



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Acts 1 – 12 Sermon Series
Supports Session 9: Baptizing
Sermon Title: “Obeying God” (Proverbs 3:5-7)

Connection to Session 9

We learned in our group study this morning about Philip and the Ethiopian official. Both were called to action, and both responded in obedience. Philip was called to share the gospel and the Ethiopian official followed through in believers’ baptism. We too are called to obedience and Proverbs 3:5-7 tells us what it looks like to walk in obedience.

Introduction/Opening

If an Army officer tells the troops to go over the obstacle, the commander will be able to observe if the command is fulfilled. If a coach tells the athletes to sprint across the field, the coach will see if the athletes complete the task. As a follower of Christ, we are called to be obedient to God’s commands. The Bible outlines in three verses what this looks like and others should be able to observe us walking in obedience to His commands. This does not mean that we are perfect, but it does mean that we are striving to live in obedience to His calling.

Outline

- I. Obedience calls us to trust God and not self (v. 5).** Some may consider themselves to not be trusting of others. If this is you, please take a moment to reflect upon how trusting all of us are. We trusted the architect of the church when we walked in because we knew it would not collapse on us. We trusted the auto maker when we put our key in the ignition. We trusted the person who made our cell phone that it was not actually going to hurt us when we used it. The list of those whom we trust is endless, and we probably will never meet the people that designed these things.

Since we are trusting of those who have designed and built things we use daily, might we consider trusting the One who designed us and built this universe? God has invited us to trust Him with all our heart. He does not want a portion or even the majority of our heart. He wants it all. This may be a scary proposition for some. But it should be known that He is trustworthy. We know this because of the cross and the empty tomb. While being obedient to God does not mean that everything will turn out exactly the way we want, It does mean we can trust Him because He went to the cross and conquered death.

As we learn to trust God, then we learn to not rely on our own understanding. Following the teachings of the Bible does not make sense when compared to what the world tells us. The world tells us to hate our enemies and Jesus calls us to pray for our enemies (Matt. 5:44). The world tells us to make sure we place ourselves first ahead of everyone else. Yet, Jesus calls us to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily (Luke 9:23). As we learn to trust God, we must in turn learn to not rely upon our own understanding.

II. Obedience calls us to follow God and not self (v. 6). As we learn to trust Him, we also learn to follow Him. The word “know” (v. 6) as used in the CSB is more than a working knowledge of a subject matter. A quick study of the Hebrew reveals that it means to personally acknowledge someone or something. It shows an ongoing relationship between two parties. The invitation to obedience is to know and acknowledge His ways.

The question now becomes, what does it mean to acknowledge His ways? It means to take what we know and begin to apply it to our own lives. For example, the Golden Rule is to treat others the way we want to be treated (Matt. 7:12). God not only wants us to know this rule, but also apply it to our lives. He is calling us to do this in all our ways, not just when we are in church on Sunday mornings.

As we follow Him in obedience, He promises to make our paths straight. To understand what the author is teaching us, we need to understand a small piece of ancient history. Whenever a king or noble was traveling from one place to another, they would have someone go in front of them to remove obstacles from the path ahead. This allowed the king to travel a straight path to the desired destination. When we know and follow the ways of God, He tells us that a straight path will be in front of us.

III. Obedience calls us to fear God (v. 7). Our next step of obedience is not to be wise in our own eyes but to fear the Lord. The word “fear” as used here means to hold in high regard or to respect someone. When someone in authority enters a room, we should have a certain amount of respect for that person, and we should want to be on our best behavior. If we feel this way toward another person, we should also feel this way toward God.

As we live in a healthy respect or fear of God, we should also turn away from evil. God is the exact opposite of evil; He is the very definition of good. Therefore, when we turn from evil, we are turning toward God.

Conclusion

If we are being honest with ourselves, many of us would have to acknowledge that being obedient to others can be a struggle. It does become easier, however, when we know the One we are obeying is good and truly has our best interest at heart. We learned in our group study today

that Philip and the Ethiopian official lived in obedience. We learned in the sermon today what obedience looks like in the now. Our only question left is, will we each be obedient to what we know God is calling us to be and do?

Tod Tanner holds degrees from Texas A&M University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has pastored churches in Texas and Tennessee. He and his family reside in Wartrace, TN, and he is serving as the Vice President of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible, Copyright 2020 by Holman Bible Publishers.