

**Russell Kelfer**

# **Wrong Counsel and Obedience**

**(Part 1)**

**518-A**

**Series: Obedience**



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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

# Wrong Counsel and Obedience

In the past several lessons we have been studying the subject of obedience. We have dealt with the perspective of obedience, the practicality of obedience and the performance of obedience by looking at the principles of obedience. A principle is a concept revealed or confirmed in Scripture that portrays the mind of God in a given area. For example, there are principles concerning finance, marriage, faithfulness and obedience. By learning these principles, we learn the mind of God in these areas. Knowing the mind of God, we are free in the spirit without being drawn, on one hand to legalism where we have to be told what rules to follow. We are freed from the problem of moral compromise with the excuse that we do not know the mind of Christ. We have been given the principles of the Word in the New Testament. In the Old Testament we are given the portraits of how the principles are revealed in lives and in relationship with God.

These are principles of obedience. Obedience is the process of responding to knowledge by following instruction. A person who perfectly obeys is one who, upon knowing for certain what the mind of God is, does it. This is obedience. The principles of obedience are concepts in Scripture that reveal God's heart and His expectations relating to our response to truth. In other words, it is what God wants us to do. We have been looking at generalized principles we can use as we live our Christian lives to learn how to respond properly in the arena of obedience.

Principle 1- The relationship between the knowledge of God and obedience. This is a perfect relationship. We found this principle in Exodus 5. We learned that obedience is predicated on a relationship. We found in Philippians 3 that our power is relative to our obedience. We read in 1 John 2 that our assurance is based upon our obedience. In John 15

we found that the sweetness of our friendship and fellowship with God is related to our obedience.

Principle 2- God still rewards obedience in heaven. We looked at the Bema Seat of Christ and what it means. When we appear in the presence of God in heaven, the things we have done in the flesh that were not done in obedience from the freedom of the Spirit will, in the presence of the Shekinah glory, be overcome and dissolved. This happens because God cannot stand in the presence of sin. All that will remain are the things which He has done. These are the things we have done in obedience to the Spirit. These will become jewels in our crowns that we will not wear ourselves, but cast in love at His feet. It will be the more with which to worship Him.

Principle 3- Obedience is illustrated everywhere. We saw in Matthew 8 that even the disciples were amazed that the winds and the sea obeyed Jesus. In Mark 1 we saw that the demonic hosts were obedient unto Christ. We looked at the principles involved with this situation.

Principle 4- In and of ourselves we do not possess the capacity to obey. The degree to which we think we can obey is the degree to which we are not dependent on God. We have the power of the will to obey, but it is the Spirit within us that gives us the authority and the power to obey.

In closing the last lesson, I gave a few questions to ponder. The first one was “Is there is a relative relationship between intellect, abilities and obedience?” The second question was “Do prior experiences of grace tend to lead to presumptuous disobedience?” Grace is often a buffer between disobedience and discipline. For example, lets suppose we do something that is out of the will of God. God, because He loves us, forgives us and offers us again another opportunity to be faithful. God’s love supercedes His divine discipline. Because of that, we begin to reason, “I got by with it the last time. Nothing happened. Maybe God doesn’t really care. Maybe it is okay with God if I compromise a little bit. After all, we live in a period of grace. Paul said, ‘Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?’ ”

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Paul answered the question, “Good grief, no!” Grace is a buffer between disobedience and discipline, but it was never intended to be a wall. It is true that divine discipline still exists for our benefit. We looked at the concept of warning a child with discipline if he disobeyed. The child does it, and you back down on your discipline. The next time it happens, a child may go further to test how far he can go. Unfortunately, we tend to do this with God.

Principle 5- God expects us to reject counsel, instruction and relationships that encourage disobedience. The word “reject” means to flee from in this case. Rejecting false counsel is in itself an act of obedience. We need to look at the definitions of counsel, instruction and relationships.

*Counsel is defined as the process of receiving from another a suggested course of action or behavior.* If I have a problem, I will call a friend and ask his advice. He will share principles from the Word in a way that I will realize the course of action that seems clear. I find a friend who is more objective to give me counsel. But, suppose the individual you go to for counsel tells you to lie in order to achieve a goal, what do you do?

God expects us to reject wrong instruction. Instruction is the process of receiving information for discerning action or behavior. This is not on the same level as personal counsel. It is generalized information. Suppose you are taught to consistently violate financial principles that are listed in the Word in the name of faith. Do you accept that or reject it? The concept is one of presumption. The principle would be that you reject that instruction.

Relationship is defined as personal investment of time and involvement with another. This can be a relationship with a family member, a friend, someone who is discipling you, or a co-worker. These are relationships. Suppose your brother or your best friend draws you or tempts you to go where immorality, impurity or weakness is prevalent. They might also continually attack the Word or the Lord that you represent. What do you do about it? We need to realize that we can reject the counsel without rejecting the person. We

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can learn how to separate ourselves from that counsel as a source of input.

Let's turn to Deuteronomy 12 and 13. If we are honest with ourselves, we really need to begin with Deut. 11:32. We will find in chapter 12 an obedience sandwich.

Deuteronomy 11:32 says,

And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today. (NKJV)

In other words, do everything the Lord has told you to do. This is the end of chapter 11. When we turn to chapter 12:32 it says,

Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. (NKJV)

In the middle of these two verses we see an obedience sandwich. The two verses tell us the same thing.

Between these two verses is chapter 12 that gives us a portrait of the necessity for obedience. If we were to write it in one basic phrase, it would be separation from evil. This chapter begins by dealing with the concept of separation as seen in verse 2,

You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the a high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. (Deuteronomy 12:2 NASB)

In other words, when you move into heathen territory, destroy everything that will remind you of that which detracts from the mind of God.

In verses 4 and 5 we see the principle of worship as it relates to separation. In verse 7 we see the principle of joy as a blessing that comes from separation. In verse 8 we see the concept of submission as it relates to separation. In verse 11 we see the concept of giving as it relates to separation. On through the remainder of the chapter, we get the details of obedience under the law, which was a picture book to bring us to Christ.

In verse 30 we find that we are to separate ourselves even

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from the study of the religions of Satan. It says,

take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' (Deuteronomy 12:30 NKJV)

You don't need to do a detailed study of the religions that are contrary to the Word of God. You know enough about them to know that they are contrary to the Word. You may study enough facts about them to be able to refute from Scripture the basic principles involved. However, in the name of wisdom, you do not do a detailed study on the enemy's works. In verse 32 this passage ends by saying,

Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. (NKJV)

This leads us to chapter 13:1 which begins this way, "If". The word "if" means that we are reading a potential cause and effect, so pay attention whenever you find this word in Scripture. It means that under these conditions take this course of action. When you see the word "if", you have to find the conditions that exist so that you will know what principles apply. So in verse 1 we have the basic condition of the problem so that we can apply the principle.

The problem in chapter 13 is described,

"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, (Deuteronomy 13:1,2a NKJV)

The passage explains that there is a prophet or a dreamer. A prophet is one who proclaims truth. A dreamer is one who interprets the truth. This could be someone counseling you such as your spiritual leader. This person makes an accurate prediction regarding spiritual things, an act of prediction. He comes to you and says, "I believe if you do this certain thing, this will happen." Or, "I believe God is going to do this in your life." Or, "I believe that the world is going to have this happen to them." There are many predictions in the newspapers from psychics who think they can predict the

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future. Some of these come true and some don't. Some are so obvious that there is no way they couldn't come true. The point is that some people will be able to tell you the truth. But be wary if there is someone who makes an accurate prediction regarding spiritual things or experiences and then also says,

of which he spoke to you, saying, "Let us go after other gods"—which you have not known —'and let us serve them,'  
(Deuteronomy 13:2 cont. NKJV)

In other words, their predictions are accurate, but their basic motivation is to encourage disobedience or unfaithfulness to the Word. They may lead you after other gods or foreign sects. We see this in Mormonism. They may set up other gods such as success or money or acceptance. Their goal is to draw you from Christ being the center of your life. Our instruction is found in the next verse,

you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams,  
(Deuteronomy 13:3a NKJV)

In other words, do not listen to them. The New American Standard says,

you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams;  
(Deuteronomy 13:3a NASB)

Up to this point, this passage was very routine as I read it. It was interesting as it taught we should be very careful about the sources of our counsel. As I got further into it, I realized it said you shall not listen to the prophet or dreamer because,

for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.  
(Deuteronomy 13:3 cont. NKJV)

The Lord is testing you to find out what your response will be. The Lord is testing you to test the degree of your love for Him. God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul. In other words, do you have a passion for God in your heart? Do you have an obedient spirit to God with your mind, emotion and will? It is a test. When wrong counsel comes, our minds



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should be swift and careful enough to have a little red light go off that says, “This is a test.” We ought not to respond in anger to the one who is counseling us, but to say, “Lord, why are You testing me? What do You want me to realize? What is the degree of my faithfulness to You?”

Why would God do this? He wants to know if you are looking for what you want to hear or what He has to say. Most of us go looking for counsel so that we can get confirmation either for our ignorance or our course of action. I do. I usually pick someone to go to for counsel who will affirm my preconceived idea. What the Lord wants us to learn is that if someone comes who is able to predict accurately and give you accurate counsel in certain areas, but he is attempting to draw you from the center of God, remember that God is testing you to find out the level of your commitment to Him. He is allowing this to happen.

What is our course of action? In verse 4 He gives us a six-fold course of action. If someone gives you wrong counsel, the first thing you do is to put it in the framework of these six concepts. What do these six concepts do? They do not focus on the wrong counsel; they focus on your relationship with Christ. It gets your perspective right. There are six things you have to do to check to see if the counsel is from God.

1- In the King James it says, “walk after the LORD your God”. In the New American Standard it says, “follow the LORD your God”. In other words, we need to discern and decide to follow God. It is rearranging our allegiances.

2- Begin to fear Him. This is the awesome reverence that demands obedience. We not only begin to follow God, we realize that we are following the King. We see His crown. We see His scepter. We realize His god-ship. We are not only following after by an act of our will, but we are following the King.

3- We are to keep His commandments. This is implicit obedience of absolute instructions. In other words, if there are things that are clearly defined to do, you do them.

These are three verbs of responsibility. He then gives us

three verbs of response. The first verbs tell us we are to walk after, fear and keep. These next verses are where the heart gets into the picture as well as the soul.

4- We are told to obey His voice. The New American Standard says listen to His voice. We are to have an ear to God. We are to have our hearing aid perfectly attuned to the heart of God. To obey or listen to His voice means to have a tender response to His Spirit that goes beyond the law. It is not just what we have to do because the Word says it, but our hearts are so sensitive that don't want to do anything to offend His heart. Sure it is okay for us to do this, but what does God really want us to do? What is His heart in this matter?

5- The second verb of response is to serve Him. We are to yield ourselves and our time to the priorities of His kingdom. Not only have we begun to walk after Him, fear Him, keep His commandments and become a listener of His ear; we begin to yield ourselves to meet His desires rather than our own.

6- We are to cleave to Him. The New American Standard says we are to "cling to Him". This gives us the picture of wrapping our arms around the Lord and loving Him. It is saying, "Lord, I'm not going to let go of You, because You are not going to let go of me." This literally means that we are to wrap our lives up in Him until His life is ours. It is the warmness of the spirit that comes when you and Jesus are one. The two cannot be separated. This is what Paul meant when he said,

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

What Paul really says in this verse is that you cannot really separate his life from Christ because Jesus Christ has died and taken control of that life. While in the flesh, he still struggles; but he and Christ are still one.

The way to reject false counsel is to turn your eyes upon the Lord Himself and begin to walk after Him, fear Him,

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keep His commandments, obey His voice, serve Him and cleave to Him. With your perspective coming from Him, you can discern counsel that comes from Him.

You should separate yourself from the source of wrong counsel because as we go on in the passage in Deuteronomy 13 to verse 5 it says, that prophet or dreamer of dreams shall be put to death. Now you don't take out your friend who gives you wrong counsel and shoot him. The point is that we are literally to "separate from". In the spiritual realm it means to remove yourself from sources of spiritual instruction or input or counsel not because of the difference of conviction but because the verse goes on to say "he has counseled rebellion against the Lord thy God". Your friend has counseled rebellion and spoken to seduce you from the way. His goal and drive there is to draw you away from the will of God.

An extreme illustration is given in verses Deuteronomy 13,

"If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods, ' which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers,

of the gods of the people which are all around you, near to you or far off from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth,

(Deuteronomy 13:6,7 NKJV)

Let's suppose that the source of rebellion is one who is close to your heart. That is tough. What do you do? Let's look at Proverbs 13:20 as a key verse.

He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. (NASB)

The whole concept in these passages is that separation is not designed as condemnation but as protection. Hosea 4:17 is another important verse concerning this matter. Romans says,

Now I urge you brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissension and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them.

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For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.

(Romans 16:17,19 NASB)

If you receive wrong counsel, be careful about it.

We can also look at I Corinthians 5:1-13. Here is a situation in which there was immorality. The Corinthian church was advised to turn from that immorality. They had become arrogant and had not mourned over the one in their midst who had committed the immorality. For their part in the situation, Paul said, "I am absent in the body and present in the spirit, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, your boasting is not good. A little leaven pollutes the whole lump."

He continues in verse 10 about not associating or having fellowship with a brother if he should be an immoral person, covetous, idolatrous or a swindler.

In verses 11-13 Paul says, "I am not telling you to stay away from the immoral people of the world or the covetous or swindlers or the idolaters for then you would have to go out of the world, but I am talking about spiritual relationships."

As we go back to Deuteronomy 13:6, the verse talks about your sons or daughters being the source of your rebellion. They are drawing you away from what God wants because you are listening to them rather than the Word.

This passage also talks about your wife. In Job 2:9, we see Job receive counsel from his wife. She said, "Why don't you just curse God and die?" In I Kings 11 we find another illustration of this.

For it came about when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

(I Kings 11:4 NASB)

The same thing is true in I Kings 21:25.

The relationship with your best friend is also mentioned. The passages that speak of this are Psalm 1, Proverbs 1:10-14,

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Proverbs 4:14-15 and Proverbs 13:20. There are many others, but these are verses that talk about how we are to arrange our companionships.

It is interesting that nowhere in this passage are parents or authorities over us mentioned. The relationships mentioned are those under our authority or those in a peer level relationship who are attempting to counsel us wrongly. The conclusion we can draw from this is that these relationships are magnets that have the capability to have a goal to draw us away from the center of the will of God.

We are given a specific response in Deuteronomy 13:8. It says don't consent, don't listen, don't pity, don't spare and don't conceal. This is hard counsel. Again, we are not rejecting the individual, but we are told what to do. We are told not to consent. The word "yield" is used in the New American Standard. This means don't be vulnerable to compromise for their sake. Don't think, "I don't want to hurt their feelings." We are also told not to listen. We are told not to appear to be open in order to humor or comfort them. Have you ever done this? Has someone, perhaps from a religious group, rung your doorbell, and you didn't want to offend them so you listened and paid attention? Did you try to humor them? This passage tells us we are not to humor or pity them. We are not to overlook reality because of relationship. We need to love them just the same, but we are not to pretend that what they are saying might have validity because of who they are.

This verse also tells us not to spare them. This means we are not to alter the rules and ignore the danger. It also tells us not to conceal. We are not to hide the fact from others, if others are in danger. This is true in a family. If you have an older child who is in rebellion and you have younger children, you need to at least reveal to the younger children without damaging the character of the older sibling, that the rebellion in their life is not pleasing to God. You don't hide this fact in order to protect them because they, in fact, are affected and could be in danger because of the life of the older sibling.

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We are told to kill these people by stoning. Stoning represents to separate and bring under the discipline of the rock. The rock is a portrait of Jesus. Two reasons are given. The first is found in verses 10-11. It says, "Because he sought to thrust thee from God". The counsel given was intended to pull you from the center of God's will. Secondly, it says that your example is crucial. Deuteronomy 13:11,

Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you. (NASB)

In verse 12 it goes on to tell us if strangers are entering in, do this very thing. They are Satan's men looking for a rebellious following. You inquire, search and ask diligently to seek out the problem. This is the Christian CIA. You don't just ignore the problem. You need to look into it and find the problem. The word "inquire" means to investigate. It is the opposite of ignoring. The word "search" means to reach out and pursue the matter until you find the truth. The words "ask diligently" means to inquire until you get to the root of it.

In summary, if you obey, you will receive mercy and there will be multiplication in your life as it says in verse 17.

I want to give you five things to consider when seeking counsel from someone else. We will only be able to cover the first in this lesson.

1- Consider the character of the counselor. Character would involve five things: their life, their lifestyle, their life message, their life goals and their maturity. I Kings says,

And King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, "How do you counsel me to answer the people?"

Then they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to this people today, will serve them, grant them their petition, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever."

But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him.

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So he said to them, “What counsel do you give that we may answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?’”

And the young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you shall say to this people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, now you make it lighter for us!’ But you shall speak to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins!

‘Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions’”

Then Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as the king had directed, saying, “Return to me on the third day.”

And the king answered harshly, for he forsook the advise of the elders which they had given him,

So the king did not listen to the people; for it was a turn of events from the Lord.

(I Kings 12:6-13,15 NASB)

Rehoboam sought counsel from the young men who joined him in his rebellion rather than listening to the counsel of those who had the maturity and grasped the will of God.

We will continue the other four things we need to consider when seeking counsel in the next lesson. The key to the whole issue is that when you are looking for the will and the Word of God through counsel, remember that if the Spirit of God gives you sensitivity that you are being led astray, you need to reject that counsel without rejecting the person who gives it to you.

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