



Obedience

because of love

Start Here

God has blessed us with free will and the ability to act on our personal choices. We love to do what we want! But there are times when what we want conflicts with what others want.

In those moments, the nature of the relationship with the other person or people will often determine what we choose to do, and the attitude with which we do it.

Read the next three short stories and discuss the questions at the end:

1. Ali's mother asked him to come straight home from school to help clean the house to be ready for guests that evening. But his friends have invited him to play. "Come just for an hour, we'll have great fun!" Ali knows if he's late, his mother's face will be absolutely red with anger and the punishment from his father will be severe. But anger is all he seems to experience at home anyway, so he decides he deserves an hour of fun with his friends. He grabs the ball and runs to the field.
2. The new local government imposed a drastic change in the speed limit in Leila's neighbourhood. Now, for seemingly no good reason, she must all but crawl down the road from her house to her sister's place. Leila assesses the situation – there is no one else on the road, she knows every pot hole to avoid, she's driven at the "normal" speed for years with no problem. She may have voted for this mayor, but this new rule makes no sense. She decides to get to her sister's on time – driving the old speed.
3. At work, Jacob's boss suddenly pulled him from the high-profile project he's been leading for the last year, and instead scheduled him for meetings the rest of this week. Jacob is disappointed, as his team had been performing well and the project is close to completion. Further, Jacob notices his top rival has been moved on to his project while he must attend this all-day meeting tomorrow for who-knows-what. He begins to wonder what his boss is doing – in the past this boss has always supported his career, guiding him well and giving him opportunities to grow and to shine. Did his boss even mean the kind things he said in front of everyone last week at the staff meeting? Though frustrated, Jacob decides to honour his boss and give his best efforts at the meeting tomorrow – which turns out to be an interview for a vice president position that his boss has recommended him for.
 - o Consider these stories. What is the nature of the relationship in each? How does that influence the motivation to obey/comply?
 - o How does the nature of a relationship influence our motivation to obey?
 - o What kind of relationship makes you more willing to obey?
 - o What thoughts and feelings do you have when you think of the word 'obedience'? When you were a child, what happened when you disobeyed your parents or authority figures?

Discuss

Similar to the stories above, there are times when what God wants us to do conflicts with what we want to do. When that happens, we face a choice: Do what God wants or do what we want.

In moments like that, some reasons we might choose God's way over our way are:

- We fear the consequences or punishment.

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- We look forward to the reward.
- We recognize that God's ways are better.
- We enjoy pleasing him.
- We trust that he is good even when we don't understand.
- Any other reasons?

All of these are reasons we might choose to obey. But some reasons are better than others. Which of the motivations above do you most relate to?

Give an example from your own life when you chose God's way over your own way. What motivated you to obey?

Explore the Word

Read John 15:9-11

- What motivated Jesus' obedience to the Father?
- What is the most prominent word in this passage?
- What is the result of obedience?

Main Idea

While there are many reasons to obey, Jesus shows us that true obedience is ultimately born out of love. He knew the Father loved him, and his loving response was to obey.

This gives us a new picture of obedience. We don't obey to earn favour and love from God. His love is unfailing. We obey to express our love for him in return. The result is great joy.

Practice Together Now

Pause for a moment and consider one thing you can do now or this week to be obedient to the Lord.

Here are some areas where God may be asking us to obey him:

- How we spend our time or money
- How we use our words
- Our relationships
- Our willingness to tell other people about Jesus
- Serving other people or our church
- Caring for our body (eating, sleeping, exercising)

In what attitude do you want to take this step of obedience?

What practical steps can you take to put your obedience into action?

Pray together and commit to obeying this week.

Review your Practice Daily

- This week, start walking out the obedience you committed to. Speak to each other during the week about the progress you are making in your new area of obedience.
- If possible, do a specific action of obedience together this week.
- During your devotions this week, read Romans 8:28-39
 - List three things in this passage that give you courage to obey.

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- Of those three, pick one to meditate on. How does that specifically apply to the new area of obedience God has called you to?