

session 6 study guide

obedience

message

What is obedience? What is its importance in our walk with Jesus? Perhaps Andrew Murray, a pastor and writer in the late 1800s, put it best: “The starting point and the goal of our Christian life is obedience.” If there is a secret to living the Christian life, it is to be found through obedience.

The following passage contains references to many Old Testament stories with which you may not be familiar. However, note the one thing that they all hold in common: God asks individuals to act and they obey. As you read, keep the following questions in mind: (1) In what types of actions are people being obedient? (2) In what areas of your life do you find it most difficult to obey God’s calling?

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home

in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death (Hebrews 11:1-19).

dig

1. How did the writer of Hebrews define “faith”?

2. What is the connection between faith and obedience?

3. In what ways are the individuals in this passage called upon to be obedient?

4. Hebrews 11:7 discusses Noah's obedience. Read the original account in Genesis 6:11-22. What do you notice about God's request and Noah's response?

5. The list of individuals mentioned in these verses includes some great biblical heroes and some tarnished, imperfect characters. But at some point each of them displayed obedience in faith to God. What does this list of the faithful tell us about the kind of person God is looking for in His kingdom?

apply

Doing what God asks is easy when it's something we enjoy or want to do. It's when the request is difficult, confusing or unpleasant that our obedience is truly tested. Let's take a look at the practices and promises of obedience.

Jesus, our example of obedience

1. Read Philippians 2:5-11. According to this passage, what attitude did Jesus have regarding obedience?

2. What was the result of Jesus' obedience?

obedience involves action

1. Read James 1:22-25. In your own words, explain the analogy James uses in this verse.

2. According to these verses, what is the result of obedience?

Obedience is a choice we make that demonstrates our commitment to Jesus. That's why there can't be passive obedience. Obedience necessitates an active response on our part.

God asks for obedience in all areas of our life

1. Read 1 Kings 8:61. Write and discuss what obedience to God means in the following areas of your life:

Friendships _____

Boyfriend/Girlfriend _____

Parents _____

Parties _____

Sexuality _____

Worship _____

Grades _____

Servanthood _____

2. Take a few moments to list areas of your life in which God is calling you to be obedient.

3. How will you show obedience to God in these areas?

freedom and fulfillment come through obedience

1. Read John 14:21. If you say you love God, what will be the result according to this verse?

2. Why is this such an important principle in your Christian life?

reflect

1. How do the standards of society influence your obedience to God?

2. God loves you! He wants the best for you! How do you think He feels when you walk away from Him in disobedience?

3. John Calvin wrote, “True knowledge of God is born out of obedience.” In your own words, what does this statement mean? Do you agree or disagree?

4. Can you truly know God and not obey Him? Can you obey God if you don't truly know Him?

5. What can you and others in your group do to help each other live more obedient Christian lifestyles?

6. Describe a time in your life when you sensed God's calling and obeyed.



This is love for God: to obey his commands.
And his commands are not burdensome,
for everyone born of God overcomes the world.

1 JOHN 5:3-4