

Obedience

A Journey Through God's Creation, His Word, and Our Own Hearts

Obedience is one of those traits we often talk about with children, but it carries a deeper meaning that reaches every age. It's not just about following rules—it's about trusting and responding to the One giving the instructions. True obedience comes from the heart, not just habit. It grows best when it's rooted in love and trust, not fear.

As we explore obedience this month, we'll look at examples in nature—animals that instinctively follow rhythms and patterns built into them by God, and the natural order of creation that reflects structure, timing, and surrender. Most importantly, we'll study the Word of God to see what obedience looks like through real people who listened to God's voice—even when it didn't make sense, or when it came with sacrifice.

This chapter includes content suitable for all ages, from elementary through high school. Each week features a Bible story, character trait reflection, discussion questions, journal prompts, and age-appropriate activity suggestions. You'll also find two printable pages at the end of this chapter: one for the obedience character trait definition and one for the Bible memory verse.

Whether you're reading this as a family around the table, using it with a homeschool co-op, or leading a group of mixed ages, remember that obedience isn't about perfect behavior—it's about a willing heart. Let's begin by understanding what obedience really means.

Character Trait of the Month: Obedience

Definition for Children:

Obedience means doing what you're asked to do with the right attitude—right away, all the way, and with a willing heart.

Definition for Parents/Leaders:

Obedience is the respectful and timely response to rightful authority, done in a spirit of trust and surrender. It is the action of following through without rebellion, resistance, or delay, especially when God is the one giving the instruction.

What Obedience Looks Like:

- Listening carefully and following directions
- Responding with respect, not grumbling
- Doing the whole task, not just part of it
- Trusting that obedience leads to blessing

What Obedience Does Not Look Like:

- Ignoring or delaying instructions
- Talking back or complaining
- Doing just enough to get by
- Choosing your own way instead of what's right

Memory Verse for the Month (New Living Translation):

"If you love me, obey my commandments."
— John 14:15 (NLT)

Suggested Printables for This Month:

1. Printable Character Poster: "Obedience" – with definitions
2. Printable Memory Verse Page: John 14:15 – These printables can be displayed on a bulletin board, tucked into a homeschool folder, or placed somewhere visible for review throughout the month.

Week 1: The Listening Sheep and Noah Follows God's Instructions

As you begin this new month, gather together and revisit your focus: Obedience. This trait is about more than just following rules—it's about learning to listen, respond, and follow through with a willing heart.

This week, we'll look at one of the most well-known animals in Scripture—the sheep—and see how it teaches us to listen carefully and follow the Shepherd. Then we'll explore the story of Noah, who obeyed God completely, even when it didn't make sense.

Learning to obey isn't always easy, but it helps us build trust, grow in faith, and stay close to the One who leads us.

Animal Study: The Sheep

Sheep are gentle and quiet animals, not known for their strength or cleverness. But they are known for something else—their ability to follow their shepherd. Sheep recognize the voice of the one who cares for them. When they hear that voice, they respond. They don't have to understand the plan—they just trust and follow.

In John 10:27, Jesus says, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." This is a picture of what obedience looks like. It starts with listening—really listening—and then doing what we're asked to do, even if we don't know all the reasons why.

Sheep that stay close to their shepherd are safe and well cared for. But when they wander away, they're more likely to get lost or hurt. Obedience helps us stay close to the ones God has placed in our lives to guide us. It also shows that we trust the voice of our Shepherd, even when the path ahead isn't clear.

You might take a moment this week to observe how animals respond to voices or instructions. Or reflect on the voices you listen to most—and whether you're responding with obedience or delay.

Discussion Questions: The Sheep and Obedience

1. Why do you think Jesus compared us to sheep?
2. What makes sheep listen to their shepherd's voice?
3. What happens when a sheep wanders away?
4. How does obedience help us stay safe and cared for?
5. What voices do you listen to the most—and how do they shape your choices?
6. What does it mean to obey even when you don't fully understand?

Bible Story Connection: Noah Follows God’s Instructions

Read Genesis 6:9–22 together.

Noah’s story is often told with animals, rainbows, and a big boat—but the real lesson is obedience. When God gave Noah detailed instructions about how to build the ark, Noah didn’t argue, delay, or do it halfway. Genesis 6:22 tells us, “So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.”

Obedience often means doing something hard, slow, or confusing—just because we trust the One who asked. Noah built a huge boat when there was no rain in sight. He followed every direction exactly, and his obedience saved his family and the animals from the flood.

This week, talk about what it means to follow through completely—not just doing part of what you’re told, but listening, trusting, and finishing the task. Obedience isn’t about perfection—it’s about faith in action.

Discussion Questions: Noah Follows God’s Instructions (Genesis 6:9–22)

1. What stands out to you about the way Noah obeyed God?
2. How did Noah respond when God gave him unusual instructions?
3. What might have happened if Noah had only built part of the ark?
4. Why do you think God cares about us following instructions completely?
5. When is it hardest for you to obey all the way?
6. How does Noah’s story help you trust and obey God more?

Journal Prompts:

1. Write about a time when you listened and obeyed right away. What happened?
2. What makes it hard to obey completely?
3. Describe or draw a shepherd and sheep. What helps the sheep feel safe?
4. What’s one thing you know God is asking you to do?
5. What voices in your life help you know what’s right?
6. Write a prayer asking God to help you listen and follow through with a willing heart.

Activity Suggestions by Age Group

Elementary:

- Act out a game of “Shepherd Says” to practice listening and following directions.
- Make a cotton ball sheep and write the memory verse on it.
- Build a small ark using blocks, paper, or cardboard and talk about how long it would have taken Noah to obey fully.

Middle School:

- Read John 10:1–5 and write what it means to follow the Shepherd’s voice.
- Create a short skit about someone who obeys completely and what happens.
- Reflect on an area of your life where you sometimes obey halfway. What would change if you obeyed fully?

High School:

- Study Genesis 6 and make a list of the detailed instructions God gave to Noah. Why do the details matter?
- Write a reflection on this prompt: “Obedience is trust in action.”
- Choose one area this week (home, faith, school, relationships) where you want to obey with a willing heart. Make a short plan to follow through.

Week 2: Nature's Order and the Ten Commandments

As you continue your study of obedience, take time to revisit your monthly focus. Say the character trait together—Obedience—and read the memory verse aloud:

“If you love me, obey my commandments.” — John 14:15 (NLT)

This week, we'll look at the natural order God placed in creation. Everything in nature follows a rhythm, pattern, or boundary that was set from the beginning. Obedience is built into the way the world works—and when we understand that, we start to see that rules aren't meant to restrict us. They're meant to protect and guide us.

We'll also study one of the most well-known parts of the Bible: the Ten Commandments. These aren't just rules for rule's sake. They're God's way of showing us how to live well—with Him and with each other.

Nature Study: Patterns and Boundaries in Creation

From the stars in the sky to the tides of the sea, nature obeys the order God created. The sun rises and sets, the moon follows its phases, birds migrate, and seasons change. These patterns don't shift because of moods or opinions—they are steady, faithful, and obedient to the Creator's design.

This obedience in nature keeps everything working as it should. If the ocean didn't stop at the shore, or if gravity stopped working, there would be chaos. But because the world follows God's order, we are able to live in stability and peace.

This week, take time to observe the patterns around you. What happens at sunrise? What birds or animals follow a routine? What would happen if they didn't?

Discussion Questions: Nature's Order and Obedience

1. What are some patterns or rules in nature that you notice?
2. Why do you think God made creation to follow set rhythms and limits?
3. What happens when we ignore natural laws like gravity or time?
4. How does creation's obedience help us understand our own?
5. What boundaries or routines in your life help you stay on track?
6. How can following God's instructions bring more peace into your life?

Bible Story Connection: The Ten Commandments

Read Exodus 20:1–17 together.

When God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments, He wasn't being harsh—He was being loving. These commandments helped the people understand how to live in a way that honored God and cared for others. They covered worship, family, honesty, rest, and contentment.

Obedience to these commands didn't make God love them more—it helped them live the way they were created to live. That's still true today. God's commandments show us how to live with purpose, peace, and integrity.

Take time to talk through each commandment this week. What do they mean? Why are they still important?

Discussion Questions: The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17)

1. Which of the Ten Commandments do you understand the most? Which is hardest?
2. Why do you think God gave these rules to His people?
3. How do the commandments help us live better with others?
4. Do you think rules are a sign of love? Why or why not?
5. What happens when we obey God's instructions?
6. How can we make God's Word a part of our everyday choices?

Journal Prompts:

1. Describe a pattern you notice in nature. How does it stay obedient to God's design?
2. Which of the Ten Commandments do you want to understand better?
3. What's one rule or boundary in your life that actually helps you?
4. Write about a time when following instructions brought a good result.
5. How do you feel when someone trusts you to obey?
6. Write a prayer asking God to help you see His rules as loving and good.

Activity Suggestions by Age Group

Elementary:

- Make a nature pattern collage—collect leaves, rocks, or photos that show order in creation.
- Create a mini book of the Ten Commandments using drawings and simple language.
- Play a sorting or sequencing game to talk about following order and instructions.

Middle School:

- Write or present a modern-day version of the Ten Commandments in your own words.
- Observe one animal for a few days and note how it follows routine or instinct.
- Talk about what happens when people or nature ignore structure or boundaries.

High School:

- Reflect on the difference between rules made out of love and those made for control.
- Write about how boundaries in your life (curfews, routines, etc.) can actually bring freedom.
- Study Psalm 19 and summarize how David describes God's laws and instructions.

Week 3: The Following Goose and Abraham Offers Isaac

Obedience isn't just about following rules—it's about trusting the one who gives the instructions. This week, we'll explore how obedience involves humility, surrender, and trust. We'll begin by looking at geese—creatures known for flying in formation and submitting to the leader's direction. Then we'll study the powerful story of Abraham, who obeyed God even when it was confusing and deeply painful.

When we learn to follow God's lead like the geese follow one another, obedience becomes more than duty—it becomes worship.

Animal Study: The Goose

Geese are migratory birds known for their V-shaped flying formation. What makes them fascinating is their natural instinct to follow the leader in flight without questioning. Each goose takes turns leading, but when it's their turn to follow, they do so with complete trust—staying in formation, matching speed, and conserving energy together.

Geese don't argue about direction. They trust the one in front, and when the leader grows tired, another steps up. This silent, cooperative rhythm shows us something powerful: obedience isn't weakness—it's strength in motion.

When we choose to follow God's leading—even when it's not easy or clear—we're doing what the geese do: trusting that we're headed the right way because we know Who's leading us.

Discussion Questions: The Goose and Obedience

1. Why do you think geese fly in formation instead of alone?
2. How do geese show trust by following each other?
3. What can we learn from the way they take turns leading and following?
4. Why is it sometimes hard to follow someone else's direction?
5. How does following God's lead help us grow in strength and peace?
6. What does it look like to stay "in formation" spiritually?

Bible Story Connection: Abraham Offers Isaac

Read Genesis 22:1–18 together.

This story is one of the most difficult and deeply moving in Scripture. God asks Abraham to offer his beloved son, Isaac—the very son He had promised—as a sacrifice. Abraham doesn't argue. He doesn't delay. He simply obeys. But at the last moment, God stops him and provides a ram instead.

Abraham didn't understand why God gave this command. But he obeyed because he trusted God's heart. He believed God would keep His promise, even if the path didn't make sense.

Obedience often means following when we don't see the outcome. Like geese in the sky, it requires trust and surrender. Abraham's story shows us that obedience and faith always walk hand in hand.

Discussion Questions: Abraham Offers Isaac (Genesis 22:1–18)

1. What emotions do you think Abraham experienced during this test?
2. How do you think Isaac felt during the journey?
3. Why do you think Abraham obeyed even when he didn't understand?
4. How did God provide for Abraham in the end?
5. What does this story teach us about trust and obedience?
6. How can obedience become an act of worship?

Journal Prompts:

1. Write about a time when you obeyed even though it was hard.
2. What would it feel like to trust God with something really big?
3. Describe how geese follow each other in flight. What can we learn from that?
4. What's one area where God might be asking you to trust and follow?
5. How does obedience require surrender?
6. Write a prayer asking God to help you trust Him completely, even when you don't understand.

Activity Suggestions by Age Group

Elementary:

- Draw a group of geese flying in a V-formation and talk about how they help one another.
- Act out the story of Abraham and Isaac using simple props or toys.
- Play a “Follow the Leader” game and talk about how it relates to trusting God’s direction.
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Middle School:

- Research why geese fly in V-formations and how it benefits the whole group.
- Write a short reflection about a time you had to follow even when you didn’t know the outcome.
- Summarize Genesis 22 in your own words and reflect on Abraham’s obedience.

High School:

- Study Hebrews 11:17–19 and write a paragraph on how Abraham’s faith is honored in the New Testament.
- Reflect in writing: “What does it mean to follow God when you don’t know where He’s leading?”
- Create a symbolic visual (art, poem, or written prayer) showing what it means to stay in God’s formation.

Week 4: The Obedient Bee and Jesus Submits to the Father

As you wrap up this month's study, return to your core theme: Obedience. Read your monthly verse one more time and reflect on how your understanding of obedience has grown.

This week, we'll look at one of the smallest, most consistent workers in creation—the honeybee. Then we'll turn to the greatest example of obedience in the Bible: Jesus, who followed His Father's will all the way to the cross.

Obedience isn't about being the strongest—it's about being willing, faithful, and surrendered to God's plan.

Animal Study: The Honeybee

Bees are small, but they are some of the most productive and orderly creatures in creation. Each bee knows its role—whether it's gathering nectar, guarding the hive, or caring for young bees. They don't argue or delay. They simply do what needs to be done.

Bees also obey the design God gave them. They work together, stay on task, and keep the hive healthy. Because of their obedience to their role, flowers are pollinated and food grows.

This kind of quiet, steady obedience is powerful. Bees show us that even small efforts, done faithfully, can have a big impact.

Discussion Questions: The Bee and Obedience

1. What do bees do that shows steady, faithful work?
2. How does each bee's obedience help the whole hive?
3. What would happen if bees stopped following their roles?
4. What does this teach us about our role in a group or family?
5. How can small acts of obedience make a big difference?
6. What helps you stay focused when you want to give up?

Bible Story Connection: Jesus Submits to the Father

Read Luke 22:39–46 together.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed before going to the cross. He was overwhelmed, full of sorrow, and asked the Father if there was another way. But in the end, He said, “Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” (Luke 22:42)

That moment is one of the clearest pictures of obedience in the entire Bible. Jesus wasn’t forced—He chose. He trusted His Father’s plan, even when it meant pain and sacrifice.

Jesus’ obedience brought salvation to the world. It was costly, but it was perfect. And it’s the example we’re called to follow.

Discussion Questions: Jesus Submits to the Father (Luke 22:39–46)

1. What do you think Jesus was feeling in the garden?
2. Why did He choose to obey, even though it was hard?
3. What does this teach us about surrender and trust?
4. How is Jesus’ obedience different from simple rule-following?
5. When have you had to do something right even though it was difficult?
6. How does Jesus give you strength to obey today?

Journal Prompts:

1. Write about a small task you did that ended up being important.
2. What does it mean to say “not my will, but Yours” to God?
3. Describe a bee and its role. What can you learn from it?
4. When have you needed help to obey?
5. What part of Jesus’ example stands out to you most?
6. Write a prayer asking for courage to obey even when it’s hard.

Activity Suggestions by Age Group

Elementary:

- Watch a short video about bees and how they work.
- Make a paper bee or beehive craft and label each bee's role.
- Act out the story of Jesus in the garden and talk about what it means to choose God's way.

Middle School:

- Research the roles in a beehive and write a short report.
- Write a letter to Jesus thanking Him for His obedience and what it means to you.
- Create a visual reminder with the words "Not my will, but Yours" to display in your room.

High School:

- Reflect in writing: "What does it mean to obey when it costs something?"
- Study Philippians 2:5–11 and summarize what it says about Jesus' obedience.
- Choose a small act of obedience this week—something quiet, steady, and meaningful—and write about how it impacted your heart.