

The Radical Rewards of Obeying God

Many years ago, when God called me to teach the Word full-time, my life was much different than it is now. We had three children at home and I was teaching one Bible study each week in our living room. Dave and I both had good jobs and we were comfortable financially. But God began dealing with me about quitting my job so I could stay home and study the Word more to prepare for full-time ministry.

Now, even though I believed with my whole heart that God was leading me to make this change and I had a strong desire to teach the Word and help people, it was scary to take this step of obedience. If I quit working full-time, we would be about \$40 short of what we needed just to pay our bills each month. Along with that, at that time, it wasn't popular for women to have a teaching ministry like this.

I kept my job until I was so miserable I couldn't stand it. Then I quit my job and got a part-time job so I still had enough money to take care of myself instead of completely trusting God and obeying His direction.

I'm a hard worker and a good employee, so it was amazing to me when I got fired! And it became obvious to me that God was saying, "I told you I didn't want you out in the work force, trying to take care of yourself. I want you to be home, studying and preparing by faith to do what I've called you to do."

Does Part-Time Obedience Count?

This experience taught me how important it is to promptly and fully obey what God puts in my heart to do. When I finally submitted to His direction, somehow every month He provided the miracle we needed so we could pay our bills on time. And I

had the time I needed to focus on studying the Word so God could prepare me to teach others how to have abundant life in Christ.

The truth is if I hadn't been willing to trust God and obey Him completely, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing today.

It's the Best Choice You'll Ever Make

Romans 12:1 (AMP) says, "I urge the mercies of God, to present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship."

The apostle Paul is saying here, "I'm begging you to make a decision that you're not going to live a mediocre, half-baked, sloppy life!" Notice that he also said doing this is "rational (logical, intelligent)."

It's so easy to settle for less than God's best for us because we don't always feel like taking responsibility for our behavior or exercising discipline to do what we need to do so we can accomplish great things for God and help people. But the cost of settling for less is actually harder than being completely obedient to God's will.

It's Always Worth It to Pay the Price

You may be thinking, "But Joyce, it's so hard to do the right thing all the time! It's hard to forgive the people who have hurt me. And it's hard to keep a good attitude at work when my boss is unfair. It's hard to be nice when people aren't nice to me. It's so hard to overcome the temptations I face every day..."

The truth is, what's really hard is having no hope, peace, joy or the righteousness of God. It's hard to be angry all the time and live with bitterness and unforgiveness. It's hard to be miserable and deal with the consequences of ungodly

behaviors like being sick or having hangovers or addictions to things that are just killing us anyway.

I really want you to get this: Everything God tells us to do is for our good. Whether it's direction you find in His Word or something He's put in your heart to do in your situation, the best thing you can ever do is obey Him promptly and completely.

The Pathway to the Best Life

Obedience to God is the pathway to the life you really want to live. It's the answer to overcoming sin and any problem you face. It's the way we learn how to grow up and let God work in our lives, changing us so we can be what He created us to be.

When you feel like it's too hard to obey God, remember that He will never tell you to do something without giving you the grace and ability to do it. The key is to trust Him fully and depend on Him for the strength you need. God loves you and wants the best for you. Humble yourself before Him, and enjoy living with His peace, power and joy every day of your life!