



Obedience

1 Kings 17 – 19; Selected Scriptures
#5 in the series *Elijah—A Man Like Us*

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Reasons for obeying God.

1. God demands obedience.

(Genesis 2:16-17; 12:1-4; Hebrews 11:8; 17:1, 9-10; Leviticus 22:31; Deuteronomy 11:1; 27:10; 28:1; Ezekiel 20:19; Matthew 28:20; John 15:14; 1 John 3:23)

2. God delights in obedience.

(Leviticus 26:3-13; 1 Samuel 15:22 [context, 15:1-34; Psalm 40:6-8; 50:10-19; Isaiah 1:11-20; Jeremiah 7:22-23]; Hosea 6:6 cf. Matthew 12:7; Deuteronomy 4:40; 5:10, 29; 6:2; Psalm 18:19-23; 25:10; 103:17-18; Proverbs 29:18; John 8:5; 14:23; 15:10; 1 John 3:22)

3. Obedience reflects a proper focus.

(Leviticus 22:31; Matthew 6:28-33; Colossians 3:1-2; John 5:30; Romans 2:5-8; 6:16; 10:3; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 2:21; James 4:7)

4. Obedience reflects love for God.

(Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 23:37 & Mark 12:30; 11:1; John 14:15, 21-24; 1 John 5:3)

5. Failure to obey God is sin.

(Deuteronomy 26:13; 1 Samuel 12:14-15; 15:1-34; Psalm 89:30-31; Isaiah 1:19-20; Jeremiah 3:13; Lamentations 3:42; Daniel 9:11; Hosea 8:1; James 4:17)

Examples of obeying God.

1. Elijah.

(1 Kings 17:1, 2-5, 8-14, 17-23; 18:1, 19-39, 41-45)

2. The widow of Zarephath. (1 Kings 17:8-24)

Principles For Obeying God.

1. Obey from the heart. (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 23:37 & Mark 12:30; 11:13, 18; 13:3; 32:46; 1 Samuel 12:24; 2 Kings 2:4; 2 Kings 23:24-25; Ezra 7:10; Psalm 119:10, 34, 69, 80; Matthew 6:21)

2. Obey completely, not partially.

(Deuteronomy 4:1-9; 11:8, 22; 32:46; 1 Samuel 15:1-34; 1 Kings 5:3, 14; James 2:10)

3. Obey regardless of your circumstances and feelings.

(1 Samuel 15:24; 1 Kings 17:10-15; 19:1-19)

In My Life This Week

Monday. Obedience: *doing what one is told*. We all know what it is about and are better at expecting it from others than ourselves. Elijah was obedient—he knew that God both demands and delights in our obedience to Him. These two reasons for obeying God should be kept together for balance. How do you respond to these reasons for obeying God? Do they trouble you in any way? If so, in what ways? Why? They should be *positive* motivators to obeying God. If they aren't for you, keep them linked as they should be.

Tuesday. There are more reasons for obeying God. True obedience reflects a proper focus on God. God is, after all, the Sovereign One. Whatever we do is foundationally and ultimately to be for His glory, not for ourselves (see 1 Corinthians 10:31). The state of your obedience to God is a good indicator of your focus and your love for God. As well, failure to obey Him is sin. Review 1 Samuel 15 and King Saul's sin of not obeying God. Note any lessons for yourself that God impresses on you.

Wednesday. The Bible has many examples of both obedience and disobedience. Check the references in the outline about Elijah obeying God. What pattern(s) do you see? How was his response to God similar or dissimilar to your own? Read 1 Kings 17:8-24, paying attention to the widow's obedience to God's word through Elijah. What does this tell you about obeying God?

Thursday. God wants us to obey Him from our hearts, and completely. What does that mean, and not mean? Review King Saul's sad story again in 1 Samuel 15. God judged his partial obedience to be disobedience.

As well, true obedience is obeying God regardless of our circumstances and feelings. King Saul told Samuel he disobeyed because he "feared the people"—what they thought, how they might not understand. The widow of Zerephath obeyed giving up her last resources when hungry and desperate. Elijah obeyed God and move out when frightened, discouraged and depressed. Choose to obey God today, regardless of your circumstances and feelings.

Friday–Saturday. We plan to continue our series on Elijah on Sunday focusing on *Courage*. Review 1 Kings chapters 17 – 21 in preparation for our time together.