

# Sponsor's Guide

To be used with Junior High, Young People and Adult

## GODLY LIVING

**Quarterly Aim: To show that God expects His people to live godly lives.**

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## About the Writer



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# Godly Living Requires Obedience

Lesson Text: Deuteronomy 4:1-10.

**Related Scripture:** Genesis 5:22-24; Leviticus 11:44; 19:37; Deuteronomy 26:16; Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 11:28; John 14:15; Acts 5:29; Hebrews 10:38; 11:5; James 1:22-25; 1 John 3:7.

**Application:** To show that godly living demands obedience.

## DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

### Obedience unto Righteousness, Romans 6:16.

Every person makes the choice to obey someone. The choice is made by yielding. Whose will do we obey? The word “yield” means to stand beside, to exhibit, to recommend. Some are obviously not on the Lord’s side. “Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD’s side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him” (Exodus 32:26). There is no fence straddling. Every person is either on the “LORD’s side” or on the devil’s side.

Some choose to obey Satan and live a life of sin. People choose Satan’s side for many reasons, all related to the desires of the flesh. Pharaoh wanted to be his own god. Ahab wanted to amass worldly possessions. Jezebel loved false worship. Cain preferred to give a prideful offering to God instead of obeying God’s command. Some desire to be rich. “For the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). They loved money instead of God.

Some choose to obey God and live a life of righteousness. Abraham made the choice to obey God and follow Him. David loved the Lord and served Him. Job continued to live for God even though it seemed he had a terminal illness. Stephen died serving the Lord faithfully. Hebrews 11 gives a list of those who chose to live for God by faith and obedience. God expects His servants to flee from a life of sin and follow after the ways of righteousness (1 Timothy 6:11). Those who do works of righteousness obey God’s commands.

## EXAMINING THE TEXT

**Deuteronomy 4:1-10.** God requires obedience (verse 1). Obedience means carrying out the will and Word of God. The first part of obedience is hearing God’s commands. The second part of obedience is heeding what God said. When servants of the Lord obey His will according to His commands, God gives His blessings and favor (Deuteronomy 28:1-13). Moses taught the people God’s commands. He received them from the Lord. He emphasized obedience as some-

thing God demands. He explained disobedience brings judgment. The Israelite's obedience resulted in the possession of the land God provided for them. The negative is not only implied, but explicitly stated (Deuteronomy 28:14-68). Obedience reveals reverence and faith in God's Word. Disobedience breaks fellowship with God. Without obedience, even worship could not be maintained in an acceptable manner.

God's commands must not be altered (Deuteronomy 4:2). Adding to or taking away from God's commands is disobedience. The word "diminish" means to scrape off, to shave or to lessen. "Add" means stronger. Obedience is not stopping short of God's command or going beyond it. God's commands are a part of His unalterable Word. To alter one of God's commands is changing His Word. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18, 19). No person has the right to alter God's Word.

The Lord sends judgment upon those who turn to false worship (Deuteronomy 4:3). The turn to false worship is a turn away from God, the author of true worship. "As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou

hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face" (Jeremiah 2:26, 27). Baal-peor was the name of a particular type of Baal worship. The word Baal means lord or master. Peor was a mountain in Moab. There they burned babies in the fire. They committed acts of immorality associated with that form of worship since it was connected with the idea of fertility. There were many forms of Baal worship. The plural for Baal is Baalim. God's judgment on the Israelites, who turned away from the Lord to Baal worship, involved destroying all of them.

Those who remained in true worship were spared from the judgment of God upon those who participated in false worship (Deuteronomy 4:4). "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:9). When God acts in judgment, there is no collateral damage. The word "deliver" means to rush to the rescue or to draw to safety. God proved His ability to separate the righteous from the unrighteous by the eight souls who lived in safety on the ark in the time of the flood and the ones drawn out of Sodom before God's judgment fell. God will remove those who are His at the time of the rapture. God would not be just and destroy the righteous with the unrighteous. Those who follow the Lord will be under His protective care. The word "cleave" means joined to or stick to. The Lord's servants have the responsibility to choose to stay true to Him.

God demands obedience for His people to enjoy His blessings (Deuteronomy 4:5). God's commands are statutes and judgments. These words are used in Psalm 119 to

refer to the Word of God. The word "statutes" means appointed duty, binding command, decree, law or ordinance. The word "judgments" refers to the right style or worthy manner by which acts of obedience are to be performed. When God commands, He expects it to be done according to His specific rules and in the right manner. Some present day examples of God's commands include scriptural baptism and the Lord's Supper. Obedience to the Lord is not a light or casual thing. It is a duty that shows reverence for God and love for pleasing Him on His terms. Moses taught the people concerning God's commands that they "should do so" (Deuteronomy 4:5). The words "should do" mean to execute or fulfill. Obedience is executing God's commands in a spiritual manner.

The wise choice of obeying God builds a godly influence before others (verse 6). "In the sight of the nations" reminded Israel that they were to be a witness nation. They were to serve as an example of obedience to God in daily living and in true worship. Their obedience would make children of Israel stand apart from all the pagan and heathen nations, false worship and fleshly ceremonies around them. When God blessed Israel for obedience to His commands, the other nations should conclude it is wise to know, love and obey the one true God. When God's people fail in obedience, reverence, fear of the Lord and spiritual worship according to the truth, those who are watching see just another religious group not so different from the pagans. God's plan for His servants is that they should be witnesses who are the "light of the world" and a "city that is set on an hill" (Matthew 5:14).

In every generation, the Lord's servants need a godly influence.

God's answers to prayers set His people apart from all others (Deuteronomy 4:7). God answered the prayers of the nation of Israel. Their prayers were "things that we call upon him for" (verse 7). God answered Israel with a mighty hand when He delivered them from Egyptian bondage. He answered their prayers by providing for them in the wilderness. He defeated their enemies on the way to and after entering the Promised Land. God's plan was to bless the children of Israel's obedience by answering their prayers. God cannot bless disobedience. When the people of Israel disobeyed the Lord, they suffered the loss of blessings, prosperity and protection from their enemies. God's blessings on the Israelites were to be so great that others could only conclude that the God of the nation of Israel is the one true God. God placed His presence among them, near them, around them, before them and behind them for their good.

The Lord commands His people to live by His righteous standards (verse 8). God's righteous standards are defined by the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments apply to one's relationship with God. The last six deal with one's relationship to his fellowman. Some of the other nations lived off of the profits they made by stealing, lying and cheating. God's plan for the nation of Israel was to live differently from the heathen by doing what is right before God. The word "righteous" means just, lawful, right. The word "law" means precept or statute. God's Ten Commandments are based upon His moral precepts as defined by His

holy character. "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:9). Any nation that desires to be right before God must abide by His commands of righteousness.

God warns His people to practice obedience and to teach it to their children and grandchildren (Deuteronomy 4:9). "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (Psalm 103:17). There are great reasons why parents should teach their children to love, fear and obey the Lord according to His commands. "Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead" (Jeremiah 2:9). Teaching received while in the tender years will tend to help children respond to the Lord in later years with receptive hearts. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Parents and grandparents should seriously consider their responsibilities in teaching children and grandchildren to love God and obey His commandments.

Obedience demonstrates the fear of the Lord (Deuteronomy 4:10). At Mount Horeb, Moses gathered all the people of Israel to hear the words of the Lord. He faithfully rehearsed all God's commands to them. They agreed to live by His commands. Their hearing the commands of God was intended to lead to obedience. Obedience is the pathway of blessings. Fearing the Lord and learning the value of obeying His commands is a learning process. Just as a child must be taught honesty, respect for authority and

the necessity for obedience, so God's people must learn the importance of obeying God, which includes, telling, explaining, hearing and doing. Correction for disobedience brings about a return to right doing. God chastises His children for disobedience. Obedience to God's commands is our responsibility.

## RELATED SCRIPTURE

**Genesis 5:22-24.** The family lineage of Seth is the generations of those who lived by faith. Enoch walked with God throughout his life. The word "walked" denotes fellowship. Those who obey God enjoy a sweet fellowship with the Lord. Enoch's faith and obedience to the Lord enabled him to maintain a lifestyle of adhering to God's commands.

**Leviticus 11:44.** Obedience to the Lord is the difference between a servant of God being holy or defiled. The word "sanctify" means to make pure. God's command is to be understood as, "you shall cause yourselves to be pure and dedicated before the Lord." The word "holy" means clean in God's sight. The word "defile" means polluted or unclean. Disobedience makes one unclean from God's perspective.

**Leviticus 19:37.** God commands His people to obey Him. This obedience is required to be all that God wants us to be. The word "observe" means to preserve, guard, attend to or keep. God does not accept good intentions as a substitute for obedience. He requires obedience from all His children.

**Deuteronomy 26:16.** Obedience to the Lord's commands must be more than lip service. God's peo-

ple are not to question them, debate them or alter them. The obedience God demands is total heart dedication to doing His will as He has commanded it to be done. Partial obedience is disobedience.

**Matthew 7:21-23.** Many claim to obey the Lord who do not even know Him as their personal Savior. Jesus made it clear that obedience to God begins with being born again. The will of God for every person is to repent of their sinful condition, trust in the Lord and call upon Him for salvation. No quantity of religious activities will produce salvation.

**Luke 11:28.** The process of obedience begins with hearing the words of the Lord. Those words must be heeded carefully. Those who follow God's word with careful execution of His commands are those whom God considers obedient. It is a blessed or favored condition to be obedient to the Lord.

**John 14:15.** Keeping the commandments of Christ is evidence of our love for Him. We can not expect to be comforted (verse 16) separate and apart from loving God and keeping His commandments. The world may never see inside of the Word of God, but they will see us. We have responsibilities not only to God but to those around us to purport ourselves in godly fashion.

**Acts 5:29.** When Peter and the other apostles were commanded not to preach in the name of Jesus, they agreed their first priority was to obey God. Those who obey men and honor them before God are disobedient to the Lord. Peter and the other apostles were committed to follow-

ing Jesus in obedience to His commands and in accord with His word.

**Hebrews 10:38.** One who pleases God lives by the new nature of a believer. Every decision is to be determined by the will and commands of God. The life choices of a faithful servant of the Lord should reflect faith and obedience to God even when one does not understand the command. God is well pleased with one who obediently walks in Jesus steps.

**Hebrews 11:5.** Enoch pleased God by obedience. Those who obey the Lord are able to live in fellowship with the Lord day by day. This fellowship is a growing and maturing process of becoming more like Christ. Enoch had a great testimony. His life's influence was so obedient to God that the Lord was pleased with his choices and actions.

**James 1:22-25.** The first thing is to hear the Word. This requires concentration and attention to the Word of God. Once one has an understanding of the responsibilities that must be executed in order to be a doer of the Word, he must follow through with the execution of God's commands. God's Word is the "perfect law of liberty." Those who examine themselves in the mirror of the Word easily see the sins in their lives (verse 25).

**1 John 3:7.** Children of God should not let anyone deceive them concerning the difference between obedience and disobedience. God's principle is "he that doeth righteousness is righteous" (verse 7). Claiming to be doing right does not make it so. God is seeking servants to obey Him who will make the

choice to do right because they love the Lord.

### RELEVANCE OF THE TEXT

Moses taught the people of God concerning their responsibilities to do God's will. He taught them the good and right way. The only good and right way is God's way. Those who obey God do not go beyond His commands or stop short of them. God's record of judgment upon the disobedient was plain to the people of Israel. In addition to the matter of Baal-peor, they would discover the same principle concerning Achan, Nadab and Abihu.

God's plan for His servants today follows the same principle of obedience to His commands. Obedience to God should be taught in the home and at the house of the Lord. When children from the earliest age are taught obedience, the result is respect for authority. Children go from learning to obey their parents to learning the necessity of obeying God. God commands us to obey the laws of the land. Obedience to God is the best choice.

### CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION

God's plan for His children today is clearly explained in the Bible. All are sinners. Sinners must be born again. The saved ones should follow the Lord's command to receive scriptural baptism. Salvation and baptism are the two prerequisites for church membership. Following church membership, the believer should learn and grow in the Word. The saved learn the commands and principles of the Lord and should incorporate them into daily life.

Obedience to God is not an option. It is commanded. No one can choose the commands of God that they want to obey. Every child of God is responsible for obedience to every command the Lord has given. Those who fail to obey the Lord do not grow spiritually. Their lives often become stumbling blocks to others. Their lives are very much the same as the ungodly. Obedience helps one to shine for God.