

Learning to Obey

When Love Writes the Rules

QR

Watch before you begin

Scan to watch the Lesson 9 teaching video, a 14-minute companion to this lesson.

BIG IDEA

Obedience isn't how you earn God's love. It's how you live inside it.

CORE SCRIPTURES

"If you love me, you will keep my commands."

John 14:15 (CSB)

"But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

James 1:22 (CSB)

KEY CONCEPTS

Fill in the blanks as you read or as your group works through the lesson.

1. John 14:15 sets the order: "If you love me, you will keep my commands." Love comes _____, and obedience flows out of it.
2. We don't obey to earn God's love. We obey because "we love because he first _____ us" (1 John 4:19).
3. The older brother in Luke 15 did everything right, but with the heart of a _____, not a son.
4. James says don't only listen. Be _____ of the word, not hearers only (James 1:22).
5. God's commands aren't a fence to keep you from joy. They're a _____ into the life he is giving you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Work through these as a group. There are no wrong answers here, only honest ones.

OPENING • LOW STAKES

1. When you hear the word “obey,” what’s the first feeling that shows up: relief, pressure, resistance, something else? Where do you think that reaction was learned?
2. Think of a rule you happily keep for someone you love. What makes it feel different from a rule you keep out of obligation?

CORE • HEART OF THE LESSON

3. Read John 14:15 slowly and notice the order. What changes when obedience becomes your response to being loved, rather than your attempt to be loved?
4. The lesson contrasts two hearts: the older brother who “served all these years” like a hired hand, and the child who obeys out of love. Which one more honestly describes how you’ve related to God lately?
5. James 1:22 says be “doers of the word,” not hearers only. Where is it easiest for you to listen to God’s word without actually doing it?

DEEPER • FOR COURAGEOUS GROUPS

6. Name one specific thing you already know God is asking of you. What would it look like to “do the word” there this week, not to earn anything, but as love using its hands?
7. Pick one command of God you’ve struggled to trust. How does it change to imagine that love, not suspicion, is what wrote it?

JOURNALING

Set aside 15 to 20 minutes with these prompts. Write honestly. No one grades these.

1. Write about a time you obeyed God and it felt like duty or fear. Looking back, what was happening in your heart?
2. Read John 14:15 and 1 John 4:19 slowly. Where in your life right now are you trying to earn a love you already have?
3. What is the one command of God that feels most like a fence to you? Write honestly about why, and ask God to help you see the face behind it.

Core Scriptures: John 14:15 • James 1:22

THIS WEEK

Once a day, when you feel the nudge to obey, the apology, the truth, the thing you know you're being asked to do, pause before you act and say one sentence: "I'm doing this because I'm loved, not to get loved." Same action, different heart. Memory verse: John 14:15.

QR

Want to go deeper?

Scan to watch the Lesson 9 teaching video, a 14-minute companion to this lesson.

ANSWERS

Key Concepts fill-in-the-blank answers.

1. first
2. loved
3. hired hand
4. doers
5. path