**Study Series: A Long Obedience in the Same Direction**

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**Lesson Title: “Obedience” (pp. 66-75)**

October 11, 2020 Session 06

**The main point of this lesson is:** For the Christian, obedience to God is not primarily a leap of faith in the dark but a hope built on His faithfulness in the past.

**Focus on this goal:** To help adults demonstrate an adventurous obedience that is rooted in historical fact and reaches forward in promised hope.

**Key Bible Passage:** Psalm 132

Before the Session

1. **List on the board** admirable and not-so-admirable movie characters such as: Indiana Jones, George McFly, the Riddler, C3PO, Princess Leia, Loki, Wonder Woman, Scar, Shaggy, and Scooby Doo. (Step 1)

2. **Read** 1 Samuel 4–7; 2 Samuel 6–7; and 1 Chronicles 15. (Steps 3,4, and 6)

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Draw attention** to the list on the board and **ask adults** to consider which movie characters they are most like.

Then **ask** which they would most like to resemble and why.

**Acknowledge** most people would like to be identified by a spirit of strength and adventure.

**State:** Fortunately, we don’t need a super-hero suit to take courageous leaps of faith, we need obedience. This session examines how the past and future can empower us to be obedient in the present.

**Step 2. Day One – “How He Promised GOD”**

**Briefly relate** the Day One illustration (pp. 67-68) of the hospital roommate betraying what many want from religion.

**Read** the Day One margin/pull quote (p. 68).

**Request adults** silently consider Day One, activity 2 (p. 68).

**Explain** Psalm 132 “was included in the Songs of Ascents to develop just those aspects of life…in Christ” (p. 68).

**Discuss** Day One, activity 1 (p. 67). If no one else does, **mention** that David wanted to keep his promise to God to bring the ark to Jerusalem.

**Encourage adults** to underline the last sentence of Day One (p. 68) as you read it aloud.

**Declare:** To be obedient followers of Jesus, we need to be rooted and reaching.

**Step 3. Day Two – Obedience with a History, Part 1**

**Explain** Psalm 132 roots obedience in a historical incident related to the ark of the covenant.

**Ask volunteers to state** what they know about the ark.

**Briefly summarize** 1 Samuel 4–7.

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 1 (p. 69).

**Explain** 2 Samuel 6 recounts how, many years later, David brought the ark to Jerusalem.

**Read** 2 Samuel 6:14-15.

**Step 4. Day Three – Obedience with a History, Part 2**

**State** Psalm 132:8-9 describes David’s successful attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem, while the troubles mentioned in 132:1 could refer to his first failed attempt.

**Ask a volunteer to read** 2 Samuel 6:1-11.

**Explain** transporting the ark on a cart disobeyed the biblical command to carry it on poles (Ex. 25:14). 1 Chronicles 15 describes the joy the Israelites experienced when they brought the ark to Jerusalem the obedient way.

**Invite a volunteer to read** the first paragraph of Day Three (pp. 70-71).

**Evaluate** why the ability to recall biblical history is so vital to the Christian faith.

**Discuss** Day Three, activities 1 (p. 71) and 2 (p. 72). (**Sample responses for activity 2**: Sing songs that rehearse what God has done. Read, study, memorize Scripture. Read biographies of faithful believers.)

**Ask:** How can these memory activators keep us rooted so we can obey God faithfully?

**Step 5. Day Four – Hope: A Race Toward God’s Promises, Part 1**

**Ask:** How is being rooted different than being stuck?

**Invite a volunteer to read** the Day Four margin/pull quote (p. 72).

**Declare:** If we desire to have a lively, adventurous obedience, we don’t just need to be rooted, we need to be reaching.

**Note** the first half of Psalm 132 reflects David speaking to God about obediently fulfilling the promise he made to Him.

**Request adults** consult Psalm 132:11-18 and identify who is speaking.

**Analyze** the significance of God’s “I will” (or “I’ll”) declarations.

**Emphasize** God was giving a vision of the reality that is in the future of faith.

**Invite volunteers to identify** from Psalm 132:15-18 what God promises His people in the future.

**Point out** how all those promises are rooted in God’s past actions.

**Discuss** Day Four, activity 2 (p. 73).

**Step 6. Day Five – Hope: A Race Toward God’s Promises, Part 2**

**Ask a volunteer to read** the first paragraph of Day Five. (p. 74)

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 1 (p. 75).

**Analyze** why it is so vital we understand God’s way as something larger and more complete than just our situations. (**Time permitting, read** 2 Sam. 7:18-28 and **examine** how David’s belief in that promise was rooted in the past and reached to a promised future hope.)

**Request adults** consult Psalm 132:12 and state how God’s promise was in some ways conditional.

**Explain** David’s descendants were not obedient, yet God fulfilled His promise in Jesus Christ.

**Invite volunteers to read** Psalm 132:11a in several different translations.

**Declare:** The foundation of obedience is not our perfection, but God’s faithfulness. God’s proven faithfulness in the past and certain faithfulness in the future is what roots us and empowers us to reach forward even when we, like David, sometimes fail to be obedient.

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Invite a volunteer to read** the last paragraph of Day Five (p. 75).

**Discuss** the second question of Day Five, activity 2 (p. 75).

**Urge adults** to periodically evaluate themselves by asking, How am I rooted? How am I reaching?

**Close in prayer.**