

To Obey or Not to Obey?

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1

**Lesson 9****Focus:**

God's wisdom can help us deal with those in authority.

Lesson 9**Bible Basis:**

Daniel 1:8-17

Lesson 9**Memory Verse:**

Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor.

—Proverbs 15:33

Students will discuss how to deal with the authority figures in their lives.

Materials:

- Internet access

As students join your group time, ask students to call out all of the laws they can think of. Some examples might be: don't steal, don't murder, don't commit fraud, etc.

We shared some good examples of laws and rules. There are also some pretty crazy laws in place. Listen as I read examples of real-life laws and see if you can guess which state the law is from. Read each law and see if students can guess the state listed in parentheses:

No one can feed garbage to pigs without first obtaining a permit. (Arizona)

A pinball machine can't give away more than 25 free games to a player who keeps winning. (Arkansas)

Those engaged in llama-related activities, such as riding, training, or goofing around at a county fair, are responsible for any personal injuries they suffer. (Georgia)

Billboards have no place in paradise. They're outlawed in the state with few exceptions, including notices from public offices and signs posted where goods are sold. (Hawaii)

Any contest in which participants try to capture a greased or oiled pig is illegal. (Minnesota)

There are lots of good laws in place that help people stay safe and live in order. Life without laws would be chaos!

➤ **What are some rules you have to follow at home, in school, or at extracurricular activities?** (Answers will vary. Students may mention things such as, "no using phones at the dinner table," "no talking to your neighbor during class," or, "treat everyone else with respect.")

➤ **How many of you have ever been in trouble for breaking a rule?** Have a show of hands. Students don't have to share why they were in trouble; that isn't the point of asking them. The show of hands is to demonstrate to the group that all of us struggle to obey authority figures at one time or another. Mention that it's very likely that all of us have been in trouble at some point.

Mention that there are varying degrees of hierarchy within authority figures. Some may be respected or feared more than others, but all authority figures need to be listened to, obeyed, feared, and respected.

➤ **Why is it important to respect those in authority over us and the laws that are put in motion for our protection?** (Answers will vary. Invite discussion.)

Although some of our earlier examples were silly, there are consequences to breaking rules and not listening to authorities. We may think that the rules created by authorities over us aren't important or are not in our best interest to obey. Today's lesson begs to differ and gives us reasons why God's wisdom helps us deal with those in authority.

Crazy laws source: <https://www.businessinsider.com/weird-state-laws-across-america-2018-1#arizona-no-one-can-feed-garbage-to-pigs-without-first-obtaining-a-permit-3>

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

To Obey or Not to Obey?

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STEP 4 

Lesson 9**Focus:**

God's wisdom can help us deal with those in authority.

Lesson 9**Bible Basis:**

Daniel 1:8-17

Lesson 9**Memory Verse:**

Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor.

—Proverbs 15:33

Materials:

- Whiteboard and marker (or screen-shared document)
- Index cards (1 per student)
- Pens/pencils (1 per student)

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring index cards and pens/pencils with them to class.

Daniel and his friend knew that the rules God gave the Jewish people were what was best for them. When the king told Daniel and his friends to eat the rich food and drink the wine, they knew it was going against God's authority and best plan for them. Instead of fighting with the king or demanding their own way, Daniel and his friends respectfully disagreed and suggested a different plan, one that the king would be able to gauge as a success or failure quite simply. When Daniel and his friends looked better than the other young men on the king's diet, the king realized that Daniel and his friends were following God's wisdom.

Write today's memory verse on a board or screen-shared document where students can see it. Share: **Today's memory verse is one that can help us gain God's wisdom as Daniel did, "Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor" (Proverbs 15:33).** Hand each student an index card and pen/pencil (or invite students to have those items ready at home) and instruct them write this verse down and keep it somewhere this week where they can be reminded of its truth.

- **What do you think the verse means when it says, "humility comes before honor"?** (Answers will vary. Explain that we must not be proud if we want God's wisdom; rather, we need to fear the Lord.)

This sounds like another verse you may know, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10). Remind students of today's lesson focus: God's wisdom helps us deal with those in authority.

On the back of the index card, have students write three authority figures or people in authority over them that they struggle to obey. Let students know that they won't have to share the names of these people or explain why they have a hard time with these people in authority over them.

Being submissive to a teacher, parent, minister—even a friend's parents—isn't easy at times. God's wisdom can guide us as we navigate this sensitive area. Sometimes a person may be telling us to do something that we think is dumb or unimportant. What today's lesson about Daniel tells us is that no matter what we think of the rule or expectation, the authority of the person can be respected even if we kindly disagree with them.

It's never easy to respect a person who we may feel isn't deserving of our respect. If they're in authority over us, however, then God wants us to respect them. Let's try this week to see how we can use God's wisdom to give both God and the people in authority over us the honor they deserve.

Encourage students to read their card this week and pray for the three people they listed on the back. Follow up to see if prayer helped their students in this struggle.

If students have specific questions or are dealing with an issue of a person in authority who should not be obeyed because he or she is not conducting himself or herself in an appropriate matter, then have that discussion with them privately or direct the student to a staff member who can help. Remember that any evidence of abuse or criminal conduct students share must be reported. If you need guidance, please talk to your supervisor or church leaders.

Close in prayer.

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