



Links Players

RELATING TO GOD 5: THOSE WHO OBEY GOD

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." (John 14:23, NIV)

HOW'S YOUR OBEDIENCE QUOTIENT THESE DAYS? Likely it has been tested in these strange times of shutdowns and home stays. Golfers aren't immune. When states that required the closure of courses started enforcing the rules, a lot of questions arose. Even those who were willing to keep away wanted to know why they couldn't play their beloved game as long they were keeping their distance from others.

In other arenas, some were blatantly defiant. The infamous reports from Florida's beaches, where revelers had no intention of social distancing during their spring break parties, revealed the sinner's nature that arises within us when we're told what to do. We resist, in spirit if not in action.

For those who profess to follow Jesus, however, obedience is not an option. This does not mean we don't choose it, of course. Even the apostle Paul notably said that he at times did what he did not want to do. Temptation called his name and disobedience kicked in. What God wanted was not what Paul did. Now can I get a "Been there, done that"? I'm sure I can. Because for all of us, even when the spirit is willing, the flesh can be weak.

In our relationship with God, he is the rule-giver, and we are meant to be the rule-followers. That may sound prudish to you, but in truth there is nothing more prudent. If God created the world and those of us who live in it, then he knows how it works best and how we work best. We may think we have some pretty good ideas, but if they're not God's ideas, they will send us right down the path of trouble.

Jesus told his disciples that they had reason to obey the commands he had given them. But his most compelling reason was not a pragmatic one. It was not only that the ways of God are wise and life-giving. Instead, the primary reason we should obey the Lord is because it shows that we love him.

Nearly as compelling is the promise Jesus offered in return: The obedient would know the love and presence of God. The subjects of a king who recognize and receive his loving benevolence decreasingly ask why they must do what he tells them. They do it because they love him, too.

Opening questions What rule in your day-to-day life is hardest for you to follow? Would it make a difference if you knew the rule was given straight from God?

READING Romans 5:18-21; Luke 11:27-28; James 4:7-8

Jesus' obedience (Romans 5)

What central act of Jesus' obedience did Paul emphasize in this passage? How critical was his obedience to our salvation? How does grace stand out as the conquerer of our fatally consequential sin?

Blessed by obedience (Luke 11)

What is first required for us to obey God? How can you get more of God's word into your head and your heart? What blessings can you name that come from obeying God's word?

Wrong and right (James 4)

Who would draw us into disobedience? What role does submission to God play in our living righteously? What do you think it means to purify your heart, and how can you go about doing this?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study can be found here: <https://youtu.be/EIRU20iSmUk>