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Complete Obedience

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Series: Obedience

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Complete Obedience

We have been looking at obedience in the Christian life. Our reference passage of Scripture is Joshua 1:8,

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

(NKJV)

In other words, God's goal for the Christian ultimately is obedience. The outline for this mini-series on obedience is:

- I- The Perspective of Obedience
- II- The Practicality of Obedience
- III- The Performance of Obedience

These are the first three sections. The *perspective* of obedience was simply nothing more than God's basic attitude toward obedience in a Christian's life. Just to review the principles. We would remind ourselves that the principles were four-fold.

- 1- God has not changed His standards of obedience at all. The will of God for the Christian is still total obedience.
- 2- God's measuring stick of our love for Him is how obedient we are.
- 3- We become increasingly accountable to become obedient the more we are exposed to truth.
- 4- We have yet a continued responsibility to be exposed to truth.

These are the four basic underpinnings of the concept of obedience. Then we dealt with the *practicality* of obedience. We went into some meddling in some areas such as lying, speeding, finances, dieting, gossiping and meditation.

In the last lesson, we went into the *performance* of obedience. What do we do about it? How do we do it? We found that the Word

Complete Obedience

of God teaches that God expects at least four things as He judges or discerns whether or not we are obedient.

1- How quickly do we respond when we know what God wants us to do? How immediate is our obedience? The issue is that the absence of a stated time in God's perspective means that He wants us to do it now.

2- We discussed the importance of obedience to God's call, the importance of obedience to God's instruction, and the importance of immediate obedience in the face of temptation. We turned to the lives of Elijah, Noah, Abraham and Jonah for our illustrations of obedience.

3- We closed the last lesson with the basic set of instructions that boil down to one quick sentence. When you know what God wants you to do, do it yesterday.

So we take up the second area of the performance of obedience. If we know what God wants us to do, (the Word of God teaches that) He expects our obedience to be complete. In other words, He expects us to obey to the letter and to obey to the end.

This is a hard situation. It sometimes becomes cloudy as we talk about it. The Word of God says to obey immediately, yet it also says to obey in detail. The point is that oftentimes the immediacy of our response needs to be an attitude of our heart to take the first step. But, we do not override the necessity to listen to God one step at a time.

Imagine, if you will, that you are called to Africa. You have a clear-cut call from God. You respond immediately and say, "Lord, here am I, send me. I am willing to go. I am ready to go. I'm not able, but that is Your business. Here I am." With that in mind, you call the airlines to find the first flight out to Africa. You hop on the first plane to Africa and go zooming across the ocean. You land in Africa in the midst of a revolt, and you almost get killed. You get back on the plane and fly to another location. There is no place for you there. There is no mission that has a need for you. You are frustrated and disappointed. You say, "God led me astray." You get back on the plane out of money, out of time and out of hope. You go back home from Africa and say, "I did what God wanted me to, He just didn't have it all together."

No. What God wanted you to do was surrender to go to Africa and then wait on the next move. You need to wait on the next

Complete Obedience

assignment. Every detail of performing the transition from your home to Africa was designed to glorify the name of God. You missed the bigness of the blessing by responding in the spirit and then acting in the flesh.

Many of you have been through this experience. God leads you to buy a new home. You say, "There is a clear cut answer from the Lord. I have it from the Word. I have indications that different doors are opened, and some are closed. I know that God wants me to buy a house. I want to respond immediately." You then go and violate 17 financial principles that are set out in the Word. You borrow the down payment. You do many things the wrong way. You find a house that doesn't meet your needs, but you are convinced that maybe God didn't really understand all of your needs. You go with the realtor, and he tells you that this is the last day the house will be on the market. If you don't buy it that day, it will be your last chance. You think, "God wouldn't want me to miss out on a deal like this." So you buy it. A month later, you find that you can't make the payments. The house doesn't fit your needs. You come across various and sundry problems. You say, "Lord, why did you lead me astray?"

God didn't lead you astray. The point is that God not only wants us to obey immediately, but once we have decided to respond, He wants us to be willing to wait on the details of the decision, because He glorifies Himself through the details. He can do this as He provides the perfect house. He can do this as He provides the visa for your trip. He can do this as He provides the perfect place for you to go on the mission field. He can do this as He provides the airplane ticket. He can do this as He provides every facet of the fulfillment of that act of obedience. He then gets the glory.

What we want to do is to say, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" When we find that out, we then say, "Okay, Lord, now don't bother me. I will call You if I need You." Then off we go in the flesh trying to perform the will of God.

Question 1- Do we obey in detail or in general? When we find the will of God, do we go off in the flesh to do it?

Question 2- Do we obey partially, or do we remain faithful until we are finished?

Have you ever noticed that the crowd gets thin as the task goes on? We will deal with this in the next lesson, but I think that there are three categories of Christians. There are sprinters, the marathon

Complete Obedience

runners and the relay runners. Most Christians are beginners. If we are honest with each other, we will admit that we are beginners in two ways: we are beginners because we still have all of the grace of God to receive and all of the knowledge of God yet to be obtained. We know so little compared to what there is in the kingdom of God to be revealed. Most Christians are beginners because we like something neat, new and exciting to be happening all of the time. We see a new opportunity, and we are off to the races. Yet, how seldom do we hang in there until God has completed every facet of the assignment and He can say, "Well done, thy good and faithful servant." How seldom do we hang in there until we can say, "I have finished the task You gave me to do." But most of us unfortunately have a level of excitement that continually needs to be stimulated by a new task, so we are off and running.

In this lesson, we will deal with the first aspect of this. Do we obey in detail? When we know the will of God, do we wait on Him, listen for the details of His revelation, and then obey quietly and slowly so that He gets the maximum glory in every situation? Let's begin by considering one fact. God is a god whose mind thinks in detail. Have you ever thought of that? God's mind thinks in details, not generalities. We think in terms of generalities, because we can often overlook the details of life that God uses to get our attention.

We don't have time to look up all of these verses, but can you imagine Noah building the ark without paying attention to detail? Why did God give Noah such detailed instructions? Why did He give him the size and other minute details of every aspect of the boat? Why was He so specific? Can you imagine if Noah had put the door in a different place, maybe just a few feet lower? What if Noah had said, "I can save God a lot of problems by cutting down on the housing problem by just taking one of each animal." Details are important. He was doing the will of God by building the boat. Why should God care how big it was? Why should God care how many rooms it had? Why should God care how many animals to take?

God is a god of intimate detail. He cares about everything. His mind works in a precise manner. Have you ever spent time reading Exodus 25-28? It is one of the passages that we often skip over because it is nothing but God giving the children of Israel detail concerning how to build the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant. Details. God gives them specific instruction on the color of cloth, how long to make it, what kind of fringe and many other

Complete Obedience

very specific details. Every piece was designed to give glory to God. Every piece pointed to the coming Messiah. All they had to do was eliminate one detail, one color, one piece of cloth and the picture of salvation would not be complete. God is such a god of detail. Can you imagine how tempted we would be to take short cuts? There would be too many pieces of cloth on the same table.

All of you have done a detailed study of Leviticus in your spare time I'm sure. Have you ever considered the details of the laws that God gave the children of Israel to obey? God didn't just tell them to go into the land and be good children, and to do the best they could and let Him know if they needed Him. No, God told them in specific detail what they could and could not do. We may tend to think that this leads to legalism, and we will discuss that shortly. What I am trying to do now is to capture the mind of God. He wants us to be free in the spirit to obey to the letter. God is a god whose mind works in concepts of detail.

In Matthew Jesus says:

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:18,19 NKJV)

In James we read:

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

(James 2:10-12 NKJV)

The point is that we are not to be brought back under the law, for we are under grace. But God is a god whose mind works in great detail. He wants us to pay attention to detail because it is the details of our lives from which our life message comes and from which our testimony is built. Have you ever realized that when you have a personal testimony to share that it is the details of God's working in that testimony that makes it so unique?

Complete Obedience

Several of you have shared in the last few weeks with me and with others the neat things God has been doing in your life in response to prayer. The generality of the fact that God provided a house or an answer to a specific situation by providing a friendship or other aspects of that circumstance is a part of the testimony. But the bigger part of that testimony is the details in which He provided the answer.

We can look at nature and the way God's mind works with nature and with man. Have you ever stopped to think about what an infinite God means when He says that the hairs of our head are numbered? Just imagine that the hairs of your head are numbered and God knows every strand. This is the kind of detailed mind God has. He says that every time a sparrow falls He takes out His notebook and writes it down. This is the kind of detailed mind that God has.

God's mind works with such infinite detail that when He looked into the heavens and through the galaxies of stars, He gave each one an independent, specific name that is different from all of the rest. That is the kind of detail our God enjoys. This is the reason He told Adam to give every animal a unique, separate and specific name. This is the reason He told us that He knows each one of us individually, everything about us, and He calls each one of us by our own individual name.

This is what He expects of us. Let's turn to Luke 19:12-19. It gives detail. I want to paraphrase what this passage describes.

A certain nobleman went to a far country to receive a kingdom and to return. He called his ten servants and gave them each ten pounds and said, "I want you to occupy until I come." The citizens hated him and sent him a message saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." When he returned, he commanded these servants to be called to him whom he had given the money that he might know how much they had gained and what they had done with the money. The first one said, "Lord, I took your pound, invested it and received back ten." The nobleman answered, "You are a good servant. You have been faithful in a very little. I am going to give you authority over ten cities." The second servant came and the same thing happened. The nobleman said, "You have been faithful. I am going to give you rule over much."

What does this mean, "faithful over little", or as one translation puts it, "faithful over few things"? It means that you did not render

Complete Obedience

as insignificant that which was given you based upon relative value or size, but you were faithful. In other words, you did not think it was insignificant that you were only given one pound. You did not think it was unnecessary to perform your responsibility in the same fashion. He that is faithful in the few things, and he that is faithful in the most minute detail will be given authority over bigger things. This is the pattern which God has in mind for the Christian's life.

I want to discuss the fact that God expects obedience to the letter. You may think I am getting legalistic, but I hope not. Allegiance to the letter is legalism, but love to the letter is spiritual. There is a lot of difference.

Love to the letter for the husband means that if your wife asks you to do something, and you do it in part or accomplish the end result without doing it the way she wants it done, you have not done it well out of love. If she asks, "Please move this chair into the other room, but please don't go through the dining room," but the husband thinks that she doesn't know the best way to move that chair, and he doesn't understand why she wants it moved that certain way. He then takes it through the dining room and hits the mirror and breaks it. He has not moved that chair well. She knew the possibility of the mirror being broken and didn't want that to happen. The husband says, "You don't have any right to complain because I moved the chair from one room to the other like you wanted."

What we have to recognize is that real love says, "If you want me to carry the chair through the backyard, over the fence and come in the back door, that is what I will do." Most of us don't respond that way. The point of the matter is that real love obeys to the letter. It is not legalism that says we *have to*, but love that says we *want to*. There are times that God tests us to see if we will misuse the freedom of the spirit of the law as an excuse for being unfaithful to the letter of the law. Most of us do that.

I want to give some illustrations from the Scriptures. I want us to realize, for the most part, details that are ignored are principles that are violated. Let's look into the Word to get some examples of what partial obedience does to the believer. We will look at what principles are violated in the mind of God.

Let's first look at Genesis 3. This passage is very familiar to many. I will read from a paraphrased translation, The Living Bible.

Complete Obedience

The woman was convinced. How lovely and fresh looking the fruit was! And it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit and gave some to her husband, and he ate it too.

(Genesis 3:6 TLB)

Let's try to visualize Adam and Eve a few hours later as they were under a tree hiding from God. They sense the terror and the awesomeness of what had happened, that they were now separated from God. They realized that the love that had existed between them no longer did. They were fearful and were trying to cover their sins. They were huddled up behind the tree.

You can just imagine what we would have said had we been in their place. I can imagine Adam speaking first, "I don't know why God is making a big deal about this. I am probably the most faithful gardener He has ever had. All the things God has asked me to do, I have done. I have memorized my Scriptures. I have made it to Sunday school every week. I've been tithing. There is just absolutely nothing God has wanted me to do that I haven't done. I have been a faithful servant. I just can't imagine what Jehovah is so upset about."

We can imagine Eve chiming in, "I just think this is so legalistic. All I did was take one little piece of fruit. Look at all that God has left. Why is He so concerned about details? You know, that snake needed a friend. If God is a god of love, He would understand that the snake was so lonely."

This is the way we reason with our minds. Yet, God looks down and says, "You don't need to take the first taste of sin. There is a principle involved here." We can see the questions going through Adam's mind, "What difference would it make if I want to take just one taste. It is not going to affect anybody but me." Have you ever said that about your own sin? What difference will it make if I do it just this one time? Who will know? It isn't going to affect anybody but me. It is a lie. Where did the lie come from? It came from the father of lies. What did that lie do? It contaminated mankind from then on. The first lie entered sin into the human race and completely destroyed man's relationship with God. It also cost God the life of His Son. That is what it did, just one taste.

In Genesis 19, we hear about old *vacant* Lot. I think he was vacant from the neck up. If ever anybody made wrong choices, this guy did it. After all he had been through, having compromised every basic principle, God in His grace had delivered him. Here he

Complete Obedience

is in verse 12 in the Living Bible paraphrased:

“What relatives do you have in the city?” the men asked. Get them out of this place—sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else.

For we will destroy the city completely. The stench of the place has reached to heaven and God has sent us to destroy it.”

So Lot rushed out to tell his daughter’s fiancés, “Quick, get out of the city, for the Lord is going to destroy it.” But the young men looked at him like he had lost his senses.

At dawn the next morning the angels became urgent. “Hurry,” they said to Lot, “take your wife and your two daughters who are here and get out while you can, or you will be caught in the destruction of the city.”

When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety, outside of the city, for the Lord was merciful.

(Genesis 19:12-16 TLB)

You would think anybody would learn their lesson then.

“Flee for your lives,” the angel told him. “And don’t look back. Escape to the mountains. Don’t stay down here on the plain or you will die.”

(Genesis 19:17 TLB)

By now, anybody in his right mind, we would like to say, (although we do the same thing as Lot did) would obey implicitly. But the verses give us a beautiful picture of human nature.

“Oh no, sirs, please,” Lot begged, “since you’ve been so kind to me and saved my life, and you’ve granted me such mercy, let me flee to that little village over there instead of into the mountains, for I fear disaster in the mountain.

(Genesis 19:18,19 TLB)

This is what is known as presumption. I love the city. It has been so good to me. Look what a spiritual man it has made out of me. I want to stay where the action is.

See, the village is close by and it is just a small one. Please, please, let me go there instead. Don’t you see how small it is? And my life will be saved.”

(Genesis 19:20 TLB)

God, in His mercy, granted his request through the angels at the hand of God. Lot was saying, “What difference does it make where we live? Why can’t I be just as much a witness in the city? So you want me in the mountains. I understand that God, but I want to be here. I want to do this. I want to do that. I want to do

Complete Obedience

it my way.” Lot had not yet learned what environment did for him, although if anyone should know, he should have.

The third passage is Genesis 19:26. This is Mrs. Vacant or Susie Saltshaker as she is also known. Lot’s wife turned around and looked back and became a pillar of salt. What difference could just one glance make? What we look back at reveals where our heart is. This is the principle that God was trying to get across to Lot and his wife and family. God was saying, “You have made a mistake. You’ve blown it. I want to give you a new start, a new life. Keep your eyes straight ahead. If you keep your eyes straight ahead, you can keep them on the Spirit of God’s moving, and you will go exactly where I want you to go. Don’t look back and begin to ponder what it would have been like.”

This is what Mrs. Lot decided to do. What difference could one glance make? One of the best passages to meditate on is Luke 17:32. *It is a long one*, but you can memorize it in pieces taking a third of it a week. It goes like this:

Remember Lot’s wife.

(Luke 17:32 NKJV)

Let God bring into mind what happens to the life of a believer, how it is rendered useless when his head is turned over his shoulder. Paul said,

...forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

I press [move forward] toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 3:13,14 NKJV)

The fourth illustration is found in Exodus 4:10-14. We see obedience in detail.

But Moses pleaded, “O Lord, I’m just not a good speaker. I never have been, and I’m not now, even after you have spoken to me, for I have a speech impediment.”

“Who makes mouths?” Jehovah asked him. “Isn’t it I, the Lord? Who makes a man so that he can speak or not speak, see or not see, hear or not hear?”

Now go ahead and do what I tell you, for I will help you to speak well, and I will tell you what to say.”

But Moses said, “Lord, please! Send somebody else.

Then the Lord became angry. (Exodus 4:10-14a NKJV TLB)

Send somebody else. Why should I answer that call? I don’t

Complete Obedience

have the talent. I will tell God that He made a mistake, and I will wait for the next go around.

God calls men in weakness so that He can infuse them with His strength. Because we tend to not be willing to trust Him in the details, we think the call is not for us.

The next illustration is found in Exodus 16, and is another very familiar passage. In essence, it says, “I’ll just save a little of what God told me not to. It will take the pressure off of God.” We are so busy taking the pressure off of God, aren’t we? Let’s begin with verse 14:

and when the dew disappeared later in the morning it left thin white flakes that covered the ground like frost.

When the people of Israel saw it they asked each other, “What is this?” Moses told them, “It is the food Jehovah has given you.”

Jehovah has said for everyone to gather as much as is needed for his household—about two quarts for each person

So the people of Israel went out and gathered it—some getting more and some less before it melted on the ground,

and there was just enough for everyone. Those who gathered more had nothing left over and those who gathered little had no lack! Each home had just enough.

And Moses told them, “Don’t leave it overnight.”

But of course some of them wouldn’t listen, and left it until morning; and when they looked, it was full of maggots and had a terrible odor; and Moses was very angry with them.

(Exodus 16:14-20 TLB)

You may say, “What difference did that make? God told them not to save it until morning, but some of them did. They were probably leaders or deacons in the assembly. They were probably faithful men in other areas of their lives. Why did God care if they saved some manna just in case?” God cared because it was blasphemy to the position of God as our provider. God was also angry because He had commanded in the details of life that they save not one speck.

Another illustration is in Numbers 22. I want to skip this one because of time. You can read about it and draw your own conclusions as we have done previously. Let’s go on to Joshua 7. What is a little compromise anyhow? So what if one of the group is involved in disobeying? What affect will it have on the rest of

Complete Obedience

us? We think that God will overlook that. Chapter 7 tells us that there was sin among the Israelites. God's command to destroy everything except that which was reserved for the Lord's treasury was disobeyed. Let's look at verse 2 as I paraphrase it:

Soon after Jericho's defeat, Joshua sent some of his men to spy on the city of Ai, east of Bethel.

When they returned, they told Joshua it was no sweat, no big problem to take the city because it was a small city. They told him they could take just two or three thousand men to wipe them out.

So approximately three thousand soldiers were sent—and they were soundly defeated.

(Joshua 7:2-4 Author's paraphrase)

What was the problem? Joshua cried out to the Lord, "Lord, what are You doing to us? Why have you done this? You brought us out of Egypt. You gave us instructions. Now You are giving us trouble. Why is it, Lord, that I'm not having victory in my life after You led me into this in the first place? Lord, this was Your idea, and You are the victor. Now You have put me in the midst of this situation, and I'm becoming utterly defeated. Lord, it is Your fault."

Have you ever said that? I have. Joshua continued his complaint, "Lord, what do you want me to do now? Israel has fled from her enemies. When the other nations hear about it, they are going to make fun of us, and we will be a reproach. What is going to happen to the honor of Your name?"

The Lord said to Joshua, "Get up off of your face. You've got the wrong picture. Israel has sinned and disobeyed My commandment." We may say it was just a little disobedience. "Yes," God replied, "but the whole nation suffered." Victory that once was theirs was lost.

This is the way the Christian life is. So often we will enter into a period in our lives where there is victory, not circumstantially but spiritually. We are entering into the fullness of a walk with Christ that we have read about and heard about and prayed for. All of a sudden we have an opportunity for a minor compromise in an area we have compromised years before, and it never bothered us. All of a sudden, we try again. Now the glow is gone. The power is gone. The ministry is gone. The excitement is gone. We say, "Lord, what are You trying to do to me? You led me into this situation. Now the power is gone. You turned the power off once I got into the room." God says, "The first thing I want you to do is to look to see if

Complete Obedience

there is any sin in the camp.” You reply, “Well, it can’t be anything major. I’m still doing everything You told me to do.” God answers, “Yes, but remember that I am a God that pays attention to detail. Somewhere in the camp there is an act of disobedience that will not give you the power over your enemies that you once had. Now let’s go back and clean it up. Get up off of your face.”

God told Joshua, “Israel disobeyed My commandment and has taken loot that I said was not to be taken. They have not only taken it, they have lied about it, and they have hidden it which always happens.”

If we follow the story to its conclusion, and we find only one man, Achan. The whole community was aching because of Achan. The point is that Joshua was down on his knees wondering why the power was gone. Here was God up in the heaven saying, “Joshua, don’t you know why the power is gone? I will tell you why. Disobedience. Details. I want obedience.”

Another example is found in I Samuel 15. Have you ever said, “Lord, doesn’t the end justify the compromise? Sure, so I bent the rules just a little bit. But Lord, I was doing it for your good.” Saul told God, “Lord, I cheated, but it was for Your glory.” The pressure was so great. This is the key verse to that passage.

Samuel replied, “Has the Lord as much pleasure in your burnt offerings and sacrifices as in your obedience? Obedience is far better than sacrifice...”
(I Samuel 15:22 TLB)

In I Kings 13, we see another example. This is a story of the prophet who was told not to enter in and drink anything or eat anything. He went the way God told him to. A test came when a man came to him and said he was a prophet of God. He had changed God’s instructions. He said, “I know that God told you not to eat or drink with anybody, but I am a prophet of God and I’m here to tell you that God has changed His mind.”

Have you ever had this happen to you? Have you ever sought counsel in a situation and someone tells you, “Well, I know that is what the Scripture used to say, but...” Used to say? The Scripture never “used to say” anything because it is the same yesterday, today and forever. The Scripture will say 2,000 years from today the same thing it said 2,000 years ago. The Word of God is complete, and the Word of God need never change. The standards of God need never change. So if somebody comes to you and says, “Yes, I know what the Scripture teaches in this area, but times have changed.” This

Complete Obedience

is true, I grant that. Times have changed, but God hasn't. The standards of God are absolute.

God is trying to tell us in this passage that we are not to ignore the details of obedience by listening to some counselor who says, "I know that is what the Scripture teaches, but times have changed." Don't let anyone tell you that they have a fresh insight and that they have just come up with some new insight that the Word has overlooked. They may have a fresh insight, but they didn't get it from God.

Jeremiah chapters 43 and 44 come up with another excuse for disobeying details. He said, "Isn't it okay? I've gotten by with it so far and God hasn't punished me yet." Have you ever said that? "After all, if I've gotten by with it up until now, it must mean that God has changed the rules. So let's operate circumstantially on what I think the rules are based upon the fact that God has been merciful until now." Don't do it. As soon as you say that, God will vindicate His Word. Oftentimes, in our ignorance, God gives much grace. But when we become presumptuous on His grace and use our "ignorance" as a basis for our actions, God must judge.

In Mark 1 we hear another illustration. Jesus has just healed the man with leprosy in verse 42. In verse 43 it says:

Jesus told him sternly,

"Go and be examined immediately by the Jewish priest. Don't stop to speak to anyone along the way. Take along the offering prescribed by Moses for a leper who is healed, so that everyone will have proof that you are well again."

But as the man went on his way he began to shout the good news that he was healed; as a result, such throngs soon surrounded Jesus that he couldn't publicly enter a city anywhere, but had to stay out in the barren wastelands. And people from everywhere came to him there,

(Mark 1:43-45 TLB)

Why wait on God, I've got to save the world. Yet, God's timing is so perfect and so precise and the details on how He wants you to be an instrument to save the world are so important, that like Moses going out to save his people, we sometimes, in the energy of the flesh, try to do the will of God.

Acts 5:1 tells us the story of Ananius and Sapphira. I'm not going to go into that one right now due to time, but read it and draw your own conclusions regarding obedience and how God

Complete Obedience

deals with it.

In conclusion, what we have done in this lesson is look at how man tends to obey in general, but is disobedient in detail. Then we looked at God's character. His character reveals that He is a God who gives attention to detail. He has expectations of details. He blesses in detail. So we have looked at the characteristics of man and compared them with the character of God. What do we do now? We meditate. That's how we become obedient. We understand that it is the will of God for you and for me to turn neither to the left nor the right. We should obey according to all that is written therein, everything.

In closing, if you want some verses to meditate on this week, get a concordance and look up the "alls" and the "everys" in the Scripture. You will remind yourself that the word "all" means the absence of exception. I'll give you a few to start with. Look up Ephesians 1:22; Matthew 28:20; John 14:26; Romans 8:28; II Corinthians 9:8 and Philippians 3:8.

What a precious God we have. He gives us a book filled with the complete instructions and guidelines for living the Christian life. All He asks us to do is to respond immediately, but to obey in detail. Don't overlook the fact that love obeys to the letter. There are some of us who use excuses and expressions such as those in our Scriptural illustrations to justify ourselves. Some of these may have struck a responsive chord. There may be areas in our lives where just a little compromise seems appropriate. May I encourage you to remember Lot's wife.

Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly "hear" his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It's been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that's a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you "hear" as you read.

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