

Watch for This Spiritual Pitfall of Shortcuts to Obeying God

The other day, I said to Timmy, "I want you to get all your Play-Doh off the table." He reluctantly but obediently walked toward the mess, so I left the room. I came back later to find his Play-Doh off the table, all right. It lay scattered on the floor next to where he had been sitting.

Not too long before that, I set out to deep clean my sons' room. In the process, I discovered many things that didn't belong to my older son, Kenny, stuffed into Kenny's shelves, drawers and bins. It turned out that, when told to clean his room, Kenny had taken the things his sisters had left there and, instead of returning them to his sisters, simply shoved them out of sight.

Did my sons obey me? No. Sure, they complied with the letter of the law, but they completely disregarded its spirit. They chose obedience in name only over true obedience.

Good thing we moms never do that, right?

Okay, so we do. All the doggone time.

We fix lunch for our children, but then we slap it down in front of them, fed up with doing menial jobs. We get up in the middle of the night to tend a sick child and resent him or her for interrupting our sleep. We agree to take our kids to the library, grumbling inwardly that nobody seems to care how we wanted to spend the afternoon.

In any of these three cases, did we do what God wanted us to? No. At least, not fully. Because God doesn't just ask us to drive the car, fix the meals or tend the sick. He asks us to

do it with a willing, grateful spirit.

Ouch.

There have been several times this past week where I indeed served my children and did the things God wanted me to do, yet still failed to fully obey, because I didn't have the attitude He wanted me to have.

"But that's normal," you might protest. "After all, we moms are human beings, too. Surely, we can't be expected to have a good attitude all the time."

Actually, that's exactly what God expects. Because while we may not be able to control how tired our body or emotions are, or even whether our body is physically healthy or able, we can always control how we choose to respond and the kind of thoughts we choose to dwell on.

Always? Yes, always. Because Scripture plainly states that God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. Which means if we have a bad attitude, we can't blame it on the circumstances God is permitting in our lives. We can't blame it on others or on how they treat us.

We have only ourselves to blame.

But it's so hard!

Yes, my friend, indeed, it is. It's very hard sometimes. But let's get back to 2 Peter 1:3, where Peter writes that God has given us everything we need for godliness—in other words, for having the right attitude despite our circumstances. Everything we need, not just some things.

True, there may be times when we try to have the right attitude, but we come dangerously close to failing. What then? Then, we cry out to God and ask Him to change our attitude. He can do anything, you know, and if we truly need help, He's always there to give it. Every thing. Every time.

So the next time you're tempted to roll your eyes in disgust, or to let out one of those "I can't believe I have to deal with this" sighs, stop. Just stop. And remember, in that moment, just one word.

Everything.

His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and excellence (2 Pet. 1:3). {eoa}

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