

“Obey Right Away”

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I learn so many spiritual lessons from my kids. As I shared in my last *Shofar* article (“Do You Trust Me?”), God uses interactions with my kids to show me many things about my relationship with Him.

My son Alex is clearly in his “terrible twos.” I don’t like to use that name for this phase of life, but it does aptly describe the phase where he challenges what I tell him to do, exercising his own free will often. This usually comes in the form of his saying “no” in ever-increasing volume. I guess on one hand I should celebrate the fact that he knows what the word “no” means. But I don’t accept it when it comes out in a disobedient manner.

Of course, Alex will shout “no” when he doesn’t want to do something I’ve asked him to do, such as pick up toys or go into time-out. But I find it remarkable that Alex will sometimes shout “no” even when I tell him to do something he wants to do. For example, I’ll tell Alex to come to the table for dinner, and he’ll say “no” and turn away. I’ll repeat the instruction more clearly, and he’ll say “no” more loudly, with defiance in his eyes. I’m trying to give him something good, but he in disobedience will turn his back and say “no,” simply to exercise his free will.

We, too, can be like that in our relationship with God. He has good gifts ready to give us, but we sinfully turn our back in disobedience, determined to pursue things in our way or on our timetable. Just as Alex sometimes misses the first few minutes of dinner as he’s in his room in a time-out, so I probably sometimes miss God’s best for me in my own disobedience.

You see, my obedience to God is much more important to Him than my comfort level. We read scriptures like these:

To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams (1 Sam 15:22).

And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands (2 John 6).

You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God (Lev. 18:4).

All of these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God (Deut. 28:2).

I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands (Psalm 119:60).

...Blessed...are those who hear the word of God and obey it (Luke 11:28).

If you love me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15).

He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me (John 14:24).

Obedience to the Lord is a significant issue throughout the entire Bible.

I have tried to teach my children that when they obey, things go very well for them in our household. Likewise, when we obey the Lord as we should, we are in line to receive His best blessings for our lives. On the flip side, when we are living in disobedience, we receive not His best blessings, but His discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11). It is much better to obey His commands and experience His richest blessings for our lives!

Do you know what the great *omission* in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) is? What’s missing here: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” If I didn’t point it out, you might easily miss it. The correct version is “...and teaching them *to obey* everything I have commanded you.” We are instructed by our Lord to help people learn to obey God’s commands, which implies that we are first obeying them ourselves. When we teach others, we are teaching not just what God wants us to do, but how to follow it. Obedience is one of the most important things we can teach and model for those around us.

To go one step further, I also try to teach my kids that they should “obey right away.” To delay is to disobey. We might say “I’m struggling with this issue right now,” when we’re really saying that we’re not ready to obey what He wants us to do. We might say “but I’m too tired” or use another excuse to delay obedience. We might use “I’ll pray about it” as an excuse to postpone obeying what we already know we need to do. How much better it would be if we—you and I—were to obey right away, to do *what* God wants us to do exactly *when* He wants us to do it.

Are there areas in your life in which you need to obey right away? What about in my life? Let’s obey Him together, without delay, and move forward according to His leading.