

Bible Studies for Life Series for June 3: Practicing obedience diligently

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Practicing obedience diligently

- Deuteronomy 1:6-8, 26-33, 42-46

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We begin a new series of studies for the summer. We will enter the book of Deuteronomy and find one of God's greatest and most obedient servants, Moses, leading the people of God out of the land that held bad memories and represented their sinful way of living. God was calling Moses to lead his people into a new relationship and into a new land, a land promised to them. This land represented trust, fulfillment, and all the blessings and promises of God.

One of my favorite people in history is Winston Churchill, who led the British in the darkest days during World War II. One day, while London was being bombed by Nazi planes, Churchill rose to the occasion of leadership. He said: "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is perhaps, the end of the beginning." Later, Churchill offered one of the

best definitions of success I've ever read, "Success is moving from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm."



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Moses was called to lead the people of God after years of sinful, disobedient living. God called them to a new relationship. God called them to be obedient. God called them to listen, and he would lead. God was saying through Moses to his people—this isn't the end for you. This isn't even the beginning of the end. This is an altogether new beginning for God and for the people to walk together in a relationship.

If you feel distant from God, perhaps your devotion has suffered, but God has not turned his back on you. This lesson can help you fan to flame your passion for God and his ways. This can happen when you admit to God any struggles you have with sin and ask for God's forgiveness and help in resisting temptation and sin.

Are you going where God leads? (Deuteronomy 1:6-8)

Moses reminded the Israelites that the Lord commanded them to leave Horeb and go to the land of promise. It always is a sad thing when God's people settle for less rather than choosing life with God.

As I write this lesson, our youngest daughter is preparing for graduation week. Brennan Harp is my daughter, and she has excelled in high school in

many ways. Brennan has received many awards while in high school, and she has had a “successful” high school career. Next week, Brennan will be ready to move on to a new level in her life. She plans to move forward in following God’s plan for her life.

No one wants to stay in high school forever. There comes a time in life when God taps us on the shoulder to say, “Let’s move forward, together.” We have no evidence the Israelites resisted the Lord’s leadership to leave Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 1:6). In fact, they obeyed his command (v. 19).

The emphasis of this section is that we must follow where God leads, even if we don’t fully understand it.

In recent years, we have heard a lot about the words “comfort zone.” Most often, when we speak of God moving us beyond our comfort zone, we think of people leaving our churches to go off to the mission field or “surrendering” to preach God’s word. God wants to widen our comfort zone to include him in every area of life.

Are you controlled by discouragement? (Deuteronomy 1:26-28)

What keeps us from going forward with God? So often, it is our own sinful condition. At other times, we are guilty of poor attitudes and responses to God when he tells us to go.

The Israelites complained about God’s plan. They focused on the obstacles and never looked for an opportunity for God to deliver them. Verse 27 says they “murmured” or “grumbled” against the Lord. This illustrates how deliberate, defiant sin corrupts one’s view of God. The people claimed, “the Lord hates us,” and said that he delivered them from Egypt only to destroy them by the hands of the Amorites.

Are you distrustful of God's help? (Deuteronomy 1:29-33)

As believers, we must not allow fears and disobedience to set our focus on the obstacles we face. As believers, we must remember the root of sin is a lack of trust in God. Many times, we have short memories of God's help in our past. No wonder God often would speak to his people then (and now) and remind them to retrace their steps spiritually and remember who was leading them and God's mighty acts of deliverance in the past.

When we disobey, we miss opportunities. Our sin can rob us of God's blessing in our lives. We must always seek to trust God to help us answer his call.

Moses recalled that at Kadesh he had urged the Israelites to combat their fears and lack of trust by remembering the Lord's powerful actions in Egypt and his covenant presence throughout their wilderness experience. Moses reminded them, "You saw how the Lord your God carried you ..." (v. 31).

Are you defying God's commands? (Deuteronomy 1:42-46)

There is no more miserable place on the planet than the place of consequences. We all have faced our own "bowl of consequences" after sin. Sin separates us from God. As we say in West Texas, "It will leave a mark on you!" The consequence for these people of God is that they would stay in Kadesh far too long. They would not enter the land of promise as easily as they had hoped.

The teaching of Scripture is clear—all have sinned, and whenever we sin, we do wake up to a bowl of consequences. We have to face the fact that our sin is a rebellion against a God who loves us and has a better plan and a better life for us. The good news is that as we read these Scriptures we can

learn from the mistakes of others (and our own). We do not have to choose to be defiant. We can choose to do the right thing. We can trust and look to God and lean upon him and not on our own understanding.

Discussion questions

- Retracing your own spiritual steps with God, can you recall a time when God brought you through a time of testing?
- What are some ways believers can overcome discouragement?
- What is controlling you today—a vibrant relationship with Jesus or grumbling against God?