

OBEYING THE LORD

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Lessons: Deuteronomy 6:1-7; Mark 10:13-16

*Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them,
for of such is the kingdom of God (Mark 10:14).*

When the Lord lived in our world, He especially loved little children because they were innocent. Being innocent means that they were willing to be led by the Lord—willing to listen and to obey. One day when the Lord had been teaching the people, some of them brought young children to Him so He could touch them. His disciples told the people not to do this. But when the Lord saw this, He was not at all pleased. He wanted the young children to be brought to Him. So He said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14).

Why are the people of the Lord, those in the kingdom of God, like little children? Because they want to be protected and taken care of by the Lord, just as children want to be taken care of by their parents and kept safe by them. The Lord’s people are willing to be told what to do by the Lord and to be led by Him. All the people of heaven are like this. They want to belong to the Lord.

Each one of us should want to belong to the Lord. After all, He made every one of us, and He also made everything we have. But how do we really come to *belong* to the Lord? We do this by wanting Him to teach and lead us, by listening to and obeying what He tells us to do—what he commands us in His Word.

Now young children can’t very well go to the Lord in His Word by themselves. Even if they can read, they still find it hard to understand what it is the Lord is saying. Children need their parents, teachers, and ministers to explain the Word to them. They especially need their parents to teach them.

Did you know that parents are *commanded* by the Lord to teach their children what He says in His Word? In Deuteronomy parents are told “you shall teach them diligently to your children...” (Deuteronomy 6:7). Parents are supposed to teach their children about the Lord and the Word with their very best effort. Especially, they are to teach the truth: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5). This teaching is the very first in importance for it tells children that there is only one Lord whom they are to love with their whole heart.

One of the Lord's chief commands [and the primary way we can love Him] is to obey Him. We must obey Him because He alone knows what is best for us. To obey is one of the first lessons parents must teach their children. For parents stand in the Lord's place for children while they are young. Children are given to their parents by the Lord, to take care of and teach until they are old enough to know and obey the Lord by themselves.

Without adults to help them, children do not know anything about the Lord, nor are they able to love Him and come to Him. But children can't come to the Lord until they have learned obedience—first obedience to their parents and then obedience to the Lord.

To be obedient children have to fight against being stubborn and wanting their own way. They have to learn not to be sneaky about things, just pretending to obey. They must learn to be honest with their parents and with themselves. They need to be brave enough to say no when they might want to do something wrong.

Sometimes we can get some mistaken ideas about obedience. Sometimes it may seem that parents just want to make children do what *they* want. Sometimes it may seem that obedience is just for sissies. Sometimes it may seem that it is too hard to obey. But truly loving parents do know what is best for their children, if they ask the Lord for help.

This is a key, because obedience is not something that we outgrow; it is not something just for children. Adults, too, must be obedient—obedient toward the law, obedient toward employers, obedient toward the Lord. We actually *need* to be obedient. We need rules and laws to obey—we especially need the Lord's commandments. This is because even as adults, we do not know what is best *from ourselves*. We can only know what is best from the Lord's commandments. For the Lord is Father to everyone, and we all must obey Him.

So learn the lesson of obedience well, for only when you have learned to obey have you taken the first step toward heaven. And the more thoroughly you learn the lesson, the higher you can go in heaven—for the highest angels are the most obedient.

The more obedient we are, the more innocent we become, that is, the more willing we are to be led by the Lord. And if we are led by the Lord, then we can truly come to Him. Remember, the Lord said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).

Amen.