

‘Daddy, I Disobeyed’: A Lesson on Disobedience and Grace

I was thousands of miles away ministering at a men’s retreat near Seattle, Washington. My wife and three sons were in Atlanta, Georgia. I was making a routine phone call to let them know how lonely I was without them, when my wife informed me:

“William has something he needs to tell you.”

I immediately knew my nine-year-old son was in trouble. She handed him the phone. He made his confession.

“Daddy, I disobeyed. And it cost \$200.”

That was a short confession. I needed more information, so I played detective.

“Who did you disobey?” I was pretty sure of the answer to question No. 1.

“I disobeyed Mom.” He sheepishly confirmed my suspicion.

“OK, so you disobeyed your mother. But how did that cost \$200?”

He had disobeyed his mom before, but there had never been a monetary price attached to it. What’s going on here? Did she fine him? Two hundred dollars, that’s a pretty steep fine for a nine-year-old. Maybe, she suspended his allowance for the next five years? But \$200? He could never come up with that much money.

“Well, see, Mom told me and my brothers to stop wrestling in the house, and we kinda stopped, but we were still playing

this game where we sorta push each other and try to make each other fall down, but we don't hurt anybody, but we weren't really wrestling, but Mom says we were, and so my brothers pushed me and my head hit the corner of the door, and blood went everywhere, so I ran downstairs to find Mom, and blood kept going everywhere, and so she took me to the hospital and the doctor gave me a shot so the stitches won't hurt and I got six stitches and Mom had to pay the hospital and the doctor and buy medicine and all that cost \$200. Oh yeah, Dad, I almost forgot, and the doctor said I was the bravest person that he had ever had to put stitches in."

Besides the \$200, it also cost him a week with no swimming—doctor's orders. That was pretty tough since it was summer time and there was a great pool where we were staying.

Recognizing this to be one of those made-for-the-gospel events, I seized the moment and prayed God would make the reality of His grace as permanent as the scar on William's head. I prayed that every time William looked at his new scar he would remember these three truths:

1. Disobedience is always costly—the tragedy of SIN. This lesson was obvious to William. Unfortunately, it's not so obvious to us most of the time. We think we can sin and get away with it. We can't. No one can. No one ever has. No one ever will. Adam disobeyed, ate the fruit, and paid the price. Cain sinned, killed his brother, and suffered the consequences. David, because of his position of power, thought he could literally get away with murder, not to mention adultery. Thanks to an obedient and fearless prophet, he got caught. He subsequently repented and was restored. If we sow to the flesh, we reap corruption. It's a fact of life we can't change—sin is costly.

2. Disobedience costs more than we can pay—the reality of JUDGMENT. William's medical bills that resulted from his disobedience cost more than he could possibly pay. That's how

sin is. It always produces death—spiritual death. That’s the price of sin.

William had the power to obey or disobey, to wrestle or not to wrestle. He chose to wrestle. Of course, like most of us, he rationalized that he was not really wrestling, but we all know he was. Just like those who convince themselves that their lying, stealing, and adultery is, somehow, acceptable. All sin, even sin that has been rationalized out of existence, is costly—very costly. William found out the hard way.

3. God paid the price for our disobedience – the gift of God’s GRACE. William disobeyed his mother, cut his head, and in the process accumulated \$200 in medical bills. He couldn’t afford the price of his disobedience, so who do you think got stuck with the bill? Right, it was the offended party. The one he disobeyed paid the bill. That’s what happened on the cross. We sinned against God. We couldn’t pay the price to fix the situation. God, the offended party, paid for our disobedience. We caused the problem, because of our sin. God fixed the problem, because of His grace. That’s the gospel.

“But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23).

Thank God for the unfathomable riches of His grace!

Steve and Deborah Murrell went to the Philippines in 1984 for a one-month summer mission trip that never ended. They are the founding pastors of Victory Manila, one church that meets in 14 locations in metro Manila and has planted churches in 60 Philippine cities and 20 other nations. Currently, Victory has more than 6,000 discipleship groups that meet in coffee shops, offices, dormitories and homes in metro Manila. Steve is co-founder and president of Every Nation Churches and Ministries, a family of churches focused on church planting, campus ministry and world missions.

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