

Does Obedience Matter?

Introduction. God has demanded obedience from the very beginning of time and in every subsequent dispensation (Genesis 2:16-17; Deuteronomy 30:10). All nature testifies that there is a God in Heaven who has supreme authority, but only humans have the power of choice to obey or not to obey God. To be obedient and willing to respect authority in the home, the nation, and the church is basic to success in life. Love is the bottom line of obedience if Heaven is to be our home (John 14:15).

“Obedience” is an important word in our world. It means to be willing to follow orders or instructions of one in authority or power. and it should be a part of everyone’s life and character, but it is ignored by many families, governments, and churches. We need to analyze the three areas of obedience which every human must respect in order to go to Heaven.

I. Obedience In The Home

- A. Basic obedience must be taught. This must be true in all areas of life in order to have the blessings desired and needed for our welfare (Proverbs 3:13-18). Children do not come into the world knowing how to obey (Proverbs 22:6).
 - 1. Parents must begin to teach obedience in the play pen in order to find real success in raising their children. As parents, we should be careful to exercise discipline so as to retain the love, respect, and confidence of the child (Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 29:15; cp. Ecclesiastes 8:11).
 - 2. One has said, “If children do not learn obedience in the play pen, they will have to learn it in the state pen!” A public speaker was addressing the subject of child discipline. Afterwards, a lady approached him with a question. She asked, “How old should my child be when I begin to discipline him?” He answered, “How old is your child?” She responded, “Five years old.” He said, “Hurry home, you have already missed the best five years!”
- B. Long life, prosperity, and happiness come to those children who are taught discipline and who learn to honor and obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). We are not to “tell up a child in the way he should go,” but “train up a child in the way he should go” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

II. Obedience In The Nation

- A. Like the home, government originated with God (John 19:11). Those who are subject to and obey the higher powers of the government find that “rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.” Therefore we are to “do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same” (Romans 13:1-3; cp. Psalm 72:12-14).
- B. Crime and corruption seem to be out of control in our nation because of disobedience.
 - 1. New prisons are constantly built, and still there is overcrowding because of law breakers. Riots of protest and destruction are usually committed by young people (cp. Exodus 21:15, 17; Deuteronomy 21:18-21).
 - 2. Parents who never say “no” while their children are in their formative years will not likely enjoy children being restrained from wrong when they enter the work place or go to college.

- C. Jesus always taught and appreciated earthly authority (Matthew 8:8-9; 22:21). Children need to be taught that liberty and freedom are only enjoyed where laws and standards are upheld.
1. When our children leave for college, where they will sit at the feet of humanists, atheists, and liberals, their faith is often lost.
 2. They are taught by these apostates to question everything they have been taught at home, and their doubts weigh them down. They begin to doubt the existence of God and Christ, the reliability of the Bible, the sinfulness of common moral issues (homosexuality, abortion, premarital sex, dancing, social drinking, etc.), and then finally doctrines of the New Testament church such as the exclusivity of the Lord's church, instrumental music in worship, and the role of women in the church.

III. Obedience In the Church

A. Christ has all authority.

1. After the resurrection of Jesus, He stated that He possessed all power (Matthew 28:18; cp. Ephesians 1:22-23). All today are under obligation to obey the authority of the New Testament of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 4:11).
2. Our obedience to the Lord's authority insures that we will not fear man (Matthew 10:28). The Father in Heaven watches over and feeds the sparrows, as well as knowing the number of hairs on our heads, and watches over us. Obedience allows fear to be removed (Matthew 10:29-31).

B. The dividing line.

1. Obedience is the dividing line between the church and the world. What makes the church of Christ distinct is evident when the obedient leave their worldliness and accept their new master, Jesus Christ (1 John 2:15-17).
 - a) The obedient enter the church of the Lord, finding peace, tranquility, and happiness in the fullest degree (Romans 14:17; Ephesians 1:3).
 - b) Those who have heard the gospel of Christ (John 6:45), believed it with all their hearts (Ephesians 1:13), repented of their sins (Acts 17:30), confessed the precious name of Christ (Romans 10:10), and have been baptized in water for the remission of sins now walk in newness of life (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4).
2. These obedient souls have been added to the church of Christ by the Lord, and have entered the spiritual domain of the saved (Acts 2:41, 47; Colossians 1:13). Yet, newborn Christians must continue to be taught obedience to receive the blessings of spiritual life in Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 2:1-2).

C. Obedience, the reason for Paul's gratitude.

1. Paul addressed the letter of Romans "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints" (1:7). He drove home the point that the gospel was the only way man could be saved (1:16-17; cp. 3:23).
2. But in the sixth chapter, Paul was thankful that their condition had changed. The facts of the gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-3). All can obey the glorious "form of doctrine" and be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Romans 6:3-4, 16-18).

Conclusion. We join with Paul in being grateful for every soul that comes to Christ through obedience. Paul knew that this was the manner in which men become cleansed from their sins (cp. Acts 22:16). Christians have to “obey the gospel” all their lives (Colossians 1:23). The three keys that open the gates to Heaven are obedience, humility, and faithfulness. Yes, obedience does matter, in the home, the nation, and the church, if one wants to go to Heaven.