

Partial Obedience Is Still Disobedience

When we keep back certain sins from God because we rationalize they are small or infrequent, we deceive ourselves. However, God is not deceived for He sees clearly our disobedience. If God says come out from among them and we linger on the border because we wish not to separate wholly, then we have clearly disobeyed God. We do this at great personal risk.

Joshua was at the end of his life and feeling the need to encourage the people to remain holy, he challenges their commitment to God. We read the following words.

“Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:14-15 NKJV)

Well this was almost an insult in the mind of the people. How could Joshua say such a thing to us? Then they respond far be from us that we should forsake the Lord and serve other gods (Joshua 24.16). However, Joshua responds “You cannot serve the LORD, for He [is] a holy God. He [is] a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.” (Joshua 24:19 NKJV)

He does this so that the people will know without any doubt the seriousness of their commitment to the Lord. When God calls a person out of the world, He expects them to come all the way out. Should they wish to keep one foot in the world they risk their souls. Notice the exhortation.

“If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.” (Joshua 24:20 NKJV)

Dear friend, have you come out of the world? Are you guilty of partial obedience?

The people made a commitment that day, but did not keep it. For as they continued in the land we read how Judah did not drive out the inhabitants of the low lands because they had chariots of iron (Judges 1:19). In addition, Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites, and on goes the accounting of the people’s partial obedience until chapter two of Judges.

Here we read that an Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim and said, “I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. ‘And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? “Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be [thorns] in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.’” (Judges 2:1-3 NKJV)

My dear friends Bochim means weepers. The people weep because God had declared that He would not drive the people out anymore! Listen; there is a limit to what God will tolerate in your life. Forsake all sin before God leaves you to a life of mediocrity.

Will you look around your life, and remove those things that are displeasing to God? If you are willing to have courage, He will drive them out. However, if you hold on to wickedness there is no hope of you living the joyful life. Remember partial obedience is still disobedience. Amen.