

Is Obedience Enough?

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Intro. (Read 1 Sam. 15:2-9) Saul was given strict orders about how to deal with the Amalekites.

- A. He paid high price for his disobedience.
 - 1) **1 Sam. 15:22-23 (read)**
 - 2) In scolding Saul, Sam gives lowdown on what God requires
- B. Suppose a friend asked for a \$1000 loan
 - 1) You have the \$\$, but have been saving it for something you really want.
 - 2) You lend him the \$\$ but grudgingly & reluctantly because he's a good friend & you know you should.
- C. This is the way we are sometimes about our obedience to God.
 - 1) We know He is worthy & that we should obey.
 - 2) Yet, we carry out our obligations of obedience to Him reluctantly, even grudgingly, when we would rather be doing something else.
 - 3) In the end we are left with feelings of self-doubt & anxiety.
 - a. Thinking we should do more but just can't "get into it."
- D. Many would prefer religion to be a neat package of easily pre-defined rules.
 - 1) Like civil laws (Speed limits, stop signs, etc...)
 - 2) Bank loans with payment books due dates, amounts, self addressed envelopes, etc...
 - 3) Underlying all this is attitude that we want to know when we've done enough & still be acceptable to God.
 - 4) ***But, is mere obedience enough?***

I. "Mechanical" obedience has never been acceptable to God.

- A. Not in OT times
 - 1) **Mal. 1:6-8, 13-14 (read)**
 - a. They gave God sacrifices, but did only what they thought they had to do to get by!
 - 2) **Mal. 2:2 (read)** God gets to the "heart" of the matter!
 - a. Their reluctant half-hearted obedience produced no inward change.
 - 3) Obedience was designed to teach them something.
 - a. **Is. 1:16-20 (read)**
 - b. **Micah 6:6-8 (read)**
 - 1. *"Moral duties are commanded because they are good for man. In keeping God's commandments there is a great reward, as well as after keeping them. God has not only made it known, but made it plain. The good which God requires of us is, not the paying a price for the pardon of sin and acceptance with God, but love to himself; and what is there unreasonable, or hard, in this?"* MHCC
- B. "Mechanical" obedience not acceptable in Jesus' day.
 - 1) **Matt. 23:23 (read)**
 - a. Pharisees had obedience down to science!
 - b. Went even further than Law did.
- C. Not acceptable today:
 - 1) **2 Cor. 8:11-12 (read)**
 - a. Regarding the collection for the needy saints, Paul exhorts them to give out of *willingness*, not obligation.

II. Obedience must be accompanied by a willing spirit.

- A. Jesus had it.
 - 1) **Phil. 2:5-8 (read)**

B. We need it too. *“Have this attitude in yourselves...”*

1) **Phil. 2:12-15 (read)**

- a. What does our complaining about the Christian lifestyle show the world?
- b. Illustration: Boy who was sitting on the outside, standing on the inside!

C. That attitude should be there from the beginning.

1) *“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”*
Rom. 6:17-18

2) If God requires willingness at our rebirth, why would He not during our walk?

D. In all that we do, there should be an underlying factor of not just obedience, but *willingness!*

1) **2 Cor. 9:7 (read)**

- a. What do we give? Same as the Macedonians.
- b. **2 Cor. 8:5 (read)**

E. A scribe who came to Jesus seems to have latched onto this.

1) **Mark 12:28-34 (read)**

2) Jesus sums it up when He sees a poor woman illustrate that very principle.
a. **Mark 12:41-44 (read)**

Conc. Let's ask a few questions.

- A. How often do we HAVE to go to church?
- B. How often do we HAVE to pray?
- C. How many people do we HAVE to tell about Christ?
- D. How much do we HAVE to give?

Our answers will reveal much about our relationship with God.

- A. Should not feel we must attend 3 times/week or 10 times, but as often as we hunger to worship God.
- B. Should not pray in morning & at night, but as often as we feel the longing to talk to God.
- C. How many we teach depends on how much we love the lost souls & how much desire we have to see them saved.
- D. We don't give according to fixed percentages but according to how grateful we are for what God has blessed us with.
- E. It is easy to obey. All we have to do is “just do it!”
 - 1) But HOW we do it is what's important.
 - 2) *Is YOUR obedience forced or willing?*

Begin With Yourself

The following words were written on the tomb of an Anglican bishop in the crypts of Westminster Abbey:

“When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world. As I grew older and wiser, I discovered the world would not change, so I shortened my sights somewhat and decided to change only my country. But it, too, seemed immovable.

“As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I settled for changing only my family, those closest to me, but alas, they would have none of it.

“And now as I lie on my deathbed, I suddenly realize: If I had only changed myself first, then by example I would have changed my family.

“From their inspiration and encouragement, I would then have been able to better my country and, who knows, I may have even changed the world.”