

# What Is Obedience?

Quarter 9 • Lesson 5

Focus on Character Development

- 1. Connecting:** Play a game to practice obeying.
- 2. Teaching:** Listen to the story of an obedient servant (John 14:15; Genesis 24).
- 3. Responding:** Practice obeying to show love.

## SUPPLIES

- Bible

*Optional Supplies:*

- Memory Verse Poster
- *The Action Bible*, images of the servant at the well
- Student Pages
- Scissors

## Teacher Devotion

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*If you love me, obey my commands.*  
John 14:15

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Jesus said these words to His disciples during the last meal before His death. When we obey God's commands and live in a way that honours the example set by Jesus, we show God how much we love Him. Therefore, our obedience to God should come from our love for Him. Obeying out of love, not fear or obligation, is something that sets Christians apart from the rest of the world.

Obedience, both to God and to other people, can bring great joy to your life. Think of times when you have obeyed God. Did you do this because you felt you had to, or did you do it because of your love for your Father in heaven? When you obey out of love, you strengthen your relationship with your heavenly Father. This may sometimes be difficult, but that is why God sent the Holy Spirit to guide and help us in our times of weakness. When we obey out of love, we can trust that regardless of the outcome, we are in our Father's care.

**Family Connection:** Encourage families to talk to their children about obedience. What are some positive things that happen when each family member follows rules and is considerate to the others?

## LESSON TIME

### 1. Connecting: Play a game to practice obeying.

Greet the children as they come to class. Ask the children to think of someone who they may need to obey—teachers, parents, pastors, local leaders, etc.

**Let's begin today with a game. In order to do well in this game, you will need to pay attention and follow instructions.**

Bring a student to the front of the class and explain that you are going to tell him to do 3 things. He must wait until you list all 3 things before he does them. Give instructions like this:

1. **Touch your nose.**
2. **Jump up and down.**
3. **Sit down.**

After you give the 3 instructions, the student should do all 3 actions in order. Repeat the activity 2 times with other students, making your instructions more and more complex. The children must pay attention in order to correctly complete all 3 instructions in the correct order. If a student forgets or does not understand an instruction, the other children may help. Here are some ways you may ask the children to move:

- Touch your toes.
- Spin in a circle.
- Clap hands.
- Remove shoes and put them back on.
- Do a dance.
- Say, "Hello."
- Walk to the other side of the room and walk back.
- Pretend you are swimming.
- Shake my hand.

After you have done the activity 3 times with the whole class, divide the children into groups of 4–5. Ask the groups to choose 1 leader. The leader will then have all of the children in his group repeat 3 instructions. Continue playing in groups for 2 minutes.

**To be successful in our game, you had to listen carefully and understand the directions. You also had to do what was asked of you. These are the skills needed to obey someone.**

### 2. Teaching: Listen to the story of an obedient servant (John 14:15; Genesis 24).

**When we obey, we do what someone asks us to do or we follow a rule. In our lives, we are expected to obey adults and those who make rules and laws for the whole community. Sometimes people use fear or shame to make us obey them.**

However, when God asks us to do something, He does it out of love for us. When we obey Him, we have an opportunity to show our love for Him. When we obey, we can also show love for other people. Listen to what Jesus said to His disciples.

If possible, read this verse directly from your Bible.

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*If you love me, obey my commands.*

John 14:15

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When we obey God, we show our love for Him. This also helps us to strengthen our relationship with Him. The Bible tells the true story of a man who obeyed both God and his master. His master was Abraham, who we know as the man God made a very special promise to. Listen to this true story of Abraham and his servant.

The time had come for Isaac, Abraham's son, to marry. Abraham gave very specific information to his servant about how to find a wife for Isaac. He told his servant to go to the country where his family lived. He told the servant to bring back a woman from there to be Isaac's wife. He told the servant not to find a wife for Isaac in Canaan, where they lived. He also told his servant not to take his son Isaac out of Canaan.

Wow! This is a lot to tell someone. Let's see if you were listening carefully.

- **What is 1 thing Abraham told his servant to do?**

Encourage 4 children to respond. Allow each child to name 1 thing Abraham said. Answers include: 1. He told the servant to go to the country where his family lived. 2. He told the servant to bring back a wife for Isaac. 3. He told the servant not to find a wife for Isaac in Canaan. 4. He told his servant not to take Isaac with him out of Canaan.

**Teacher Tip:** If the children cannot remember all 4 of Abraham's requests, reread the information about what Abraham wanted. This will help the children to learn to listen carefully and try to understand the information they hear. If there are still some missing answers the second time through, recognize that this may be a new skill for some of the children. You may read the answers they miss.

*Optional:* If possible, share the image from *The Action Bible*.

Let's listen to the true story to find out if the servant listened to his master. It would have been much easier for the servant to find a wife for Isaac in the land where they lived, but the servant did not do this. He obeyed his master and went to the land where Abraham was from. When he got there, he stopped by a well to rest.

The servant wanted so much to obey his master that he prayed to God and asked for help. Listen to what the servant prayed.

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*Then he prayed, "LORD, you are the God of my master Abraham.  
Make me successful today. Be kind to my master Abraham."*

Genesis 24:12

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The servant asked God to show him who should be Isaac's wife. The servant asked God to let Isaac's future wife be the one who, when asked for a drink of water, would not only give him a drink but would offer to water his camels as well. Camels could drink a lot of water, so this would be a lot of work for the woman. Before he finished praying, a woman came to the well and, when asked, offered the servant a drink. Then she offered to water his camels too. The woman's name was Rebekah.

The servant watched Rebekah as she gave water to his camels. The servant had to watch carefully to understand what God wanted. The servant saw that Rebekah did everything he had asked God to show him. Then he knew that she was the woman Isaac was supposed to marry. The servant went to her family and told them the story about his journey, his prayer, and how Rebekah was the answer to his prayer. Listen to what Rebekah's family told the servant:

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*Here is Rebekah. Take her and go. Let her become the wife of your master's son, just as the LORD has said.*

Genesis 24:51

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**Rebekah's family listened to the servant and obeyed God.**

- **How did Rebekah's family obey God?**

They told the servant that Rebekah could go with him to become the wife of Isaac.

- **How did the servant obey Abraham?**

He followed all of Abraham's instructions and found a wife for Isaac.

- **How did the servant obey God?**

Allow 1–2 children to respond.

The servant asked God to guide his search. He listened and understood when God led Rebekah to him. The servant did what his master asked and he obeyed God.

For the game we played at the beginning of class, you had to complete 3 tasks. In order to succeed, you had to listen, understand, and do what I asked. That is how you obey God and others. You listen to what is asked of you. You must understand what you hear. Then you obey by doing what is asked of you.

We are asked to obey many different people including leaders, people who care for us, and others in our community. When we obey others, we please them. We can also learn from those who are older than us by obeying them. Here are a few steps to help you obey others.

**1. Listen**

Put your hand near your ear. Signal for the children to do it too.

**To obey someone, you must first listen to what he is asking you to do. Listen carefully so you can follow the instructions you need to obey.**

**2. Understand**

Put a finger on the side of your head a little above your ear. Signal for the children to do it too.

Check to see if you understand what the person wants you to do. If you do not understand, you may be able to ask questions. If you cannot ask questions, you may try asking a friend or another person who heard the request you must obey.

### 3. Do

March in place. Signal for the children to do it too.

**Do what the person has asked you to. If steps were given, try to follow those steps in the correct order.**

**Let's practice these steps to help us remember how to obey someone. When I name one of the steps, you will do the action.**

Repeat these steps in order 3 times. Pause to allow the children to do the actions that go with each step. Do the actions with the children the first time you read the steps.

Listen—Put your hand near your ear.

Understand—Put a finger on the side of your head.

Do—March in place.

**Good job learning these 3 steps. Remember, when you obey someone, you show love for that person. God always wants us to obey out of love, not fear or only because we feel we must do something.**

**If someone asks you to do something that is not right or that might hurt you or others, this is not something you can obey out of love. Ask God to help you in these situations to decide how to stay safe while honouring the adults around you.**

**Teacher Tip:** Help children understand that God wants us to obey those in authority over us. However, if we are asked to do something that goes against what God would want, we must obey God rather than man. Let the children know if they face a situation in which they do not know what to do, they should come speak with you or another trusted adult.

## 3. Responding: Practice obeying to show love.

Before beginning this activity, put the children in pairs. If needed, there may be a group of 3 children.

**Let's do something fun to practice obeying. During His time on earth, we know Jesus asked us to love our neighbours as ourselves. We have talked about this as one of the most important commandments God gave His people. For our activity, we will use the concept of loving others as we obey.**

**Let me give you an example. I might say, "Encourage your neighbour." You would repeat the command so that I know you were listening. Repeat it with me: "Encourage your neighbour."**

**Then you need to make sure you understand what I am asking. If you are not sure what "encourage" means, you can raise your hand and ask. When you encourage someone, you make that person feel valued and hopeful. You could do this by saying something kind to that person or sharing something hopeful you learned today. For example, I might say, "You are very helpful when you share your thoughts in class." Ready?**



**Encourage your partner.**

Give the children about 30 seconds to encourage each other.

**Let's try a few more commands to see if you will obey me by listening, understanding, and doing what I ask. Remember, you can ask questions if you are not sure what to do.**

Call out 1–3 commands. If a child asks a question to help her better understand the activity, quiet the class and answer her question. It is very likely the answer will also help the other children understand what to do. Pause for 20–60 seconds after each statement to allow children to respond.

**Give a high 5 to your partner for obeying.**

**Walk around the space 1 time. Then return to the place where you started.**

**Ask your partner what 1 part of obeying might be difficult for her. Then pray for God to help your partner.**

*Optional:* If you are using Student Pages, give children scissors and allow them to cut or tear apart their puzzles. Give them about 1 minute to put together their puzzles.

**When we obey, we honour God. Our memory verse today reminds us why we should obey others.**

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

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*You must obey the authorities. Then you will not be punished.  
You must also obey them because you know it is right.*  
Romans 13:5

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Repeat the verse in the same way as last time. Divide children into 2 groups. Say the first sentence of the verse together. Then have 1 group ask the question and the other group answer it.

All: **You must obey the authorities.**

Group 1: **Then you will...**

Group 2: **Not be punished.**

Group 1: **You must also obey them...**

Group 2: **Because you know it is right.**

Say the verse together 3–4 times. End class by saying this blessing, based on John 14:15, over the children.

**Blessing: May you obey what God wants. May you obey God out of love for Him.**

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible.

"Agnus Dei" by Michael W Smith <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVFzxazTQNM>