

Dgroup Discussion Guide for September 26, 2016

## Obedience is Less Painful than Regret

Scripture: **Exodus 4**

God desires to bless us holistically, but before He does so, He wants to make sure that we are capable of properly handling those blessings. Joshua 1:8 says, ***This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.*** People tend to prefer the blessing without the work that comes with getting it, but the verse says that the two are in a causal relationship; only after living by the written word will we be able to be blessed with prosperity. James 1:25 also says, ***But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.***

The importance of the observation of circumcision was brought to light in Exodus 4. Moses and his family were en route to Egypt on the Lord's command when Moses was struck with a fatal sickness. Only after Zipporah circumcised their son was he able to recover. We remember that circumcision is the mark of God's covenant with Abraham to be God to his descendants. Genesis 17:14 says, ***But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.*** Circumcision was so important that it was not only mandatory for the Jews, but also for the foreigners that lived with them. To God, Moses' failure to circumcise his son was an act of disobedience. As a future leader for the Israelites, Moses was held to a higher standard by the Lord.

What is the significance of circumcision? The same way that there is physical circumcision for men, the Bible also talks about spiritual circumcision for Christians. Jeremiah 4:4 says, ***Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and remove the foreskins of your heart, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or else My wrath will go forth like fire and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds.***

Some observations about circumcision:

1. A person didn't circumcise themselves; instead, they yielded to the process.

Deuteronomy 30:6 says, ***Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, so that you may live.*** The same way physical circumcision is done by medical practitioner, only the Lord is able to circumcise our hearts.

2. Circumcision was the cutting of the flesh.

Galatians 5:17 says, ***For the flesh sets its desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.*** God hates the flesh, for it is in opposition to the Spirit and is the reason for our spiritual imprisonment. With examples like greed, pride and envy, the Lord desires to cut the flesh from our lives so that we will be able to fully commit to Him.

3. Circumcision was done in a private place to a personal part of the body.

When God circumcises our hearts, He will deal with us in private. He may use the people around us to further His work, but at the end of the day it is the Lord that will deal with us.

4. That which was cut off was unnecessary.

Christians sometimes like to go back to their old selves even after they have committed to the Lord.

There is a danger in looking back, as demonstrated when Lot's wife looked back on their home and, in turn, turned to a pillar of stone. The moment that God cuts the flesh from your heart, we shouldn't give into the temptation to look back; what was taken off was unnecessary anyway.

5. Circumcision was a point of consecration.

God didn't just deliver the Israelites to get them out of Egypt; he wanted to get them out of bondage to lead them to the promised land flowing with milk and honey. In the same way, God didn't save us merely to send us to heaven, but to bring us to our promised land: the Word of God.

There are two ways we can respond to God when he tells us to do something: we can respond like Pharaoh—who refused to obey—or we can respond like Saul in Acts 22—who simply asked the Lord what He wanted him to do. The difference in the willingness of the two to obey had to do with one having a personal encounter with God and a subsequent relationship with Him. Just like Pharaoh, the very reason many people are disobedient to God is because they do not know Him. Relationship is important for us to fully obey the Lord. Philippians 2:14 says, ***For it is God who is at work on you both to will and work for His good pleasure.*** It is the Holy Spirit that gives us even the desire to live a holy life; the only effort we need to put in is to say "yes."

**APPLICATION:**

Patiently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage's lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

	<p>Why do you obey God? In what part of your life are you still struggling to obey God? What is the cause of your struggle?</p>
	<p>How are you and your family obeying God? In what aspects is it easy for you and your family obey God? In what aspects is it difficult for your family to obey?</p>
	<p>Share with your discipleship group the things you are struggling with in order to obey God. How can your group help you?</p>
	<p>What is God calling you to do today? Is He telling you to share the Gospel with someone? Is He telling you to lead a group? Is He asking you to join a ministry? How does God want to use you to be a blessing to others?</p>