

Acts 5:12-42  
Obey God Not Man

12 Many signs and wonders were being done among the people through the hands of the apostles. They were all together in Solomon's Colonnade. 13 No one else dared to join them, but the people spoke well of them. 14 Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers—multitudes of both men and women. 15 As a result, they would carry the sick out into the streets and lay them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. 16 In addition, a multitude came together from the towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

1. People are now starting to go to the apostles with their needs instead of the religious elite.

17 Then the high priest rose up. He and all who were with him, who belonged to the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 So they arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail during the night, brought them out, and said, 20 "Go and stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this life." 21 Hearing this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

When the high priest and those who were with him arrived, they convened the Sanhedrin—the full council of the Israelites—and sent orders to the jail to have them brought. 22 But when the servants got there, they did not find them in the jail; so they returned and reported, 23 "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing in front of the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside." 24 As the captain of the temple police and the chief priests heard these things, they were baffled about them, wondering what would come of this.

25 Someone came and reported to them, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple and teaching the people." 26 Then the commander went with the servants and brought them in without force, because they were afraid the people might stone them. 27 After they brought them in, they had them stand before the Sanhedrin, and the high priest asked, 28 "Didn't we strictly order you not to teach in this name? Look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

29 Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than people. 30 The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had murdered by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted this man to his right hand as ruler and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

2. Obedience to God is disorienting to those who are not Christian.

In regards to the Sadducees—“There was plenty of sacrifice, but it was no good. They were functioning in the wrong way, with the wrong motivation and the wrong propositions.”

3. Obedience to God reshapes our hearts, our desires and motivations.
4. Obedience to God will ask you to go back.

33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. 34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered the men to be taken outside for a little while. 35 He said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful about what you’re about to do to these men. 36 Some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, and all his followers were dispersed and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and attracted a following. He also perished, and all his followers were scattered. 38 So in the present case, I tell you, stay away from these men and leave them alone. For if this plan or this work is of human origin, it will fail; 39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even be found fighting against God.” They were persuaded by him. 40 After they called in the apostles and had them flogged, they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them. 41 Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name. 42 Every day in the temple, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

5. Obedience to God does not manage results or outcomes.
6. Obedience to God comes from what you believe about God

1 Peter 4:12-13

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

Questions:

1. When you're facing a need or challenge, where do you usually turn first for help? What would it look like to turn to God first in those moments?
2. How might obedience to God today come into conflict with cultural, political, or personal pressures?
3. What is you think is the core difference in the hearts of the apostles and the religious elites?
4. When has obedience to God reshaped what you wanted in a given situation, or circumstance?

5. Have you ever tried to control how things turn out or how others respond? How did that affect you—emotionally, spiritually, or relationally?
6. How do you make your life “so tethered to that of Christ” that obedience is the natural outpouring of that?
7. What does it look like to “count the cost of following Jesus?”
8. Why do the apostles “leave rejoicing” in the midst of their trials? How can we further deepen our understanding of the sufferings of Christ in order to experience this level of joy and contentment?
9. What does obedience to God look like in our everyday lives? With our money? Our relationships? Our prayer life? Our future?