

## Practical Expressions of Obedience

### Lesson Scope: [Deuteronomy 12-26](#)

#### Lesson Focus

In his first message, Moses had reviewed Israel's recent history, beginning with their departure from Mt. Sinai. Their journey to Canaan would have been relatively short, had they not turned back in unbelief when the ten spies brought their report of intimidating giants and walled cities. Their disobedience resulted in forty years of wandering in the wilderness until all of the unbelieving generation had perished.

During those long years, God had tested their loyalty repeatedly. Would they trust Him to provide for their needs? Would they obey Him in all the details of His perfect Law? Would they shun the idols of the nations they encountered and maintain the separated worship arrangement that God had instituted? So often they had failed and suffered the consequences.

Moses was speaking to a people who were knowledgeable and responsible because of the Lord's gracious provisions for them and His mighty works among them. Apart from their continuing obedient response, they would be cursed rather than blessed.

God deserves and requires genuine obedience. Man's response directly affects his relationship with his Lord and with his fellow men.

Read chapter 11 to get the background for the first part of this lesson. You can read in Joshua 8:30-35 how Deuteronomy 11:29 was carried out. Think about how God designed the Law for man's happiness and for the well-being of His people. Be practical. How do the principles in the Law apply to our daily life?

**Lesson Aim:** To demonstrate how obedience to God is expressed in every-day life.

**Theme Verse:** [Matthew 7:21](#). Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

## Lesson Text

### Pure Worship

*Deuteronomy 12:1-5* <sup>1</sup> These *are* the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. <sup>2</sup> Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: <sup>3</sup> And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. <sup>4</sup> Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God. <sup>5</sup> But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

*Deuteronomy 18:9-12* <sup>9</sup> When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. <sup>10</sup> There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, <sup>11</sup> Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. <sup>12</sup> For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

### Heartfelt Benevolence

*Deuteronomy 15:1* <sup>1</sup> At the end of *every* seven years thou shalt make a release.

*Deuteronomy 15:7-8* <sup>7</sup> If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: <sup>8</sup> But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, *in that* which he wanteth.

*Deuteronomy 22:4* <sup>4</sup> Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift *them* up again.

*Deuteronomy 23:19* <sup>19</sup> Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:

### Moral Values

*Deuteronomy 19:14-16* <sup>14</sup> Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt in-

herit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it. <sup>15</sup> One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. <sup>16</sup> If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him *that which is wrong*;

*Deuteronomy 19:19* <sup>19</sup> Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.

*Deuteronomy 22:5* <sup>5</sup> The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

*Deuteronomy 22:8* <sup>8</sup> When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.

*Deuteronomy 24:14* <sup>14</sup> Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant *that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates*:

*Deuteronomy 25:14-16* <sup>14</sup> Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. <sup>15</sup> *But* thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. <sup>16</sup> For all that do such things, *and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God.*

## **Questions for Study**

### **Pure Worship**

1. What was the purpose of the statutes referred to in Deut.12:1?
2. For what reasons might wrong worship seem appealing?
3. How can we avoid the snare of idolatry?

### **Heartfelt Benevolence**

4. What did the year of release help Israel to remember?
5. Explain the direction given in Deut.15:8.

### **Moral Values**

6. How might we be guilty of bearing false witness?
7. Why is safety important in our work and around our homes?
8. List some ways we can apply the principle in Deut.25:15.

## **Analyzing the Passage**

Canaanite worship involved multiple gods, and the heathen sacrificed to them in many different ways and places. The forms of these gods and the methods of serving them seem to have varied somewhat according to the thinking of the individual worshiper. The Lord condemned this worship as utterly polluted; it would certainly corrupt the Israelites unless they destroyed every remnant of it.

In contrast, true worship focused on and exalted the one true God. It reminded the people continually how dependent they were on Him and how much they owed Him. The worship that God had prescribed had an ennobling effect on the people, promoting joy, peace, and healthy relationships. The release (Deut.15:1) at the end of every seven years included the forgiving of debts owed by the poor. At all times, the people were to share liberally with their poor brethren (Deut.15:7-8) and not charge them usury (interest) on anything borrowed (Deut.23:19).

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Pure Worship**

1. Obedience to God is a life-long series of daily choices (Deut.12:1). It is not a once-and-done experience but a conscious choice to obey God in every decision. Actually, obedience is a form of worship (see Romans 6:16). The natural man believes he can separate his worship from his daily life, so that his worship has no effect on his thinking or on how he treats his fellow men. God requires the complete loyalty of our heart (Matthew 22:37) and the service of our body (Romans 12:1).

2. Obedience to God requires an active rejection of idolatry (Deut.12:2-3). In every age, God's people have been tempted by the gods of the society around them. Israel's contemporaries bowed to graven images; our neighbors bow to fashion, pleasure, and electronic gadgetry. We must identify and deal with whatever competes with our affection for God.

3. God requires His people to worship in His prescribed manner (Deut.12:5). Man becomes like what he worships (Psalm 135:18). True worship draws us nearer to God. In His presence we sense our continual need of cleansing so that we can be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16). Scriptural worship patterns are designed to help us keep a right perspective of ourselves and

of our great God. It is presumptuous to think that we can worship as we

please and, at the same time, please Him.

### **Heartfelt Benevolence**

4. God's people express obedience by heartfelt care of the needy among them (Deut.15:1, 7-8). One defining mark of God's people is their willingness to help each other. Jesus taught that the way we treat the needy will affect our eternal destiny (Matthew 25:31-46). Refusing to care for the needy demonstrates that God's Spirit is not ruling in our heart (1 John 3:17).

5. Obedience is expressed by being alert to the calamities of our brethren (Deut.22:4). Sooner or later, all of us experience losses of one kind or another. Possessions may be destroyed through storm or some other "act of God." Many times damage results simply from our own poor management. When our brother meets difficulty for that reason, we are not excused from coming to his aid. Christ taught us to help even our enemies in need (Matthew 5:44). How much more should we help our brother!

6. God's people express obedience by refusing to take advantage of the needy (Deut.23:19). We know that people vary in their earning and management abilities. Accidents, sickness, and other events beyond one's control sometimes cause hardship. When things go well for us, we easily forget who gives the power to get wealth. Then we might easily make life more difficult for a struggling brother. It is a serious thing to take advantage of the needy; doing so is actually an act against the God of heaven (Proverbs 14:31).

### **Moral Values**

7. God requires honesty and uprightness in all relationships (Deut.19:14, 16, 19). When we are the victim of someone else's deception or unfairness, we understand what is wrong with treating someone unfairly or deceitfully. Jesus taught that we should treat others as we would like them to treat us. Healthy relationships thrive in an atmosphere of integrity and trust. The child of God treats others fairly because he is upright in heart and not simply to preserve his reputation.

8. Obedience to God involves proper respect for the sanctity of human life (Deut.22:8). Man is created "in the image of God," who reserves the exclusive right to terminate life. Since life is sacred, we must be safety conscious at home, in the workplace, and on the highway. Man is an eternal being; none of us want to be responsible for sealing another's eternal destiny.

9. The laborer is worthy of his hire (Deut.24:14). God sees how we treat those who work for us. God expects employers to treat their workers kindly, to pay them fairly, and to be sensitive to their needs.

10. God requires His people to be honest in trade or business (Deut.25:14-16). The Gospel way is to fill the bushel, giving a little extra. Go the extra mile, and give outstanding service (Luke 6:38). God's blessing for obedience far outweighs any small gains one may get through shortchanging and deception. Being a little dishonest in business is a choice to serve mammon rather than God (Matthew 6:24).

### **Important Teachings**

1. Obedience to God is a life-long series of daily choices (Deut.12:1).

2. Obedience to God requires an active rejection of idolatry (Deut.12:2-3).

3. God requires His people to worship in His prescribed manner (Deut.12:5).

4. God's people express obedience by heartfelt care of the needy among them (Deut.15:1, 7-8).

5. Obedience is expressed by being alert to the calamities of our brethren (Deut.22:4).

6. God's people express obedience by refusing to take advantage of the needy (Deut.23:19).

7. God requires honesty and uprightness in all relationships (Deut.19:14, 16,19).

8. Obedience to God involves proper respect for the sanctity of human life (Deut.22:8).

9. The laborer is worthy of his hire (Deut.24:14).

10. God requires His people to be honest in trade or business (Deut.25:14-16).

11. Obedience to God involves the rejection of the occult (Deut.18:9-10, 12).

12. God requires His people to maintain proper gender distinction in their attire (Deut.22:5).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. What was the purpose of the statutes referred to in Deut.12:1?

These statutes basically teach man how to worship God. The purpose is stated in Deut.12:28—"that it may go well with thee." The purpose of all of

God's laws is for man's happiness and well-being.

2. For what reasons might wrong worship seem appealing?

Wrong worship appeals because of man's innate tendency to conform to the practice of those around him. False worship appeals to the senses and the emotions without disturbing the roots of man's sinful nature.

3. How can we avoid the snare of idolatry?

By studying God's Word, we are able to identify false teaching, and we gain the motivation to reject it. To spend much time learning how other religions worship their gods is unwise. We should also limit our exposure to false teaching by screening our reading material, tapes, and so forth.

4. What did the year of release help Israel to remember?

The year of release helped Israel to remember that all their blessings came from God. They had once been bondmen in Egypt. Their gratitude for God's deliverance and blessing made them willing to share with the poor (Deuteronomy 15:1-18).

5. Explain the direction given in Deut. 15:8.

To open the hand wide is to be generous. Generosity comes from a heart of love for the suffering. Verse 9 shows the opposite of generosity.

6. How might we be guilty of bearing false witness?

We maybe would not think of purposely bearing false witness in court, but telling a defaming story about someone could easily amount to the same thing. If we have wrong feelings toward a brother or sister, it is easy to repeat a derogatory story about him or her that we are not sure is true.

7. Why is safety important in our work and around our homes?

Safety is important because human life is sacred. A person who dies because of someone's negligence or carelessness is just as dead as one who is murdered.

8. List some ways we can apply the principle in Deut.25:15.

We should give our customer or employer a full hour's work for an hour's pay. We should properly represent what we are selling. We should give good measure.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.... Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain

descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock" (Matthew 7:21, 24-25).

### **Research Guide**

1. Read the lesson scope, especially the context of the verses in the lesson text.
2. Read Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 5:24; 6:15; 29:20; 32:16, 21; Joshua 24:19; Nahum 1:2; 1 Corinthians 10:22 to gain inspiration for the verses in chapter 12.
3. Study Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 11:14, 15; in relation to 22:5.
4. Study Proverbs 14:31; 19:17; 22:16; Luke 6:31-36; 1 Corinthians 4:7; James 5:4 in relation to oppressing the poor.
5. You can gain some thoughts on honesty in business by reading Leviticus 19:35-37; Proverbs 11:1; Ezekiel 45:10; Micah 6:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:6.