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Obedience

OBJECTIVE

Each young man will understand that his obedience to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ should be motivated by love rather than by duty or fear.

PREPARATION

1. Prayerfully study Luke 22:39–44; John 6:38; 14:15, 21, 31; 15:9–10; 1 Nephi 17:1–9; Moroni 7:6–8; and Doctrine and Covenants 59:23.
 2. Materials needed:
 - a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).
 - b. Pencils for marking scriptures.
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**SUGGESTED
LESSON
DEVELOPMENT**

Story

Obedience Indicates True Love of the Lord

Explain that on 26 April 1839, the Quorum of the Twelve met with some members of the Church in the square at Far West, Missouri. In fulfillment of an assignment from the Prophet Joseph Smith, they relaid the southeast cornerstone of the temple that will someday be built there. (The southeast cornerstone was first laid on 4 July 1838.) They assisted with the initial settlement of Nauvoo, and then began to leave on a mission to England to which they had been called. The call to the Apostles to go to England came at a very difficult time for some of the Twelve. It was certainly a test of faith.

Read the following account of the departure of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball:

“On the fourteenth of September, Brigham Young left his home at Montrose and started for England. He had been prostrated [bedridden] for some time by sickness, and at the time of starting on his mission was so feeble that he had to be assisted to the ferry, only some thirty rods from his house. All his children were sick, and he left his wife with a babe but ten days old, and in the poorest circumstances, for the mobs of Missouri had robbed him of all he had. After crossing the river to the Nauvoo side, Israel Barlow took him on a horse behind him and carried him to the house of Elder Heber C. Kimball, where his strength altogether failed him, and he had to remain there for several days, nursed by his wife, who . . . had crossed the river from Montrose to care for him.

“On the eighteenth of the month, however, Elder Young, in company with Heber C. Kimball, made another start. . . . Elder Kimball left his wife in bed shaking with ague, and all his children sick. It was only by the assistance of some of the brethren that Heber himself could climb into the wagon. ‘It seemed to me,’ he remarked afterwards in relating the circumstance, ‘as though my very inmost parts would melt within me at the thought of leaving my family in such a condition, as it were, almost in the arms of death. I felt as though I could scarcely endure it.’

“‘Hold up!’ said he to the teamster, who had just started. ‘Brother Brigham, this is pretty tough, but let us rise and give them a cheer.’ Brigham, with much difficulty, rose to his feet, and joined Elder Kimball in swinging his hat and shouting, ‘Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah for Israel!’ Sisters Young and Kimball, hearing the cheer came to the door—Sister Kimball with great difficulty—and waved a farewell; and the two apostles continued their journey without purse, without scrip, for England” (B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 2:23–24).

Discussion

- What do you think motivated Elders Young and Kimball to go on their missions to England and leave their families in such difficult conditions?

Help the young men understand that the Apostles obeyed the Lord and trusted in him even though they might have felt justified in staying home.

- Are there times in your lives when it is difficult to obey the Lord?
- What are some difficult choices for young men your age?

This may be a good time to indicate that for some a mission call may seem to come at an inconvenient time but that we are expected to respond to it willingly, despite inconvenience or conflicting self-interests.

- Why do you think it was important to Elders Young and Kimball to obey the call to go to England?

Help the young men understand that the Apostles did this because of their love for the Lord and their desire to do his will.

- How can we show Heavenly Father and Jesus that we love them?

Explain that Jesus had some definite thoughts about how we express our love for him.

Have a young man read John 14:15.

- Why do you think those who love the Lord keep his commandments?

Help the young men understand that those who disobey the commandments love something else more than Heavenly Father and Jesus. Help them recognize that Jesus loves us and has given us the possibility of eternal life by atoning for our sins. He gave his life for us. Out of his great love for us, he gave us his commandments to help us. We show our love for him by doing the things he wants us to do. It is impossible to truly love Heavenly Father and Jesus and disobey their commandments.

Read and discuss with the young men John 14:21, 31; 15:9–10; and 6:38.

- What was the final result of Christ's obedience?

Help all the quorum members understand that Christ willingly gave his life for us in obedience to the Father's will. Point out that we also have to learn to submit willingly to our Heavenly Father if we want to receive the happiness and joy that Christ obtained through his obedience.

Explain that there are several scriptural accounts of Jesus Christ's suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane. Have the young men read Luke 22:39–44.

Explain that even though Christ had prepared during his whole life for this moment, it was hard to bear. He pled with the Father to remove, if possible, the "cup" or trial from him. He had obeyed his Father's will all his life and had no intention of not doing so now. But perhaps he had hoped that some other way was available and in that moment pled for relief from what he knew was to come. The powerful lesson he taught us was that he did what the Father asked regardless of what it was. He demonstrated his love for his Father and for us by his willingness to do something that was so difficult and painful that it lies beyond our comprehension. He suffered for our sins without having committed any sins himself. His suffering was so great that he bled at every pore (see D&C 19:18).

Blessings Come When an Aaronic Priesthood Holder Is Obedient

Adviser presentation

Help the young men understand that Christ obeyed the Father because he loved him. Jesus loved doing what was right. Righteousness can be defined in one way as doing what is right simply because it is right. We should also obey Heavenly Father simply because we love him and because it is right.

- What blessings come to us when we are obedient?

Have the young men read Doctrine and Covenants 59:23.

- Why do the obedient have more peace in life?

Scripture and discussion

Testify that the blessings of peace and happiness come with obedience. We feel more at peace with ourselves because we have done what God wanted us to do. We often feel this way, to a lesser degree, when we obey our parents. Explain that doing right also makes us feel better about ourselves and our ability to conquer temptations to do wrong. Help the young men understand that following the promptings of the Holy Ghost and doing what we know and feel to be right always lead to peace and joy.

Quotation and discussion

- What is meant by the phrase “eternal life in the world to come”?

Help the young men understand that the blessings associated with eternal life can come only when we have been obedient and when we have allowed Jesus Christ’s atonement to become effective in our lives.

Point out that we have help in trying to do Heavenly Father’s will. Read the following quotation from President Heber J. Grant:

“There is a still small voice telling us what is right, and if we listen to that still small voice, we shall grow and increase in strength and power, in testimony and in ability not only to live the Gospel but to inspire others to do so.

“My most earnest prayer is that every man and every woman will get it into his and her heart that they are in very deed the architects of their lives” (“The Path of Safety,” *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1937, p. 735).

- Why does the Lord give us the still small voice to help us do right?
- How does the Holy Ghost help us?

Help the young men understand that Satan is doing his best to keep us in a state of disobedience and that this will finally lead to misery. Heavenly Father, through the Holy Ghost, is trying to help us to do right and obey the commandments so that we can become as he is. As we obey the still small voice, we become more subject to Heavenly Father’s influence. Explain that we tend to become like those who influence us most. As we increasingly come under the Father’s influence, we will become more like him.

Scripture and discussion

Relate in your own words the events from 1 Nephi 17:1–6. Then have the young men read verses 7 through 9.

- What response did Nephi give when the Lord commanded him to build a ship?

Point out that Nephi did not ask the Lord how to build the ship, even though he probably had never done anything like this before. Nephi just asked where to get ore to make the tools. This kind of response showed his love for the Lord and his complete trust in the Lord. Likewise, our response should not be, “Why do we have to do these things?” but simply, “How do we begin?”

- How did the Lord bless Nephi because of his willingness to do what he was told to do?

Have a young man read Moroni 7:6–8.

- What do we learn about obedience from these verses?

Story and adviser presentation

Tell the following story:

Ben had a decision to make. He was twenty-five years old, was working as a mining engineer for a coal mine, and had been a member of the Church for just a year. He had joined the Church after some friends had introduced him to it.

All the happiness the Church had brought him made him want to share the gospel with his family, but his parents were disappointed that he had joined the Church. He thought he might take a job with a coal company in his home town and try to show them by the way he lived how the gospel can change lives. However, the prophet had said that every young man should serve a mission.

Finally, after much prayer and fasting, Ben decided to be obedient to the counsel of the prophet, so he submitted his papers for a mission. When he reported to his mission president, he told the president his parents were strongly opposed to his leaving his job and spending his time for the Church trying to convert people who were already Christians. But Ben said he felt he had to do what the prophet asked.

As Ben’s mission progressed, he reported to the president that his parents had asked some members of the Church what their son was doing and were told about the missionary system. They then asked what their son was teaching the people, and the missionaries came to tell them.

One night, after Ben had been in the mission field about a year and a half, he called his mission president. Ben was so excited and pleased that he could hardly tell the president that his parents had been baptized.

Explain that similar situations may not always end this happily; individuals have their freedom to choose. But point out that the Lord was greatly pleased by Ben's faith and willingness to obey; because of that faith, Ben's family also benefited and was blessed with the gospel.

Conclusion

Chalkboard discussion

Ask the young men to bring out the main points about obedience from the lesson. Help them bring out the following, and summarize them on the chalkboard:

1. The principle of obedience is basic to the gospel.
2. We show our love for Heavenly Father and Jesus by willingly doing what they command.
3. It is not always easy to demonstrate this love and obey, but we can learn to obey more perfectly by practicing obedience in both little and big things in our lives and by seeking help through the Spirit of the Lord.
4. As we practice obedience in small matters, we become more and more able to obey when difficult issues arise.
5. Christ was obedient all his days here on earth as well as when he was in the premortal existence.
6. Christ understands that it is not easy to obey in all things but has given us help, the "still small voice."
7. The blessings that come to us as we obey the Lord are peace and eternal life.
8. We will become more like the Lord as we let his influence be part of our lives. As we obey the Lord out of love, we can become, as did Nephi, more powerful in accomplishing the Lord's will and in doing good for others.

Challenge

Challenge the young men to show their love for their Heavenly Father by renewing and strengthening their efforts to live his commandments.