

why God asks certain things of us. We are not asked to like these instructions or reasonably recognize the wisdom of obedience, but we are asked to obey. When we are obedient we gain a measure of strength to face the next battle. Every small victory strengthens us to face the next. This is the way it is intended to work. The only reason it does work is because we stop obeying and then act as if we don't have the strength.

Sometimes we may grow arrogant. We think our strength gained the victory (cf. Deut. 8:17). Or we simply forget the Lord and turn to disobedience (cf. Deut. 8:11). Our love of the world may cause us to disobey (cf. Deut. 29-31). What ever the reason, the problem remains simple, we must obey. The faithful soldier of the Lord who has labored obediently in the Lord's kingdom for years didn't just wake up one morning as strong was they have become in Christ. They took the simple steps of obedience and their strength increased along the way.

4700 Andrews Ave.
Amarillo TX 79106
806-352-2809
www.olsenpark.com

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Faithful Sayings



Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
10:00 AM
11:00 AM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:
Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:
Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:
Kyle Pope

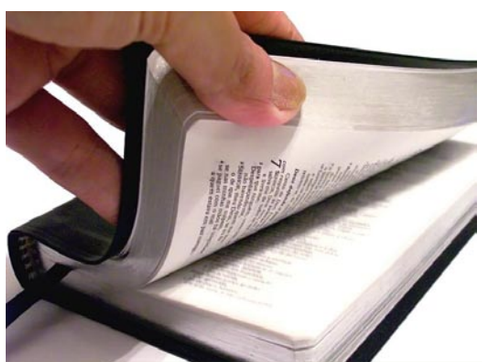
Strength and Obedience

By Kyle Pope

In Deuteronomy 11:8 the Lord instructed Israel **"..you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess"** (NKJV). As the Lord was bringing the Israelites into Canaan, instructions such as this would (quite literally) determine whether Israel was successful or whether they would face defeat. They would see at Jericho that God's strength (and not their own) would allow them to defeat a more powerful and well protected enemy when they were faithful (Joshua 6). Then they would see at Ai how helpless they would be by their own strength (without God's) when they were disobedient (Joshua 7).

As Christians, God has not promised to give us physical strength when we are obedient. Success in business, in warfare, material prosperity, relationships or competition is not guaranteed to the faithful Christian. However, there are a number of principles about *strength* and *obedience* which are paralleled and illustrated by the Lord's instructions to Israel.

1. Our Strength



Must Come from the Lord. While the number of men capable of fighting when the Israelites came out of their wanderings was significant (601,730 - Numbers 26:51), compared to the strength of walled cities and established nations of Canaan, they were helpless (if left to their own strength). This was much of the reason that their parents had been so frightened when the spies reported back to them. They recognized that they were not strong enough (by themselves). What they failed to realize was that their strength came from the Lord.

In our lives we face strong and powerful adversaries. Temptations toward materialism, sensuality, substance abuse, peer pressure to act, talk and dress like the world can be powerful forces that we often feel powerless to resist. While we must always be the one who chooses to obey, we must recognize (like Israel) that there our strength comes from God and His word When we choose to obey we must see ourselves as surrendering our will to God and trusting that what He says is best. I once heard it put, "we must obey God and leave the consequences of our obedience to Him."

We often ask, "what if other people laugh at me?" Or, "what if I don't fit in?" Or even, "how can I be happy without _____?" The real questions we should ask are, "how will I answer to God if I disobey?" Or, "how can I ever resist sin if I keep giving in to it?" Paul offers us such a wonderful example of how important it is to see God as the source of our strength. He told the Philippians that he can learned contentment in all situations, having come to recognize, **"I can do all things through Christ who stregthens me"** (Philippians 4:13).



2. Disobedience Leads to Defeat. Many people wonder why they never grow stronger in their service to the Lord, in spite of the fact that they continually surrender to disobedience. Some think to themselves, "I'll get my life straight and then I'll be faithful." The Lord told Israel that obedience was the first step. Imagine that a person didn't know how to read. Recognizing this problem they said to themselves, "I'll read more books and then I'll learn how to read." They will never accomplish the first task (reading more books), if they don't first accomplish the second task (learning to read). The same is true spiritually. Giving in to sin and disobedience weakens us for the spiritual battles we face. We will never grow stronger to be able to face these battles if we don't first obey. Obedience is the foundation of spiritual strength and the key to spiritual success.

3. Obedience Grants Us Strength for the Task at Hand. We are not asked to understand