

Small Group Discussion Guide

for leaders (see below for participants' guide)

Gathering Time

- Make sure newcomers are welcomed and engaged in conversation
- Offer a snack and drink if the setting is right (i.e. a home)
- Arrange seating so everyone in the group can see each other

Getting Acquainted

- **This week we are talking about obedience. Specifically, the kind of consistent spiritual obedience that will enable us to end well in life. Share an experience in your life that required consistent commitment over a long time in order to end well.**
 - An example of this might be completing a college degree, getting out of debt, etc.

Discussion Starter Video

- To view the video, go to christchurchil.org/future-you-videos. Choose the title, OBEDIENCE. If you open the video in Vimeo, there is a download option to get the video onto your computer. Or you can just play it from the site without downloading.
- The videos are designed as discussion starters to be used at the beginning of the Bible Exploration.

Bible Exploration

- **In this week's sermon, Mike Woodruff focused on the backstory behind Daniel 5:10-12. In these verses, the queen of Babylon tells young king Belshazzar about Daniel whose wisdom set him apart in Nebuchadnezzar's court for thirty years. Read this passage and reflect on what Daniel's daily life may have been like for those decades in Babylon. How was he able to garner such a reputation?**
- **Think about the various accounts involving Daniel in chapters 1-6. Where do you see evidence of consistent obedience to God as his highest authority?**
- **Where does this kind of obedience come from? Is it a natural quality some people possess, or a grace given by God? Explain your perspective.**

- **What, specifically, are God's people expected to obey?**
 - NOTE: It may be helpful to read & briefly discuss Deuteronomy 6:1-2, Matthew 22:37-40 & Matthew 28:18-20.
- **In what area or situation in life is it most challenging for you to consistently obey God? What is your biggest barrier to obedience in that area?**
- **Mike Woodruff makes six points about cultivating obedience in our lives. How can this teaching help you obey in your most challenging situations?**
 - NOTE: Try to think of a specific way one of more of these points can help you.
 1. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is based on grace, not works. Therefore, our salvation does not depend on our obedience, it depends on God's forgiveness.
 2. In response to God's forgiveness, Christians are called and expected to obey God.
 3. We are not called just to obey once, but over and over again.
 4. Because long term obedience is hard, it is rare.
 5. Even though it is hard, it can be done.
 6. Resilient obedience comes from 1) having the right friends, 2) expecting life to be hard, and 3) refusing to quit.
- **What can you do this week to strengthen your desire and capacity to live in consistent obedience to God?**

Prayer

- Invite the group to participate in a time of "conversational" prayer. Each person may pray as often as he or she wants, but only 1-2 short sentences on one topic at a time. This lowers the barrier of participation for people unaccustomed to praying with others.

Wrap-Up

- Be sure to end the formal conversation on time.
- Thank newcomers for joining you, and invite everyone to the next meeting.
- Encourage people to linger for a few minutes, and do your best to have a personal interaction with each individual before he or she leaves.

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