

From Where I Sit . . .

"Learning to Obey"

A certain farmer lived beside the railroad tracks. One day he heard a fast train approaching. Glancing up, he saw his three-year-old son walking down the track toward him. The father realized it would be impossible to reach the little boy in time to save him from the oncoming train. He yelled to his son, "Lie down!" and without a second's hesitation the child obeyed. The train passed over him and he was unharmed. A few days later the farmer received a letter from the president of the railway company commending him, not for his bravery and wisdom, but for having taught his son to obey. How wonderful it is when those in our charge are saved literally in this life, and more importantly, in the life to come, because they have learned the importance of being obedient to their parents, and to their Heavenly Father. Everyone from the cradle to the grave must learn submission to authority. Each of us must learn the self-discipline required to be obedient. It is not a natural part of human nature. It is learned.

Our Lord understood the pain of this discipline and went through the experiences that taught him from a human perspective what obedience felt like. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Now it might be argued that Jesus did not have to learn how to obey since He was God in the flesh. Others might argue that he was already perfect and suffering did not make him more so. But you see, being in all points tempted as we are, he subjected himself to the painful discipline that obedience sometimes requires. He felt the pain of self-denial and submission to another's will. We cannot point an accusative finger at God or His Son and say, "You don't realize how hard it is down here. You're deity. We're only human!" Jesus learned first-hand what it felt like to be human and to have to make the ultimate surrender in order to obey His Father.

Thus when God calls upon us to be obedient children, He's not asking more of us than God in the flesh was willing to give. Now He authors eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. Much like the little boy who was willing to do what his father commanded and was thus saved from the train, we can be saved from death to come by obedience to a Father who never asked anything of us that wasn't for our benefit. Instead of arguing back at God, or even hesitating to evaluate the logic or wisdom of it all, one should freely and gladly surrender to His bidding.

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:" (1 Peter 1:13-14).

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