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## A Sermon for Students – Matt 21:28-32

**Introduction** – As the title indicates, I am addressing the congregation this morning with students primarily in mind. Please remember, however, that we are all “disciples,” or students of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Good Teacher and so we are to look to Him as we consider the vocation of education.

**What Obedience Looks Like** (Matt 21:28-32) – In Eph 6:1, children are commanded to obey their parents in the Lord. Much can be learned about obedience from the Parable of the Two Sons that Jesus tells in Matt 21.

**Two Sons** (vv28-30) – One says he will not go, but later regrets his decision and goes. The other says that he will, but he actually does not. Jesus does not only want words of obedience. He wants action (James 1:22, 2:18-24).

**The Way of Discipleship** (vv31-32) – Tax collectors and harlots were sinners, rebelling against God’s laws and hurting people. But through the ministry of John the Baptist and finally, Christ, many were “regretting” their decision and repenting, coming to Jesus. On the other hand, religious leaders “looked” like they were followers of God, but they refused to believe and follow Jesus. They were able to put up a good show, like many Christian students today – for a time.

**Biblical Obedience** – We are not interested in raising children who only have an external appearance of obedience. Biblical obedience is –

**Heart Obedience** (Deut 6:4-5) – God not only wants us to obey, but to love Him in that obedience with all of our heart. And that obedience begins with ultimate loyalty to only One God.

**Obedience without Delay** – This is another form of saying “yes,” and then not doing what you said you would do. Delayed obedience is disobedience.

**Obedience without Complaint** (Phil 2:14-16) – God wants us to obey Him with an attitude of rejoicing that flows from trust in the One who has authority over us. Disgruntled obedience is disobedience.

**Obedience without Disrespect** (Eph 6:1-3) – Not only are children to obey their parents, but to honor their parents, showing them respect in all situations and conversations (and there is a promise for those who do). Disrespectful obedience is disobedience.

**The Vocation of a Child/Student** – We all come into this world needing to learn a lot. Our primary vocation as children and students is to “*get wisdom*” (Prov 4:5,7, 16:16, 19:8). And of course, “*the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*” (Prov 9:10). This means that all of our education begins here, in the worship of God with His people, where we are instructed to take captive every thought unto Christ (2 Cor 10:4-5). This includes every thought out there in the world coming in to us, and every thought coming from within ourselves as well. Given the nature of God’s sovereignty over all things, there is no such thing as “bare facts.”

**The Temptations of the “Second Son”** – What is it that causes a child to say “yes,” externally and then turn around and not do what he is told? What causes a student to avoid giving himself to his studies?

**Laziness** (Prov 24:30-34) – Learn this proverb: “*A little sleep, a little slumber...*” We are a culture given to laziness and amusing ourselves to death.

**Excuses** (Prov 22:13) – There is always an excuse to be found for not getting our work done. We all need to learn to repent of our excuse-making.

**Lying/Cheating** (Prov 11:1) – There is a way to look like you are obeying, but you are in fact not obeying, you are cheating and making it look like you are. God calls this kind of thing an abomination.

**“Too Cool” Attitude** (Is 3:16-26, 1 John 2:15-17) – With older children/students, one attitude to keep in check is the one which teaches how important it is to be like the world, or the girls at the mall, or the boys hanging out at the theatres. Paris, New York, and LA are all in rebellion to God, and so as they push out new fashions and “lifestyle choices,” they will be marinated in that rebellion, pushing the envelope at every opportunity.

**Self-Worship** – What we are to strive for is to “*take every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*” not to ourselves. For He is God and we are not. Once humbled to this state, God is quick to exalt those who are His, to grant them wisdom, understanding, and contentment.

**The Victory of the “First Son”** – Like the first son, we often first react to what we have been told to do (by our heavenly Father, our earthly father, our teacher, etc) with, “yuk,” “no way,” or “I do not want to...” Do not despair; this is a normal struggle for us sinners. However...

**Dealing with the War Within** (Gal 5:16-17) – The struggles to obey, to give oneself to seeking wisdom and then to applying that in every area of life is a work or warfare within one's own soul. It always will be that way in this life. This is why we are called to train up our children from the beginning in the Lord. Obedience can only be manifested by grace through faith.

**All of Grace** (Eph 2:8-10) – No one will be a good disciple-student, all the way down to the heart level, unless God grants repentance and faith. God has called you to these things – you know that. He has called you to them and prepared them for you. If you adorn your life only with external standards, it is only a matter of time until God reveals the matter. Have you submitted to Christ in all things? He is merciful to thousands (of generations) to those who love Him and keep His commandments.

*Dave Hatcher – September 3, 2006*