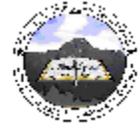


On The Frontier



“For The Glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

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The Profit Of Obedience

Shortly after the children of Israel’s exodus from Egypt, the following is recorded:

Exodus 19:1-7

In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai.

For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine:

And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

What wonderful promises obedience to the commandments of God hold for His own!

You can be certain that Moses did as God commanded and gave the message to the children of Israel verbatim.

Verse 7

And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

The people’s response to Moses was that they would keep God’s commandments. This reply faithful Moses brought back to God and again he did so verbatim. As the record progresses we see God giving clear cut instructions by way of the ten commandments.

As we all know, these ten form the basis for decent human behavior. When adhered to, both believer and unbeliever alike are in the right. These ten are the cornerstone and fiber of the law of our land. It makes no matter how many nay-sayers refute this, we all know obedience to these simple directives is paramount.

We also know that not all of the children of Israel remained obedient to the commandments of God. Many of them were as disobedient as the miscreants of today. A wrongdoer is a wrongdoer no matter who they are, when they lived or where they lived.

Consider the wonderful profit of obedience:

Deuteronomy 11:18-28

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:

Notice the importance given teaching the children and “embossing” the house. The same tenets apply to us as did to them; teach the Word to your children and hang Scripture in your home (a great reminder to young and old as well as a witness to guests). This is a simple way to bless God and bask in His blessings.

Verses 21-25

That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

There shall no man be able to stand before you: *for* the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

Which of us would not like to enjoy these blessings? All yours, for the joyful privilege of keeping His Word!

The opposite is not such a good deal.

Verses 26-28

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:

And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Amazingly, they did not go for the blessing as often and with as much zeal as you would think! But isn't that so like humanity? This is especially true for the sinful practice of idolatry. It seems mankind enjoys wounding itself! After having disobeyed, as we know men are apt to do, "earthly" solutions are often sought which are both ineffectual and unacceptable. Religion promotes senses reparations for sin rather than repentance and obedience. Religious ritual fails to rise even to the level of what one might call "band-aids for bullet holes."

Consider what Samuel told Saul by way of the revelation that God had given him:

I Samuel 15:22,23

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

Such great truths are held in these two verses! We know from the context that Saul's sin was disobedience. He claimed to fear the people and so did not do as God commanded him (I Samuel 15:24). Previously he laid the blame for his guilt on the people and even justified that as "cause worthy" (I Samuel 15:20, 21). Of course there is no excuse for being disobedient to God, is there?

I would often reference the 23rd verse in this passage when admonishing my children. All except the part about being rejected from being king, they had enough problems thinking they were princes and princesses already. I would, in all seriousness, remind them of God's opinion in the matter of obedience. That is, ". . . rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry . . ."

It may have been fear that got Saul into the "soup" but it was pride that kept him there. Saul remained stubborn and prideful until his death. Consequently, he died with sin that is "as witchcraft and idolatry." As a matter of fact, he exacerbated matters by seeking guidance from a

spiritualist. This ultimately cost him his life!

I Chronicles 10:13

So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, *even* against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel* of one *that had* a familiar spirit, to enquire *of it*;

Not only did Saul die but so did his sons, all in the same day! Saul, his family AND his army, all dead in one day!

I Samuel 31:6

So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

Talk about togetherness!

I Chronicles 10:6

So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together.

How important is it then to be obedient? There certainly is more at stake even than losing the blessings. Not only is there no blessing to be had but the blessing is replaced with a curse. For our understanding a curse comes in the way of consequences, negative ones heavy to be born.

My children always thought me strict. At the time I don't think they made the correlation between disobedience and sin or stubbornness and iniquity, let alone witchcraft and idolatry! I'm certain they wanted me to be more "lenient." After all, strict sounds so much meaner than "lenient." Doesn't it? Discipline! What could be worse?

Our culture is guilty of rejecting sound biblical parenting techniques. Love, logic, consequence and discipline have been condemned and replaced with "psychobabble." Today work, responsibility and reward have been

replaced with privilege and unbounded access. Children are allowed privilege that exceeds their years. Furthermore, the privileges extended rarely have commensurate responsibilities. I don't know about you but I have never had that luxury afforded me. I've been given responsibility without the necessary authority to execute but NEVER authority without liability. NEVER! Yet today this sort of thing is commonplace in parent-child dealings. Furthermore, the rudimentary parental training methods outlined in the Bible are all but outlawed. As a matter of fact, true biblical parenting is against the law in many places around our world today. This is what the Word of God declares as loving and appropriate:

Proverbs 13:24

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Note the word loveth! We discipline our children out of love, NOT anger or frustration. Withholding discipline is not a product of love. We have been lured into believing that a "time-out" is an appropriate substitute for chastening. It is not! There may be a time and place for such things but they do not replace or supercede the truth of God's Word. Men who think they can improve upon God's commands are fools. They view the Bible as antiquated and chauvinistic. Thus, they promote themselves and their "genius" above God and His Word. Again I say, they are fools. Furthermore, the bleeding heart approach advocated by so many of today's child behavior "experts" simply does not work. Let's consider one of the current objections to chastisement. They say that spanking a child teaches them that the way to deal with conflict is violence. But, let me back up a bit and qualify some

bandied about terminology. The naysayers use the term spank, the Bible does not and neither do I. But for the sake of this example we'll allow for it. Okay, so the child who never gets "spanked" has no proclivity to strike another. Right? Wrong, wrong, a thousand times wrong! I've seen an adult hold a child who's throwing a tantrum and so have you. You know as well as I that the minute they lose their grip on the child he/she throws a punch or kick at the adult. You can witness this asinine event at any supermarket. Here you have this adult (probably the parent) trying vainly to restrain said out of control child. What a joke! This is the kid most likely to bite, punch or kick yours. It happens all the time and we all know it. You take that same out of control child, exercise godly chastisement and he/she becomes a little angel almost immediately. That is, if you don't wait too long. If you allow that child to get much past the toddler stage, you are going to have your hands full! The problem does not get easier as the child grows, it gets worse. Unless, you do as the Word of God instructs. Don't wait, do it early. Obedience is required and it is a blessing to those who are exercised by it. The child is blessed, the parent is blessed and all those who are exposed to the child are blessed. The opposite is true when disobedience is allowed. The parent with the unruly child is raising a pariah. Nobody wants to be around a brat or his/her parents. It is a very uncomfortable experience for everyone involved except maybe for the child who thinks they are the center of all activity in the universe.

Proverbs 29:15

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to *himself* bringeth his mother to shame.

Everyday we see or hear of children bringing heartache and shame to their

parents. You can bet that in most cases the child was left to his/her own devices.

Proverbs 20:11

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work *be* pure, and whether *it be* right.

The fact of the matter is there is very little guess work here. Oh, we could continue to make excuses for our children. Have you ever heard, "boys will be boys?" Or "he/she gets cranky when tired?" I can't get away with that, can you? That is to say, I cannot break the law and tell the judge I was tired! Now, I'm not saying that children don't get tired or even misbehave as the result. What I am saying is that, while there may be reasons, there are no valid excuses for bad behavior. When it comes to giving excuses, I learned a long time ago that they only satisfy the one giving them. The bottom line is, making excuses for the child is no different than Saul making excuses for himself. If lying is sin, it is always sin. Likewise for stealing, murder, false witness, dishonoring mother and father and taking the Lord's name in vain. How about adultery? When is it okay to sin? Yet today the masses embrace situation ethics, worse yet they transfer that to their children. If you deal with enough children this way, make excuses for their bad behavior, you will change the face of society. That's right! In one generation you can change the moral behavior of an entire culture. This is not a new concept. Hitler knew this, which is why he was so involved in "Hitler Youth." To some degree we Christians acknowledge this too, which is why we are so (or should be) involved with our youth. But this we MUST do as defined in the Scripture.

Proverbs 23:13,14

Withhold not correction from the child: for *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

If he cries! I guess that means it stung. You bet! You must make an impression or be thought of as weak and ineffective. Make no mistake the child knows the difference.

An important point must be made here. The rod is NOT a magic wand! Nor is striking the child so as to put fear in them the method God is describing here. The rod represents your authority over the child. It is YOUR authority, you are the parent he/she is the child. You must believe that in your heart of hearts. If you don't the child will know it. If you do the child will know it. The rod simply makes that a point to remember. God never intended for us to beat our children into submission. We must train them properly and keep them mindful of who it is that is in charge. To use the rod in anger is a huge mistake. But it is just as grievous to use your authority with a limp will. By that, I mean a will that can be changed. You give the child the directive and then you must stick to your "guns." You and your spouse must be in total agreement here. One cannot give in while the other remains staunch. Both must be in concert agreement until the end. DO NOT allow the child to ply you emotionally. If you do that, you have not only wasted your time but have also taught the child that their disobedience was not that bad after all.

A child must be taught three things:

1. Listen

2. Remember

3. Obey (the first time)

Obedience is paramount and it is imperative that they obey THE FIRST TIME. There can be no threats, simply a carriage of justice.

Maybe you've heard this:

"You stop that, if you do that one more time I'll . . . "

Of course the one more time becomes two, three or four more times before said parent follows through. In a case such as this, the child has been taught that they have two, three or four more times to go before they obey. They're not stupid, they're your kids. You're not stupid, are you? I didn't think so.

Proverbs 22:15

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

The Bible tells us that a child is foolish. A fool is one who has careless habits in both mind and body. A fool lacks the ability to make clear logical decisions. A fool can be a danger to themselves. If foolishness is bound in the heart of a child (and it is) a parent would be a super-fool to allow him/her to make life altering decisions. Decisions of such magnitude are age appropriate and should NEVER be left to children. To look around today you would never guess that anybody ever considered this! Children are allowed to do things which have impact impossible for them to comprehend. A child is only capable of internalizing childish things. That which is age appropriate and nothing more. This of course would have to include the viewing of certain movies and television programs as well as the playing of certain video games. We dare not forget reading material or friendly associations. As a parent you

are THE qualified and truly concerned buffer between your child and the world. His or her friends are as important as the movies and activities you approve. Remember "... a child left to *himself* bringeth his mother to shame."

I Corinthians 15:33

Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

From the Bible in Basic English:

I Corinthians 15:33

Do not be tricked by false words: evil company does damage to good behaviour.

So then, obedience is indispensable. Obedience to God's Word for us adults and obedience to us from the children we are responsible for. God promises good things for those who raise their children properly.

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Though there may be an "interlude" along the way, the child trained God's Way makes a wonderful adult. Obedience has profit in both the short and long term.

Today there is a tendency in society to think of a child as more important than an adult. Yet, we were all children once upon a time and all children turn into adults. So there can be no such distinction made. There is however, such a thing as age appropriate accountability. Consequently, at some level, we are accountable for our actions and should all be held to the standard of God's Word. A baby as a baby, an adult as an adult. A husband as a husband, a wife as a wife. A minister as a

minister. A teacher as a teacher and so on. Because of the way society views children these days, interaction between parent and child has changed. I might add, not for the better.

My dad could never see the logic of toys. As a boy he had only one, a wooden scooter which he called a buddy bike. A while back I did some research and found drawings of the aforementioned "buddy bike." Believe me it wasn't much. Today, adults shower the children in their lives with extravagant gifts. Here in Alaska where I live it's not unusual to see a youngster in possession of a \$10,000 snowmobile, \$6,000 dirt bike or \$8,000 atv. I do mean youngster, as in 8 or 10 years old! I think it fair to say this is overly indulgent. My dad would have flipped at the notion!

What he did endorse was work. Again, this is something that is deemed unpleasant in many social circles. Our present culture worships leisure and despises work. Of course, there is an opposite position as well. There are still workaholic men and women to be found. But let us who are wise save worship for Him to Whom it is due and strike a sensible work/play balance in life.

Above all else we are to remember:

Luke 4:8b

. . . Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

We dare not worship work, we dare not worship recreation. Yet how many there are who make a religion of a leisure pastime. You think not? I've one word to consider - football! Nothing wrong with football, baseball, golf or fishing. But when they take preeminence over the things of God, something is terribly wrong!

Sadly, we live in a world where these things have more draw than the local church, even if it has a Bible teaching minister (though few do). My brothers and sisters, these things ought not to be! But they are! Furthermore, our children learn that it is okay to give a leisure pursuit priority above and beyond a hearing of God's Word. The same is often true for work related issues.

Most people today if forced to choose between hearing God's Word or play time will choose the later. Likewise for work and sleeping in. You see it all goes back to what we consider important. If you've come to think of play as more important than work, you will relinquish work time in lieu of play time. Or fellowship time for play or for work or for any excuse (remember, they only satisfy the one giving them) that suits you.

My dad taught me the great joy of working and the important relationship it holds to responsibility. God's Word teaches this too.

Proverbs 30:24-ff

I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, *and* nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

Then I saw, *and* considered it well: I looked upon it, *and* received instruction.

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

So shall thy poverty come *as* one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

God expects man to work. But He never intended for work to supplant His Word or the hearing of it. Work that gets between God and the man quickly becomes very unprofitable.

Genesis 3:17-19

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life;

Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Look at the rack and ruin brought upon the entire creation as a direct result of Adam's disobedience! Contrariwise, look at the blessings of obedience.! Again by one man.

Romans 5:17-19

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Wow what a difference!

Psalms 104:1-24

Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

Who coverest *thyself* with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

Who laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed for ever.

Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

He sendeth the springs into the valleys, *which* run among the hills.

They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches.

He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, *and* oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.

The trees of the LORD are full of *sap*; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

Where the birds make their nests: *as for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.

The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats; *and* the rocks for the conies.

He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*.

The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Clearly, God wants us to work and He also wants us to play. But neither should be worshiped or taken to the

extreme. We must NEVER forget who it is that has given us everything we have. We must also be diligent to teach this to our children and we cannot expect them to learn well if they are not required to obey.

Life must be observed in the proper balance regarding the priorities between God, work and play.

Obedience is required and very profitable to those exercised thereby.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

I would simplify the above for my children by saying, "There's a time and place for everything, this is not the time and place for . . ."

Today's adults tend to be lenient and indulgent with their children. Consider the following taken from a Reuters news wire:

LONDON (Reuters) - Teenagers are more likely to experiment with the ecstasy drug if they have grown up with lenient, indulgent parents, according to a study on Thursday.

Poor discipline and control were associated with taking ecstasy, and lack of parental warmth during childhood was also a factor, researchers from Liverpool John Moore University found.

"There is increased dosage among those who rate their parents as less controlling and neglectful," researcher Catharine Montgomery told Reuters.

She said the correlation was with increased doses of ecstasy, a younger age at first use and longer-term use. Montgomery's team studied 85 ecstasy

users and 83 non-users between the ages of 18-25.

If it's not ecstasy it will be something else! Maybe something worse, though nothing's worse than being disobedient to God and His Word.

Most parents are duped into being lenient and indulgent because they love their children. The motives may be loving but the methods aren't. It's not loving to help a child become self-centered, self-absorbed, self-gratifying and disobedient. We have an Adversary you know! He uses even our most intimate emotions to destroy us. Let me remind you of how Jesus described him:

John 10:10

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

He described himself in the balance of this verse:

. . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Which do you want for yourself and those you love?

What is it to be lenient? Simply put, procedures are lax and discipline is weak - too soft on the children!

What about indulgence?

Consider Webster:

Prone to indulge; yielding to the wishes, humor, or appetites of those under one's care; compliant; not opposing or restraining; tolerant; mild; favorable; not severe; as, an indulgent parent. --Shak. [1913 Webster]

So common today and SO wrong! You should love your children and if you do, the best way is God's way!

Colossians 3:20

Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1-4

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Very clear, isn't it? Look at what the Bible has to say about Jesus the Christ:

Hebrews 5:8-10

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

If God Almighty expected His only begotten Son to be obedient, what about the rest of us?

Philippians 2:5-13

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

What a wonderful Father we have, such a privilege to be obedient to His Word! Obey the gospel! Enjoy the profit of obedience and teach your children likewise.

Romans 6:17

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.
