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OBEDIENCE PATTERNS IN THE BIBLE

By

Rev. Dae-Sung Kang,
lecturer and former
Academic Dean at the
Wesleyan Bible College,
Georgetown, Guyana.

*Rev. Kang has been serving
under the Mission Board of the
General Assembly of
Presbyterian Church in Korea
as a missionary to Guyana for
the past 10 years. He has
studied at the Chongshin
Theological Graduate College,
Seoul, Korea (Th.M.),
Chongshin Theological
Seminary, Seoul, Korea
(M.Div.), Hankuk University of
Foreign Studies (Hindi
Language (B.A.), and the Fuller
Theological Seminary,
Pasadena, CA., U.S.A. (Pre-
Doc.).*

INTRODUCTION

The theme of the Kingdom of God, as John Bright says, was the central theme of Jesus' ministry (17). Jesus proclaimed, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). There is an urgent need for Christians and churches today to be obedient to the dictates of the kingdom of God. They need to examine themselves to see whether they are alive or dead with regards to biblical obedience. The Apostle Paul urges us, "Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God and Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:11). Christians are to be obedient to the Kingdom of God.

As the only Korean missionary to Guyana spending the last 10 years here, Guyanese Christians and churches will be in my mind on this paper. It has been my privilege to see the wonderful recent revival movement in Guyana's churches. However, there is a great need for Guyanese churches today to

participate in world missions. Guyanese churches need to be obedient to the dictates of the Kingdom of God.

Obedience is the most important value for the people of the Kingdom of God. This paper is concerned with the patterns of obedience in the Old and New Testaments. In chapter 2, nine types of obedience patterns will be explained. These are those of Adam and Eve, the people in the Exodus, the Davidic kingdom, the people of Apocalypse, the law community, Jesus, the Jewish Early Church, and the Gentile Early Church. In chapter 3 these obedience patterns will be analyzed. Awareness of the calling of the Kingdom of God will be the starting point of ideal obedience. Motivation

will be crucial for obedience. It will be interesting to see that only 33.3% of the people of God, including Jesus Christ, were obedient and that 66.7% of them were disobedient. In chapter 4, ideal obedience will be examined. The process and ministry of ideal obedience will be dealt with. Finally, I will look at the need for a study on obedience patterns in church history and make a proposal for some characteristics and the life-style of the people of the Kingdom.

OBEDIENCE PATTERNS IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

It is evident that the central theme of the whole Bible is the Kingdom of God. As A. Glasser says, Christians and their churches today should be instruments of God's Kingdom both present and future (5). As His instruments, we must be obedient to the dictates of His Kingdom.

Obedience as the Core Value of the Kingdom of God

It is very important to know that obedience is the core value of the Kingdom of God. However, there are people and groups who have been disobedient to the demands of the Kingdom. Ironically, some of these have thought they were being obedient. But they really had neither given priority to the Kingdom, nor had they understood it. God prefers obedience rather than sacrifice. He prefers the dedication of minds and hearts rather than empty outward religious activities. Arthur Glasser says that the Church should be nothing less than a missionary people of the Kingdom (207). He continues to say, "The Church constitutes the people of the Kingdom..." (207). The missionary mandate being one of the chief dictates of the Kingdom, the Church then, should be obedient to the missionary mandate. In other words, the church cannot be an instrument of the Kingdom if she has no concern for world missions.

Obedience is knowing the requirements of the Kingdom of God and doing them. Terry Wardle, citing Ray Ortlund, founder of Renewal Ministries, says that a balanced order of priorities is built upon three commitments: commitment to Christ, to the body of Christ, and to the work of Christ in the world (65-66). The Bible tells us the value of obedience in the lives of the people of the Kingdom of God as the instruments of His mission to proclaim the gospel to the nations to the uttermost parts of the world. Therefore, obedience is the sign of the people

of the Kingdom of God.

A study of the patterns of obedience practiced in different time periods in the Bible is crucial for the examination of contemporary Christians and churches. In fact, there have been different kinds of obedience throughout history. There have been obstacles and necessary elements for obedience. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. In order to learn from the past, it is important to study the patterns of obedience in the Old and New Testaments.

The Patterns of Obedience in the Old Testament

First of all, there have been cases of true obedience and cases of pseudo-obedience. That is why we study obedience patterns. Pseudo obedience looks almost the same as true obedience. But the former could stem from wrong motives such as self or group interests. Once the focus is on the group or individual, it usually leads to pseudo obedience. It is my wish to discover the obstacles to, and to find out the elements necessary for the exercise of real Kingdom obedience.

Adam and Eve: Disobedience from Self-Centredness

Once Adam and Eve became aware that they had been created by God, they were to be obedient to God. They could have continuously enjoyed the blessings of God in the Garden of Eden had they not eaten the fruit of the tree (Genesis 2:17). But they were tempted and prompted by human lust and self-centred pride to be like God. They were eventually punished by God and cast out of the garden. We can see the similar pattern later at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11).

Abraham: Obedience from Faith

Abraham, the ancestor of the Faith, is a good example of obedience motivated by faith. God made a covenant with him that he should be the father of a great nation and that through him the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). Even though he might not have been sure of where he was going, he was obedient when he was asked to leave his home in search of the promise of God. Wherever he went, he erected an altar to God and honored Him. He was called "a friend of God" God was his instructor who taught him lessons on hoping in the promise of God and

imparted to him the value of obedience on different occasions, even though at times he was not so faithful in trusting him.

Abraham was concerned about the people in Sodom. He cherished the covenant of God in his heart. Although he was not perfect, his prime interest was not the earthly kingdom, but to keep the covenant of God, the promise of the Kingdom of God. God renewed his covenant with Abraham on several occasions. He gradually understood it better, and eventually he could trust God fully based on God's promise and respond to Him with obedience. When Abraham was asked to dedicate Isaac, the son of the Promise, Abraham was obedient. God saved Isaac, and Abraham became the father of faith (Genesis 22:1-14). Glasser puts it well when he says the Kingdom consists only of spiritual "sons of Abraham" (64).

People in Exodus: Disobedience from Immaturity

The people of Israel in the Exodus were disobedient to the will of God by worshipping idols and rebelling against Moses. The passover (Exodus 12-19) is the clearest picture of the gospel in the Old Testament portraying our individual salvation through faith in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In those days Israel's duty was clearly to obey and worship the Lord. Glasser says that Moses was a missionary to the Israelites and Israel was a "kingdom of priests" to enable the nations to enter the fullness of His salvation and blessing (77). But the people turned away from the right path and went astray. They did not worship God but idols and pursued worldly living.

They had to spend 40 years in the wilderness until they learnt the value of obedience to the Law of the Kingdom of God. But God was merciful in that He restored the Law and His relationship with the Israelites (Exodus 20-24). Although the Israelites failed to be obedient to God, God led them to the promised land, Canaan.

Davidic Kingdom: Disobedience from misguided patriotism

Although David was also a good model of faith to follow, his kingdom placed priority on the nation of Israel over the Kingdom of God. When the people asked Samuel for their own king, God allowed it and Saul was chosen to be their king (1 Samuel 6-15). Since Israel had their own king, they relied upon the leadership of the king. They forgot the role of Israel to

proclaim the salvation of God to the nations. John Bright says the people of Yahweh had become the kingdom of Israel, the citizens of the Davidic state (39). He adds that the hope of the establishment of the Kingdom of God began to be divorced from the Israelite State and was driven beyond it (67). Eventually, the kingdom of Israel was under the judgment of God because of loyalty to the kingdom of Israel rather than to the Kingdom of God.

The people of Israel had to learn that the Kingdom of God was not in this world but in the next. They were not to follow the pattern of this world. Even in this world system today, our eyes should see God alone as our king. If our purpose is clearly in line with that of the Kingdom of God, our patriotism will not pose a problem. We can be patriotic to the Kingdom of God and to our nation. However, our priority lies with the Kingdom of God. Christians are to be obedient to the demands of Kingdom of God.

The Prophetic Movement: Disobedience from False Expectations

The covenant relationship between God and Israel demanded obedience. This requirement was to continue for the Remnant. Prophets in the pre- and post-Exilic periods shifted the hope of Israel from the earthly kingdom of Israel to a kingdom beyond history. They focused on the future Kingdom of God rather than on the present kingdom. Even though they might still have hoped for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, they wished for it in the future when the Messiah would come. Finally, when Jesus Christ came, the people (except for a few of them later on) could not accept Him as their Messiah. They had strongly anticipated the coming Kingdom of God, but they were not ready for its realization. This pattern can be called disobedience from false expectations.

In the days of the Restoration, Israel's historic faith was intensified and reshaped in the triumph of God's rule by the prophets. God, as Creator of all the world, intends to rule over the whole earth. Foreigners are also equally acceptable under that rule (Isaiah 55:7-8). And some of them will serve as priests and Levites (Isaiah 66:18-21). Although Judaism never really became a missionary religion, the concept of Apocalypse began to emerge in the place of the kingdom of Israel. John Bright says that all the prophets pointed toward the Pure Remnant. It is the time of the New Exodus (Hag 2:4-5). The Kingdom is at hand!

Isaiah saw the judgment coming both upon the nation of Judah and upon the other nations (chapters 1-39). But his second section (chapters 40-66) is changed from judgment to comfort. He did not speak anymore of wrath but of promised deliverance of His people (chapters 40-48). He envisioned "the Servant of the Lord" (chapters 49-53). Isaiah 53 gives us a perfect picture of our suffering Redeemer. He ends his chapters (chapters 54-66) with words of hope, proclaimed in eager anticipation of the coming Kingdom, the future glory of spiritual Israel.

Jeremiah challenged individual men of Israel to choose between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Jehoiakim (chapters 24-26). John Bright calls attention to the lesson that all false hopes for the redemption of man - the state, its politics, its wealth, its prosperity, its religion, and its noblest efforts at reform - can not produce the Kingdom of God (126). The Apostle Paul had an apocalyptic understanding of the Bible, applied it to Jesus Christ, and proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom of God to the Gentiles. That is why Timothy Carrier says that the Apostle Paul's hermeneutic is both missional and apocalyptic (Charles Van Engen 1993:50). It was a new start. God would one day make a new Covenant with a new Israel, a spiritual Israel. Unfortunately, when Jesus came, apocalyptic Judaism rejected Him as their Messiah. They continue to anticipate the coming of their Messiah, and have thus failed to submit to the Kingdom of God. It is important to submit to the purposes of the Kingdom of God.

The Law Community: Disobedience from misunderstanding

John Bright says the Post-Exilic law community had misunderstood the demand of obedience to God (170). There was a problem in their theology of justification. They believed that a man could be justified by works of keeping the law rather than by faith. They were satisfied to be obedient to the law of works rather than to the the precepts of the Kingdom of God. The people continued to hope for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, and this became intertwined with the apocalyptic hope. Eventually, when Jesus came and challenged them to come back to right direction of obedience to the requirements of the Kingdom of God, they could not accept Him as their Messiah and rejected Him.

The influence of the law community brought the end of the prophetic movement. As the Word of God, the law, was written for all to read, there

was little room left for a prophet to speak. The function of prophecy was taken over by the law. Soon no more prophets appeared in Israel. John Bright points out that the class of Scribes and teachers rose to a higher rank than the ordinary man (175). If one was to be religious, he had to be able to study the law, discuss it, teach it, keep it, etc. The law externalized religious faith. But no flesh is justified by the works of the law (Galatians 2:16; 3:11). Therefore, if the prophets put the Kingdom of God beyond man's doing, the law community limited the Kingdom of God to man's work. In fact, justification by keeping the law is disobedience stemming from a misunderstanding of the demands of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God requires a new obedience, not by works, but by faith.

The Patterns of Obedience in the New Testament

In the New Testament days the hope of the Kingdom of God was restored by Jesus Christ. Clearly there is a new thing in the New Testament. And the Church as a new vehicle is chosen to be obedient to the dictates of the Kingdom of God. Let us look at the patterns of obedience in the New Testament.

Jesus: Perfect Obedience

Jesus gives us a perfect model of obedience. Christ brought a radical reorientation to the existing morality. According to John Riches, Jesus purified Judaism (132). Jesus Christ demanded from his fellow Jews love for both God and their neighbours instead of just for themselves. His love includes forgiveness, healing, and restoring the lost and the fallen. Righteousness is no longer simply external works, but an internal obedience motivated by faith. The central theme of Jesus' teaching is obedience to the dictates of the Kingdom of God.

The tense used with reference to the Kingdom of God is not the future, but the present indicative (Mt. 12:28). It is here and now. The present reality of the Kingdom in Jesus Christ was established not by battle or national victory, but by His sacrificial obedience on the cross. His resurrection has been a proclamation of the victory of good over evil. The true Israel, the true people of the Kingdom of God, are no longer those who are Israelites by race, nor those who keep the law, but instead those persons who are obedient to the calling of God. John Bright says that

Christ has come to call men to His Kingdom. His mission was not to instruct men on better and more spiritual ethics (219). The calling of God demands obedience and righteousness here and now, proclaiming the gospel to all nations.

The people of the Kingdom of God are those who obey God. They feed the hungry, clothe the naked, show mercy to the prisoner and the outcast (Matthew 25:31-46). The people of the Kingdom of God are doing the work of Christ. Whosoever obeys Him, whosoever he may be, is his brother and next of kin (Mark 3:35). Glasser says that the parables of Jesus are Kingdom truths which must be translated into missionary obedience (170). Jesus founded no church, but he called the Remnant to obedience to the Kingdom of God. His followers should submit to His demand of obedience to the precepts of the Kingdom of God for all generations.

Jewish Early Church: Disobedience through Exclusivism

The Church is a new community. It is to be a missionary community. It must be noted, however, that as Glasser says, local congregations and denominations are mixtures of true and false Christians (207). That is why they are always under God's scrutiny judgment, and always in need of spiritual renewal and a deepening of their commitment to the missionary priority (207). The Church is a missionary people. If she is not obedient to mission, she is no longer the Church.

After the ascension of Jesus Christ, the disciples and other followers of Christ gathered together to remember the teaching of Jesus Christ. But the Jewish-centered early Church preferred to maintain Jewish traditions. They were not certain of Gentile salvation. They kept circumcision as the sign of Christianity. Even after the conversion of Cornelius through the instrumentality of Peter (Acts 10), the issue of circumcision for salvation continued to be debated in the Church. (Acts 15). Therefore, there seem to have been a Jewish early Church distinct from the Gentile early Church.

The Jewish Early Church was disobedient to the Kingdom of God in their exclusion of the Gentiles. They still wanted to keep the law or the traditions of Israel. They believed circumcision was the sign of salvation. They thought that if the Gentiles were to be Christians, then they should be circumcised. They finally did become the missionary people of God when persecution forced them out of Jerusalem and they were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Gentile Early Church: Obedience to the Missionary Mandate

The Gentile Early Church was an obedient church proclaiming the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. The Gentile Church became the true heir of Israel's hope when Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah. She is "a Remnant, chosen by God" (Romans 11:5). John Bright says the Church is the people of faith, the people of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, "We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law" (Romans 3:28). The Church is aware of the Great Commission, the command of Jesus for world evangelization. She is interested in the Kingdom of God. As a result, she is a missionary in obedience to the dictates of the Kingdom of God.

The Church transcends time and space. If any local congregation or denomination is not obedient to the Kingdom of God, it is possible that it may no longer be part of the Church. John Bright stresses that the missionary task of the church is thus one of critical importance (258). It is therefore necessary for local churches to examine themselves to see whether they are being obedient to the missionary mandate.

ANALYSIS OF OBEDIENCE PATTERNS IN THE SCRIPTURES

I will now go on to summarize the obedience patterns in the Scriptures. I have been able to discover many wonderful insights through this study. I would like to challenge Christians and churches in Guyana and all over the world to be obedient to the dictates of the Kingdom of God.

Summary of Obedience Patterns

There are nine obedience patterns in the Scriptures, spread over eight different periods of time. These are self-centred disobedience, faithful obedience, immature disobedience, patriotic disobedience, anticipating disobedience, confused disobedience, perfect obedience, exclusive disobedience, and missionary obedience. Among the nine obedience patterns, 33.3% (3/9) of them are positive and 66.7% (6/9) of them are negative with regards to obedience. There are 4 patterns involving individuals of which 50% are positive and five patterns involving groups of which 20% are positive. Fifty percent of individuals and 80% of groups reflect negative patterns. We thus have examples of obedient and disobedient individuals, as well as obedient and disobedient groups. We will now analyze these findings using the obedience check factors of time,

awareness, motivation, response, and result.

Awareness of the Kingdom of God and Obedience

In all cases, there were different levels of awareness of the Kingdom of God. Adam and Eve, Abraham, prophets, and Jesus became aware of it through direct individual divine contact. The people in Exodus, the Davidic kingdom, the Law community, the Jewish Early Church, and the Gentile Early Church became aware of it through the group experience of God's redemptive miracles, through the written law, through the Word of God, or through the command of Jesus. We note that any form of awareness of God's calling to the Kingdom of God must necessarily be the first test of obedience in the journey of faith.

Motivation and Obedience

Obedience that pleases God stems from right motives. After becoming aware of the God's calling to the Kingdom of God, individuals or groups may respond to it with different motives. For real obedience to occur, the motives should pass through the filter of the Kingdom of God. With respect to the cases being discussed, the right motives are faithfulness, servanthood, or a wish to be an instrument of God, etc. These can be found in Abraham, Jesus, or in the Universal Early Church. Wrong motives are self-centeredness, immaturity (idol worship), patriotism to the kingdom of Israel, wrong theology, and the exclusion of the Gentiles by Jews, etc.

These wrong motives lead to undesirable behaviours such as worshipping idols, listening to Satan's voice, giving priority to the kingdom of Israel, rejecting Christ, working for justification, and rejecting Gentiles. Desirable behaviours are walking in faith, suffering with the conviction of victory and living with the presence of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives. It is interesting to find out that without an experience of renewal by the Holy Spirit, individuals and groups may hardly have the right motivation for obedience to the dictates of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the final filter in the test of real obedience. While right motives will be able to pass through the filter of the Kingdom of God and lead to real obedience, wrong motives will not be able to pass through the filter and will lead to disobedience.

Renewal Experience by the Holy Spirit and Obedience

The experience of renewal by the Holy Spirit gives a refined awareness, purified motives, a new life-style, an obedient response, and blessed results. It is hard to pass through the filter of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, this special experience is not a choice, but a must. And this experience can happen at any stage of the process, such as before awareness, before motivation, before response, or even after response, too. When it happens, the process begins again from the renewed awareness, etc.

IDEAL OBEDIENCE TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

By the help of the study of obedience patterns in this paper, we are now able to reflect on the ideal obedience pattern and its process. In this chapter, we will deal with what is the ideal process of obedience and what are the necessary conditions for the ministry of ideal obedience to the Kingdom of God.

Ideal Obedience Process

Jesus showed us the perfect model of obedience. It is our responsibility to follow His model. The writer of Hebrews tells us, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (13:7-8). And Jesus said, "The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15). When we consider what the Word of God says concerning obedience to the dictates of the Kingdom of God, the first thing we must do is to repent. Individual Christians and churches alike, all need to repent of their wrong motives (all sinful desires), wrong attitudes (theology or idol worship, etc.), and disobedient responses vis-a-vis God's standard.

After real repentance by faith in Jesus' name, we should have the perspective of the Kingdom of God. It is necessary to examine our knowledge or theology of the Kingdom of God. A perspective is a map that guides us to a particular destination. Without Kingdom theology, our ministry may be in vain. As we repent, our hearts are cleansed. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8). We are able to discern the will of God through pure hearts. God is not pleased with

impure hearts. The apostle Paul said "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ" (Philippians 2:5). We can not serve two masters at the same time. We have to choose either Jesus with a pure heart by repentance through faith, or the world with all the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does (1 John 2:16). "The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever" (2:17). Our aim is not works, but the Kingdom relationship with God – intimacy.

The renewing experience or power of the Holy Spirit, then, is absolutely necessary. I have observed that it is not possible for any individual or group to have the right motivation for obedience in the Kingdom of God without the renewing experience of the Holy Spirit, even though they might be faithful, as in the case of the Jewish disciples. Even the disciples of Jesus were not able to proclaim the gospel to Jews and Gentiles until they experienced the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Abraham, Jesus, and the Gentile Early Church all had this experience. The Holy Spirit leads us into awareness of Kingdom Theology (knowledge), pure motivation (heart) for the Kingdom, obedient attitude, obedient response, powerful ministry, confidence of victory, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, etc. Even with Kingdom theology (knowledge), pure motivation for the Kingdom is hardly seen without the Holy Spirit. Only the power of the Holy Spirit gives us victory in spiritual warfare against Satan. We should not link this power with only special experiences. It is through the Holy Spirit that the mind is transformed when we accept Jesus as Lord.

Finally, powerful Kingdom ministry with the Holy Spirit results in blessing or victory from God with love, faith, and hope in the triune God. Therefore, the ideal process depends on repentance through faith in Jesus' name, the renewal experience by the power of the Holy Spirit, and powerful Kingdom ministry of blessing.

Principles of Ideal Obedience: Ministry for the Kingdom of God

If the Kingdom is the realm of His kingship, rule, and authority, then principles of ideal obedience ministry should reflect the biblical idea of the Kingdom (George Ladd, 21). The Kingdom is both a present spiritual reality and a future reality to be consummated in glory when Christ comes again. Lesslie Newbigin says that for the accomplishment of the universal salvation purpose, God chooses particular individuals or groups (68). The

Kingdom demands repentance that determines the quality of the present life and future destiny. Abraham, Moses, Israel, the disciples and churches were chosen by government to reveal the Kingdom of God.

The Church has the missionary responsibility of world evangelization. She should show obedient stewardship for the Kingdom of God. Religion is not the instrument of universal salvation. Jesus is the only way. Therefore, church expansion alone is not missions. Missions is a new obedience of doing new things in the Holy Spirit. A living church may grow and learn in obedience to Christ. Jill Briscoe says that God never asks anyone to do anything without giving him the strength he needs to accomplish it (18). And John Stott (1992) says that the contemporary Christians are separated from the world to be of service to the world (265). The church is given the power of God to be of service to the world (265). The church is given the power of God to be of service to the world as his instrument for the Kingdom.

Firstly, to be obedient in ministry for the Kingdom, Christians and churches should be courageous enough to abandon the present worldly privileges which they now enjoy. These privileges often blind people to the Kingdom of God. Only a pure heart can see God. Therefore, a pure heart is the mark of the people of God. The pure in heart can be the sacrificial labourers for the Kingdom. The cross of Jesus is not strange for them. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross" (Matthew 16:24).

When we surrender ourselves totally to the Servant of God, God guarantees the victory of the Kingdom for us. Through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Satan has already been defeated. However, John Bright says the Church of the suffering Servant must be a martyr church (236). She should follow the way of Christ. That is to drink of his cup (Mark 10: 38-39) and to take up his cross (Mark 8:34). God will take time to rid us of all our unnecessary accoutrements for the Kingdom. Therefore, it is wise for us to abandon all our unnecessary privileges before the Christ of the cross.

Secondly, the people of God should be equipped with the spirit of pioneering. Sometimes, it may be so easy to compromise in the face of the mighty power of Satan. The church must never be ashamed of the gospel. She should be courageous to claim world missions. Although there may be suffering or persecution in the course of God's cosmic struggle with Satan,

she is marching on to conquer a new territory where nobody else has yet put their feet, just as Caleb claimed a new territory to conquer at the age of 85 (Joshua 14:6-15).

The spirit of pioneering has been seen repeatedly in the ancestors of the faith and even in Jesus and the Apostle Paul as well. However, there can be temptations to adopt the attitude of King Hezekiah, who, in his foolish selfishness, was concerned only for his own security in his lifetime, in spite of the promise of disaster for the next generation. Even though it may be true that today we see more Hezekiahs than Calebs, today we need to have some Calebs who have the full pioneering spirit along with a pure heart for the Kingdom of God.

Thirdly, the missionary church and Christians should focus on leadership training. A. Glasser says that the ministry of Jesus was to prepare the Twelve for leadership in the missionary community of the Kingdom of God (194). There are events and processes in becoming a disciple in the Kingdom of God. There should be discernment of the days and of his own talents, awareness of the Kingdom of God with right theology, and renewal experience in the Holy Spirit. The process of obedience leads the disciple to a solid attitude of faith, love, and hope for the Kingdom of God. The disciple then becomes a creative and pioneering leader for the Kingdom of God.

The leader should be faithful and able to teach others. The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is no greater legacy for a man to leave than wisdom which comes from the Kingdom of God (7:11-12). To cultivate missionary leaders for the Kingdom of God, the teacher should be a good role model. The Apostle Paul says, "Therefore, I urge you, imitate me" (1 Corinthians 4:16, cf. Philippians 3:17). Jesus Christ is the ideal model. In fact, the ministry of obedience to (the demands of) the Kingdom of God is not doing, but rather, being a Christian/ church of the Kingdom of God. What matters is not *doing* but rather, *being*.

CONCLUSION

There are nine obedience patterns in the Bible. Among the nine, six are patterns of disobedience and three are patterns of obedience. The reasons for disobedience are wrong theology, wrong motivations or false responses. Obedience requires repentance by faith in Jesus' name, a renewal experience by the Holy Spirit, awareness or knowledge of the

theology of the Kingdom of God, a pure heart or motivation, an obedient attitude, obedient response in ministry, all of which results in blessings and victory. To practice ideal obedience ministry for the Kingdom of God, one must be courageous enough to abandon worldly privileges, be equipped with the spirit of pioneering, and focus on leadership training in all areas of missionary activities such as church planting, medical service, children education, etc.

It is hoped that this study will serve to motivate contemporary Christians and local churches to do some introspection and review our own patterns of obedience, especially with regards to the missionary mandate. This is an opportunity for us to learn from the mistakes of the past, search our own hearts and repent from our wrongs. It is time for us to reshape the missionary strategy in obedience to the Kingdom of God.



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