

Young People’s Quarterly

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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After obtaining his Master's Degree in Bible from the Little Rock Seminary, he has served in various capacities for nearly twenty years. Although currently serving as senior pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Sherwood,

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Robert's experience with youth began at the Conway MBSF, followed by pastoring the teens of County Avenue Baptist Church in Texarkana, Arkansas. Robert is the camp registrar for National Camp Week Two at Bogg Springs, and also assists in the planning and development of camp programming from year to year. Robert's writing experience includes authoring VBS and youth camp teaching materials for the ABA.

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Godly Living Requires Obedience

APPLICATION

To show that godly living demands obedience.

SCRIPTURES TO READ

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.

Devotional Reading: Obedience unto Righteousness, Romans 6:16.

Introduction

Brad was excited beyond words because of the news he received. He ran into the house, threw his backpack onto the kitchen counter, spun around and started doing some wild footwork. His sister and mother stood staring at him in frozen awe. After a few moments his mother composed herself and blurted out a query for Brad to explain himself.

He told his mother that he was rehired at the local theme park for the summer. This was great news in itself, but he was also approved to be trained to operate The Kraken—the biggest roller coaster in the region! After reporting these brief facts, Brad let out a victory howl.

His mother piped up (as mothers do) and told him that he would have a great responsibility toward people's safety. She reminded him that it was a time to thank God and to be a witness of what was right even at the theme park. She told him that she was overjoyed with him, but wanted to make sure that he took his job seriously.

During training for the operation of The Kraken, Brad was glued to the details. He wanted to know all the ins and outs of the ride so that he could be depended on for its proper working. He wanted to be well versed in all areas of the ride so that he would have the opportunity to work in any of its key areas. The trainer continuously stressed the importance of safety and following procedure.

When the park opened up Brad felt like the king of the world. Working on The Kraken was the most desirable spot in the place. When a few

weeks had passed, schedules began to fall into place, aptitude was judged, changes were made, and Angela was moved to The Kraken. Brad thought that life couldn't get any better!

One day, he and Jake were at the station that locked the patrons into their seats with safety belts and the crash bars. Angela arrived with a small water gun and started shooting them when they weren't looking. After a little while, the boys figured out who was doing this, and began to horse around. About fifteen minutes of this went on when a car pulled back into the station with a crying twelve-year-old boy and a raging father. The boy's crash bar was up through the entire ride and he was terrified that he would fall out. The father swore he would file a complaint.

After an investigation by park security, it was verified that Angela, Brad and Jake were not conducting their duties according to procedure. They were all fired. Brad was humiliated and defeated.

- Tell about a time when you have witnessed employees who did not take their duties seriously.
- Do you think that firing Brad, Angela and Jake was too harsh as a consequence of failing in the responsibilities as an operator on The Kraken? Explain why you think so.
- If someone is a Christian, do they also have responsibilities in their daily living? Did Brad succeed or fail in his responsibilities for godly living?

In today's lesson, we will learn about the responsibility to obey God in order to have a godly life. We'll see that God brings attention to doing this, explains the acclaim that accompanies it, and then stresses adherence to the life He shows.

1. Attention (Deuteronomy 4:1-3)

This passage of Scripture records some of the final words Moses spoke to the children of Israel before God took him home to Heaven. These words were the words of God to His people which were given for their benefit, safety and prosperity. And just because Moses was far older than any of them did not give the words any less importance or relevance. The message of the book of Deuteronomy has power and principle for God's people of all ages—even today!

Moses used the word "hearken" as a call to serious attention. He wasn't messing around with how serious it was for him to tell them what they needed to hear, neither was he derelict in his duty to get their attention on the matter. He repeated often the call for them to hearken throughout the book's historical record. The laws and ways of living that Moses taught them which came from God were a serious matter that needed dedication and obedience.

He pointed out that they shouldn't try to add to God's commands or ignore the things they don't like about them. The Israelites were supposed to leave the words of God just as they were so that they would be the real deal and not some man-made code of goodness. Just being a child of God was not enough to fulfill God's requirement of obedience. God spoke through Moses to remind them of what was recorded in Numbers 25—the

Baal-peor incident. This was a situation where the people of God camped near the Midianites and started worshipping the god Baal-peor while also trying to say they were Israelites. This conglomeration of faiths, customs and lifestyles was unacceptable to God who sent a plague on the people and many people died. God is opposed to diluted, adulterous, self-designed faith. He brought their attention to these startling, stringent standards and consequences.

- Talk about why you think it was so important for God to call such serious attention to His laws and statutes?
- Look back over Numbers 25. What is your response to God's reaction to the people's behavior?
- Why do you think that a reminder of the Baal-peor incident is effective in stimulating serious attention to His laws and statutes?

2. Acclaim (Deuteronomy 4:4-8)

Acclaim is a word that is used for positive praise, commendation or reputation. Those who obey God's design for life will enjoy acclaim even though they may not seek it out. God assured this for the Israelites in these five verses.

First, He reminded them that they were alive because they obeyed. Solomon recorded the wise saying in Ecclesiastes 9:4, "For a living dog is better than a dead lion." Life is eternal to the believer, yet the experience of all eternity depended upon what one chose and did in the years of living given here. Eternity doesn't care if someone is a king or a homeless man. Eternal life and its rewards are a result of the choices and actions of this life. As long as there is life, there is opportunity to obey and be blessed.

Second, if the Israelites would do the things God taught them to do, they would grow wise and excel above all other nations. People would assess them as being wise and understanding. They would avoid terrible decisions, and they would make choices that would astound the people of the world.

Third, they would have God very close to them all the time. When they sought God, He was near. If they turned their backs on Him and walked away, His fellowship with them would be harmed. Their relationships would grow distant. His work would be less among them because their faith had not stirred up obedience. No other nation on the planet had the opportunity to have such a close relationship with God.

Fourth, obedience would cause the world to sit up and take notice of the laws and statutes of God. They would learn them and realize how wise and good they are. The nation of Israel would enjoy the acclaim of having the best laws in all the planet.

- Name an organization or team that you are associated with from which you get a lot of enjoyment when they do something that gets acclaim.
- How is this like the enjoyment of being a part of a church that enjoys a great reputation in the community? How is it different?

- How does obedience to the teaching of God cause a church or an individual Christian to be acclaimed? Are the acclaims similar to what Moses promised to Israel?

3. Adherence (Deuteronomy 4:9, 10)

Now Moses, like a loving and pastoral father, looked to the people and charged them to really stick with the laws and statutes. He had clearly called their attention to them and he let them know of the benefits of following the commands. Yet just speaking about his commands and calling the people to listen was not enough. He had to stress the obedience at this point of his address.

He asked the Israelites to make a deep, personal assessment to make sure they were serious about keeping the words of God. He was powerfully motivated to call them to think about the words, remember them, teach them and live them. God's laws and statutes were an impressive and intimidating list. Even so, a person needed to dig deep within his soul to determine to work hard at obedience. It would not be easy.

Once, as reported in Exodus 33, God called the people together at Mount Horeb and severely stressed the words. He demanded they gather and hear Him speak through His servant Moses. God demonstrated His presence among them that day, so they would be reminded that He is real and a powerful, jealous God. He loved them fiercely and anticipated their faithful, obedient love in return. If they were to remain undeniably His people, they would need to obey.

- When was the last time you did a serious soul search to see whether you are living with the proper dedication that God expects?
- Share some lifestyle changes you made for God, but didn't stick with them. Why did you stop doing what is good?
- Why do you think it is so important for God's people to adhere to His commands?

Conclusion

In this lesson we learned that godly living requires obedience. God brought His people's attention to obedience, He shared the acclaim that comes from obedience, and wrapped up with a challenge to adhere to a lifestyle to obey Him. Christians today may believe that since they are saved by grace, then they are free to act, say or think whatever they wish because they cannot lose their salvation. While it is true that no act of man can cause a person to lose salvation, it is not proper to believe that it is unimportant to obey God. Read Romans 6:1, 2.

- Why do you think Christians don't confess their sins to one another as they are commanded to do? How would confession aid their obedience to God's commands?
- How would you rate your obedience level on a scale of 1-10 (one being poor and 10 being perfect)? What could you improve?
- Can you name a good example of a person who lives a godly life? Why not find a time to sit down with them to get some tips and pointers?