

AMPLIFY

GROWING A
FAITH THAT LASTS

AMPLIFY: OBEDIENCE
LESSON 11: OBEDIENCE THAT LEADS TO LIFE

What we want students to learn: That the foundation of our relationship with God is built on obedience to His commands.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To come to grips with the tension between knowing that there is freedom in obedience, and still desiring to live by our own rules and not God's.

Scripture Focus: Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Psalms 119:89-93; Psalm 119:15-16, 18, 24

Overview: Obedience. It's an easy concept to understand, but it's pretty tricky to live out! Every teenager struggles at some point with disobedience—to God, to parents, to teachers—some more so than others. Many times, when they disobey, teenagers are simply rebelling against the rules and the system that seeks to box them in. But in the Bible, we see that obedience isn't about rules, it is about a relationship. We obey God not to impress Him with our rule-keeping ability, but to walk closer and closer with Him. As students walk closer and closer with God through obedience, they'll actually realize they come to know God more and more intimately. Instead of obedience being restrictive or confining, obedience to God can be freeing. This lesson will help your students begin to understand why obedience to God is vital and how they might begin to see freedom in living according to God's ways.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **Amplify** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **Obedience** lesson 11 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 11, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the **Bible Background** to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

Genesis

- **Author:** While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Genesis,

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with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).

- **Timeframe:** It's difficult to establish with any certainty a date for the completion of the Pentateuch (a name for the first five books of the Bible—including Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—of which Genesis is a part.) Most of the material originated from Moses himself and depending on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure) that would make the date for the writing of Genesis sometime in the 1400s or the 1200s BC
- **Purpose:** Genesis details the earliest history of our world, including creation and Adam and Eves' fall. It also focuses on the emergence of Israel, not only as God's people, but as the group, God would work through to bring redemption to the world.

Deuteronomy

- **Author:** While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Deuteronomy, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).
- **Timeframe:** The dating of the Deuteronomy is a point of debate. The issue is that no one knows for sure when the Exodus occurred, whether it was in the mid-1400s BC or a later date around the mid-1200s BC. The writing would have occurred around those general dates.
- **Purpose:** **Deuteronomy** means "second law." It was a reminder of the law of God for the second generation of Israelites in the desert before they entered the Promised Land. It reminded the people that the Lord is God. He is faithful to keep his promises to His people.

Psalms

- **Author:** God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms in their era, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan, and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other Psalms remain unknown.
- **Timeframe:** The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e., Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e., Psalm 119).
- **Purpose:** The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e., Psalm 51).

THE MAIN POINT

These passages serve very specific functions in understanding the reason obedience is foundational in our relationship with God. The Genesis account of the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" serves to simply remind students of where this all started. This along with the passage from Deuteronomy shows that the foundation of humankind's relationship with God is built on obedience to His commands. Psalm 119:89-93 reminds us why we obey God. When we rightly understand who He is, then our greatest longing is to obey Him.

However, we understand obedience is a difficult task in day-to-day living. Just because we know it's right to follow God's commands doesn't mean we don't continue to desire to do things our own way. Psalm 119:15-24 shows us that obeying God actually is freeing and enables us to experience a closer personal relationship with Him.

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LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** The idea is to get the students thinking about how obedience is like a set of instructions that shows us exactly how to live and be closer to God.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need boxes of spaghetti and bags of small marshmallows. You'll be breaking the group into small groups of 4-5 students. Each group will need their own materials. You'll also need to print off instructions and hints on how to build a marshmallow tower for each team.
 - Do a Google search for instructions for "Building a Spaghetti/Marshmallow Tower." Download them and print them off, one for each group.
- **DO NOT PASS THESE OUT IN THE BEGINNING.**

FIRST, break students into small groups and hand out marshmallows and the spaghetti to each group. Tell them they have two minutes from when you say "go" to build a tower that is self-standing. Do not give them any other instructions! Say "go" and let them at it. After two minutes stop them. (You're not allowed to answer any questions or give any direction on how to build this tower during the two-minute period.)

When the two minutes are up, see how everyone did. Ask:

- **How did the marshmallow tower go?**
 - Answers will vary. You want to point them toward the fact that the time and the lack of direction made things difficult. Most students will not have a standing tower at all unless they have done this before.
- **What did you do first?**
 - Answers will vary. Did they come up with a plan or just start putting it together? For the groups that came up with a plan first, did it make it easier to build, why?
- **What would have made the activity easier?**
 - Answers will vary. Would having more instructions, or direction have made it easier? Help them start to draw attention to the need for clear direction, and how helpful that is.

NEXT, pass out the packet of instructions you printed on how to build a tower. Give each team five minutes to re-build their tower, utilizing at the instructions/hints. (More if you have the time.) When time is up, ask:

- **How was it different in this round with the instructions than in the first round?**
 - Answers will vary. Try and direct them toward the idea that directions made it smoother. Had they thought about what it could look like to make it solid before they saw the picture?
- **Have you ever tried to play a game or a sport without knowing how or the rules of the game?**
 - Answer: Talk about how clarity in directions and knowing the rules actually helps us finish well. Explore with students who play a sport how they would feel if another team showed up and didn't want to play by the rules?

FINALLY, explain to students how this lesson is going to help them learn how obedience is a key piece of their relation-

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ship with God. Say something like:

- **Although each tower looked slightly different, the instructions on how to make a solid tower were clear. It is like our life with the Lord. Each life looks a little different, even though the instructions are the same. It's about knowing how to make a solid base that counts. Obedience is a word that can make us really uncomfortable. It makes us think that it's just about a bunch of rules we have to follow. But what we're going to find is that obedience is actually the base of our relationship with God. Let's take a closer look.**

Transition into the *Main Event* portion of your lesson.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** That students would understand that the foundation of our relationship with God is built on obedience to His commands.
- **Set Up:** None

FIRST, kick things off by asking students what they think of when they hear the word "obedient?" "Obedience" sometimes makes us think of training an animal. We send dogs to "obedience school" to get them in order. Ask:

- **When we talk about obedience when it comes to God what comes to mind?**
 - Answer: "Obedience" as we are talking about today is foundational to our relationship with God. This is not about living by a set of rules as much as learning that it is about knowing how to follow the Lord.

Explain how you are going to talk through this idea of obedience for the next three weeks. Explain that it can be a hard subject for even people who have been following Christ for decades. Explain that there is a war inside of us that believes the lie that obedience is just a set of laws that keep us from doing what we want. Instead, it is less about what we can't "do" and more about "who" we are trying to follow. Say:

- **God set obedience in place right from the first people. We are the only created being made with a choice to do or not do what God asks. This is why obedience is so important to God.**

NEXT, remind students of how this concept of obedience began in the Garden. You've talked about this story in relation to sin and salvation, however, have they ever thought about it in relation to themselves? Take a look together, either in your Bibles or on a Bible app at Genesis 2:8-9 and 15-17. Ask:

- **Why do you think God would put the tree of the "Knowledge of Good and Evil" in the middle of the Garden if He didn't want Adam & Eve to eat?**
 - Answer: It can feel like God was taunting Adam and Eve by putting something there that they couldn't eat. However, notice in verse 8 that it says there were lots of other trees that were attractive and full of good food around the Garden. This was about understanding that we have a choice to follow God and His commands or not. Would they see that what WAS being offered to them was good, or focus on what they COULDN'T have?
- **What was the exact command God gave in verse 15 and the consequence of being disobedient? Why would God give that?**
 - Answer: The command was that we couldn't eat THAT tree. Anything else was up for grabs. Notice

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as well that it was not a suggestion, instead of a command. This means God was giving clear directions about what they needed to do to stay in relationship with Him. He was also clear about what would happen if they were disobedient.

THEN, look together at Deuteronomy 4:1-2. Ask:

- **What does this passage tell us about God's commands?**
 - o Answer: The Lord wants us to live with Him and be close to Him. He is telling us that it's not about a list of "rules." We aren't supposed to make it about a list of "do's" and "don'ts." Instead, it's about knowing that we can know exactly what keeps us close to God. This isn't a new idea; this is the way God always planned it.

Explain to students that it is actually a comfort to know that God doesn't change the "rules" on us. Say something like:

- **We can see that God wanted obedience to be a basis for our relationship with Him right from the start. Adam and Eve didn't know what "death" really was, so they couldn't see what they would lose in their disobedience. However, they did understand who God was; this is why they obeyed Him. This is true for us as well. Let's look at it.**

NEXT, read or have a student read Psalm 119:89-93. Remind students this was kind of like a "praise song" written to tell God how much the writer loved Him. We can see that the psalmist understood who God is and this gave him a desire to obey. Then, ask:

- **What does this passage show us about God and about the person who wrote it down?**
 - o Answer: In this short passage we see that God and His Word are eternal. That means it always 'has been and always will be. It is unchanging. God is faithful, and this is who He always has been. The person who wrote it not only understood these things, he really grabbed hold of them as important.
- **The psalmist talks about God's law (or commands) as being something he values. Why? Do you think you could value God's commands in the same way?**
 - o Answer: He describes in verses 92 and 93 in different ways that if God's commands had not been followed, he would have died. As a matter of fact, he uses the word "delight" when talking about God's Law. The question really becomes, do we trust who God in the same way so that we want to obey Him? If so, it's less about rules to follow and more about desiring to be in close relationship with God.
- **Would you say you feel the same way about God and His Commands as this psalmist does?**
 - o Answer: We don't have to understand everything about God to understand who He is. This is a question many of us still wrestle with. We have to decide for ourselves how we want our relationship with God to be.

Explain to the students this is not a question we have to answer today. Say:

- **We may struggle with the idea of how much we truly want to know and follow God. What we have to decide for ourselves is if our own desires will win out over what God wants. Will we take a step to trust God and obey what He asks of us? Can we begin to see that obedience to God has always been about relationship more than anything else?**

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FINALLY, have a student read Psalms 119:15-24. Then read each verse out slowly again. As you do ask students to close their eyes and listen to the verses. Instead of the word "I" in their minds have them put their first name in each verse. Once they have heard it again, ask:

- **What does this passage say about the ways we can look at God's law (commands)?**
 - Answer: It talks about really thinking about God's ways and having a deep desire to follow them. Sometimes it might not make sense, and we may need to ask God to show us how His law is "wonderful." Just because something is "right" doesn't mean we feel like we want to do it.
- **This passage makes a declaration from the psalmist that He will not "neglect" God's Word. What are some ways we can put that into action in our own lives?**
 - Answer: The immediate answer is to say, "Read my Bible every day." While that is part of it, that is not the deeper meaning of this verse. Instead, it is saying that if we value God and our relationship with Him, we place a high value on what He has to say. We never have to make a guess at what God wants from us; He wrote it down. Instead, it is about taking His Word and commands and taking them seriously for our own lives.
- **How do you think God's commands could be your "delight" and your "counselor"?**
 - Answer: God's laws, statutes, and commands are all really referring to the same idea. God has put a system in place that allows for us to have freedom in our relationship with Him. They become our "delight" when we see them as guiding us and showing the way, not holding us back.

Allow students to respond to whether or not they understand that obedience to God is not something that is put in place to "suck the fun" out of our lives. Instead, it's like knowing where our safety is. Say:

- **Think of it as allowing your pet dog loose in your backyard. He could see the fence around your property as a hindrance. He would much rather roam free into the world. However, you put it there to keep Him safe from danger. It keeps anyone from coming in to harm Him or steal Him. It keeps Him from getting lost. The fence is not about what He can't do. It is about knowing that in that fenced in section, He has the freedom to be safe, have fun, and live a great life.**

Transition to The Last Word by reminding students why God would make obedience a cornerstone of our relationship with Him, and how much a life in obedience offers.

Transition to the **Last Word** to wrap up your lesson.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** The goal of this section is for the students to reflect on the way our relationship with God is built on a foundation of obedience to Him and His commands.
- **Set-Up:** You will need a dry erase board or large paper where you can draw a picture of a house.

FIRST, talk to the students for a little bit about how they see obedience now. Do they see this as something important to their relationship with God? Ask them:

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- **What do you think a firm foundation of obedience in your relationship with God means? (Draw a picture of a foundation on the board.)**
 - Answer: God has given us His commands to be the base of our relationship with Him. It lets us know exactly what we need to do. It keeps our lives from falling apart when things go wrong or are confusing. We know that even when it feels like we can't hear God or if He is far away that we still know how to live and be close to Him.

NEXT, draw a picture on the board of a stick figure house, without a roof. You can give it windows and doors if you want. Tell your students that knowing the commands are there give a great foundation. However, treating them as just a set of rules, or like "suggestions" is like living in a house with no roof. It might feel like we are protected. However, there's nothing to cover us from the heat, cold, or storms that come through. Ask:

- **What's the difference in following a set of rules just to do them and treating God's commands as something that brings us closer to Him?**
 - Answer: We can try and just stick with the rules, but at some point, they will make us angry, and we aren't going to want to follow them. In our humanness just like Adam and Eve did in the Garden, we can think the rules are "unfair" and want to do what we want. However, when our motivation is about relationship, not just keeping up with what we can and can't do, then we want to try. Obedience is the foundation that helps us understand God is the "roof" on our lives, keeping us covered from the world.
- **Why don't you think God gave us "suggestions" on how to live? Why are there commands, statutes, and laws that God put in place for us to follow? Is it so we can be miserable in our time here on earth?**
 - Answer: No instead, it is about clarity in knowing exactly what God wants out of a relationship with us. He doesn't want to play with our emotions like that. Even though it seems confusing sometimes in areas, He wants us to trust in His nature that He always wants what is best for us. This is why He was clear from the first person created, how important obedience is to a relationship with Him.
- **Just because we know that a relationship with God is built on a foundation of obedience, it doesn't always mean it's easy. Do you struggle with see obedience as something that is freeing? Do you still want to do what you want?**
 - Answer: Of course, we all do. The question isn't about whether or not we struggle with this idea; we are allowed to struggle. We are allowed to question our trust in God. However, that is why it is so important to get to know Him better every day. The more we see Him as the one who takes care of us, the more we trust in HIM and are able to follow those commands.

FINALLY, end with acknowledging how building our lives on obedience in the way God intended is what brings us closer to the Lord. As we trust Him, and who He is it becomes easier to obey. As we obey, we see how He is faithful to take care of us, and it helps us trust Him. It all brings us closer to Him, every day.

Close in prayer.

- **Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be**

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receiving them.

- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.