to following something if we don't believe it's true?

Christians have bought into the philosophy of our culture that truth is relative and this belief destroys our confidence in and our obedience to the word of God

3. What is the standard you use to navigate your life? Yourself? Your feelings? What's culturally acceptable? What's the most convenient? What creates the least amount of pain? What makes you look best in the eyes of others? What is the most financially beneficial? Whatever creates the most pleasure?
 4. How can we effectively run the race God has set before us if we don't even believe the book He gave us to help us navigate life? If we really don't believe "All His words are True!"
 5. We can never throw off disobedience until we settle this issue. Until this issue is resolved in us we will continue picking and choosing what we will follow while ignoring the rest.
- So how do I resolve this issue?
- B. Absolute truth is an issue of the will not intellect
1. Some of you struggle with the intellectual issue. You just have a problem believing in the whole "absolute thing". Some people think that to believe this they have to become mindless, intellectual wimps. Not so!
 2. Embracing God's word as having absolute authority in your life is an issue with your will not your mind. It's a heart issue not an intellectual one.
 3. For example: Let's say you don't like the laws we have in our country / state and you decide to start picking and choosing which ones you want to obey and which ones you think are stupid!
- Hunting Tag system / Steelhead bag limit / Property taxes / DEQ approved / Speed Limits / No talking on cell phones /
 4. You and I may not like some of these laws, but they are absolute none the less. Choose not to obey them and there will eventually be consequences. You may get away with things for awhile, but consequences will find you.
 5. Obedience to them has nothing to do with the intellect and everything to do with the will. You don't have to kick your brain in neutral to obey the laws of the land. You don't have to kick your brain in neutral to embrace God's word as absolute in your life either!
 6. God's word calls itself truth. Jesus called it truth. It is God's navigation instructions for this life that are absolutely true every time in every situation. Will you choose to let God's word be this standard in your life?

II. Believe That Obedience Results In Blessing

James 1:25 "But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it." (NLT)

Josh. 1:8 “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” (NLT)

- Do you really believe that obedience to God’s word will truly bless your life?

A. Believe that a life of obedience will not leave you disappointed

Rom. 9:33 “...He who believes in Him will not be disappointed.” (NASB)

1. There is this general feeling in many believers that if they completely follow God’s word they will be disappointed because of what they missed out on in this life. That following God’s word will hinder enjoyment / fun / pleasure / excitement / prosperity /
 2. The promise from God’s word is just the opposite. God will never disappoint you! Now, this doesn’t mean disappointing things won’t ever happen. There is plenty of disappointment in this life. (job loss / sickness / natural disasters / crime...
 3. BUT, a life of following God and His word will not lead to a disappointing life. A life of obedience is not a drag, it is the path to a successful, fulfilling life in God’s Kingdom!
 4. Satan just loves to promote the lie that following God’s word completely is just too restrictive for these modern times. He loves to convince us that we will be disappointed if we don’t taste what this world offers. (Follow most of it just not all of it.)
 5. BUT, the promise of following God’s word is that it produces freedom in our lives. It’s the word that sets us free! The more we follow it the more freedom we experience. The less we follow it the more bondage we experience.
 6. In our country, true freedom is walking inside the boundaries of the laws that are established. Ignore those laws and you lose your freedom. It works like this in the spiritual realm. Obeying God’s word can’t lead to disappointment because it keeps you free and blesses your life! (He will prove to you His word is true!)
- Some of you may be thinking...“I have been obeying God and I don’t see much blessing yet?”

B. Believe that blessings are multiplied the longer you obey

Gal. 6:7-9 “Don’t be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.” (NLT)

1. There is a principal about blessing we need to understand. We harvest what we plant. Therefore, if you plant disobedience in your life then you will harvest the results of that choice. If you plant obedience, you will harvest blessing from that choice. Our lives are the result of planting and harvesting. (be careful what you plant!!!)

2. The harvest isn't always immediate. Seeds take time to grow. Those who get too impatient for the blessings never see them. WHY? They quit too soon. They quit before they had a chance to produce in your life.
3. God is not like a Cosmic Vending machine. The blessings or consequences are not always immediate. BUT, the more good seed you keep putting into the soil of your life the greater the coming harvest of blessing.
4. This is why it says, "don't get tired of doing good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing IF we don't give up." Don't stop sowing the good seed of obedience in your life. God says it will be worth it. You won't be disappointed with your harvest!!! (Some of you haven't been at it very long. Don't quit!)

III. Reject The Idea That Obedience Is A Burden

1 John 5:3 "Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome." (NLT)

Malachi 1:13 "You say, 'It's too hard to serve the LORD,' and you turn up your noses at my commands," says the LORD..." (NLT)

A. Be honest with our thinking about obedience

1. Are there aspects of obedience where we truly feel this way? Where we look at what God requires and just feel like it's a burden to obey and follow? If this is true, it will erode our commitment to obedience.
 2. Let's just look at a few things we know the Lord wants us to obey, yet sometimes refuse to, because we look at them as too hard or a burden. Here are a few things God commands every believer to obey
 - Every believer is to serve. (Why do we have a labor shortage?)
 - Every believer is to give financially (
 - Every believer is to forgive
 - Get married instead of live together
 - Coming to church consistently worshipping together
 3. Are there areas of obedience where you view these behaviors as a burden? If so, obedience is nearly impossible. We need to remember that obedience even in the hard areas is the path of blessing. (Many have a situational obedience)
- In order for some of you to move past this, there is another issue you may need to resolve.

B. Let go of our performance driven faith

1. For some of you, your obedience is motivated by trying to earn God's approval / earn God's love / earn God's support / earn His acceptance. If this is in your thinking, God's word is going to feel more like a burden than a blessing. You'll always wonder if you've done enough.
2. In order for God's word not to be a burden, you must embrace what God's word says about your acceptance. You must come to believe that there is nothing you can do to make God love and accept you more than He already does!

3. Our obedience should be motivated out of our love and gratitude for God...our belief that His way is best...our commitment to His course; NOT trying to make Him love and accept us. Not trying to win His approval.
 4. Some of you have come out of very legalistic churches and families. This is something God wants to deliver you from. Obedience motivated out of love not fear.
 5. I don't want my kids to obey me out of fear because they're trying to earn my love and approval. They already have that unconditionally! We've had conversations about this. We value our relationship so much they don't want to do something to hinder it. They don't want to do something to disappoint us. (Great motivation!)
- Works this way in our relationship with God. Stop trying to earn something you already have!
 - Can you reject the idea that what God requires is a burden?

IV. Commit To The Path Of Obedience Daily

Deut. 30:19-20 "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses...Oh, that you would choose life...You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life..." (NLT)

- The key to life is committing ourselves to a life of obedience to His word! This is how we love God! This is how we commit ourselves firmly to Him.

A. The choice of obedience must be made in advance

Ps. 119:30 "I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations." (NLT)

Ps. 119:59 "I pondered the direction of my life, and I turned to follow your laws." (NLT)

1. Notice these are in the past tense. The writer already made this decision. We need to do the same. We don't wait until the heat of the moment to decide what are convictions will be. We make the decision in advance.
2. We decide now that we will follow what God's word says regardless. We make the commitment to obedience before we ever get to the circumstance or situation.
3. As a youth pastor, I talk a lot to students about developing dating convictions in advance about "How Far is Too Far". I would tell them how important it was to decide in advance before your emotions and desires make decisions for you. It's pretty tough to develop convictions in the heat of the moment.
4. It's no different for adults. We need to commit to obedience in advance before our emotions and fears kick in...before we begin to rationalize...before we consider another path. No matter what happens, I am already committed to obeying.

B. The choice of obedience must be made daily

Ps. 119:56 "This is how I spend my life: obeying your commandments." (NLT)

1. This commitment to obedience isn't a one-time decision, it is a decision we make every day. We roll out of bed every day making the commitment to obedience before the day ever begins.
2. Whatever happens today, the characteristic I want dominating my life is

obedience! I start everyday committing myself to obedience and asking God for the strength to live out that commitment.

- Is disobedience another weight that you need to cast off so you can be the person God is calling you to be? Not sinless perfection, but a life characterized by obedience to His word.

Is God's word the only absolute standard for your life?

Believe that Obedience really does bring blessing?

Reject the idea that obedience is a burden?

Commit to the path of obedience daily?

- Will you commit to a life of obedience today?