

THE INSANITY OF OBEDIENCE

LEGACIES OF FAITH

Acts 16:25-34 (ESV)

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

²⁷ When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."

²⁹ And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas.

³⁰ Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴ Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

The biblical account of Sarah and Isaac (Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-3) reveals that God's plan for the salvation of the world is necessarily _____. God blesses a family – in this case the family of Abraham – to bless the world! Even the genealogy lists we see in scripture (see Matthew 1) are not just boring history or family records. They are statements of spiritual legacy! Abraham and Sarah's faith and _____ were critical elements in the fulfillment of God's plan.

The biblical account of Peter being introduced to Christ by his own brother, Andrew (John 1:29-42) also demonstrates the centrality of _____ to the spread of the gospel! Those we know best, presumably love most, and have most frequent _____ *to* and _____ *over* are the members of our own families. They are our _____.

In Nik Ripken's experience on multiple missional fields he writes of the absolute necessity of reaching families, rather than just individuals, with the Gospel. He says, "Communal peoples, which include most of the peoples of the earth, would rather go to hell with their families than go to heaven by themselves." Though the viewpoint is obviously faulty, it nonetheless persists, he says. Because of the close-knit nature of families, the ultimate hope and aim is for faith in Jesus to spread to older and future generations. Passing on the faith is what missionaries strive for.

Should we not strive for the same?

But Ripken notes that there are some inherent barriers to multi-generational faith in many eastern settings. In chapter 12 of *The Insanity of Obedience*, he names 4:

- 1) An addiction to _____ – How do we share Jesus with people who don't read and write?
- 2) Men and the influence of their _____ – In the Horn of Africa for instance, Nik noted that over a 50-year period 83% of the men coming to faith in Christ did so after their fathers _____. In some other areas, the number was as high as 100%.
- 3) The lowly status of _____ in many cultures (particularly Muslim cultures) – Women typically only receive the gospel from other women, as men tend to only speak with other men regarding religious matters. Also, men in these cultures tend to _____ faith for their wives rather than _____ their faith with them.
- 4) The local, pre-existing 'Christian' _____ – Many of these places have existing minority Christian populations, but they tend not to evangelize and instead shun other cultures and faiths.

We have – in our culture – our own barriers.

In chapter 5 of his very helpful book *The Unsaved Christian*, pastor Dean Inserra lists some of the barriers to reaching "cultural Christians":

Some of our barriers:

1. Belief –
2. Values –
3. Heritage –
4. Rites of passage –
5. Ignorance –

What other barriers can you perceive?

Ripken also notes that in both Muslim dominant countries and in Hindu dominant countries there are certain “markers” of “serious faith in Jesus”.

For former **Muslims**, these include:

- 1) Sharing his salvation with his family – especially his _____
- 2) _____ by another former Muslim in a house church context (not a secret baptism)

For former **Hindus**, these markers include:

- 1) A willingness to reject and remove the various _____
- 2) A willingness to deal with the difficult issue of the eternal destiny of their _____ which tends to result in a deep concern for _____.

What are our “markers” for “serious faith in Jesus” in our culture and context?

Again, Dean Inserra lists several in the conclusion of *The Unserved Christian*:

1. A life of _____
2. _____ minded
3. Sound _____
4. Spiritual _____
5. _____
6. Heart for the _____
7. Love for _____
8. Love for the _____

What other “markers” would you add?

Passing Down our Faith to the Next Generation

Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25 (ESV)

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

²⁰“When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?’ ²¹then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²²And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. ²³And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. ²⁴And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. ²⁵And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.’”

3 Keys (From Tim Keller)

1. _____ Passionately

We love God wholeheartedly, having these commandments on our hearts (v. 6). This means we are not hypocritical or inconsistent in our behavior. The commandments are not only kept mechanically or partially; rather, God has an effect on all of us, through and through.

Young people are sensitive to any _____. That is the first reason a younger generation can turn from the faith of an older one.

2. _____ Practically

We are to apply the gospel practically, not only academically or abstractly. Deuteronomy 6:7 is not promoting regular family lectures. The references to “sit . . . walk along . . . lie down and . . . get up” refer to the _____ of daily life.

Instruction in God’s truth, then, is not so much a series of lectures and classes; rather, we are to “impress” truths about God by showing how he relates to daily, concrete living. This is a call to be wise and thoughtful about how the values and virtues of the gospel distinctively influence our decisions and priorities.

3. _____ Personally

Verses 20–25 tell us we are to link the doctrines of the faith to God’s saving actions in our lives. We are to give personal testimony to the difference God has made to us, how he’s brought us from bondage into freedom: “We were slaves . . . but the LORD brought us out.” We are not only to speak of beliefs and behavior, but also of _____.

We must be open about our struggles to grow, and transparent about how repentance works in our lives. We are not to be overly formal and impersonal in the expressions of our faith.

We [wrongly] assume that if we instruct our children in true _____, shelter them from immoral _____, and involve them in church and religious organizations, then we have done all we can.

In summary, we must be consistent in our behavior, wise about reality, and warmly personal in our faith. History and experience both show us that these three things are hard to carry out on a broad scale. Most Christians rely on institutions and formal instruction to “pass on the faith.” We assume that if we instruct our children in true doctrine, shelter them from immoral behavior, and involve them in church and religious organizations, then we have done all we can. But youth are turned off not only by bad examples, but also by parents who are not savvy about the lives and world their children are living in, or who cannot be open about their own interior spiritual lives.

“Fear is devastating. Fear paralyzes. Fear causes people to run and hide. Fear is a black hole that will deplete joy from the soul of a believer. Fear is the deadly enemy of the Church. Your fear is the greatest tool you will ever give to Satan. Overcoming your fear is the greatest tool against Satan.”

- Nik Ripken