

09

JEREMIAH 35:5-19

RADICAL OBEDIENCE

THIS WEEK'S **focus**

It's irritating to try to play a game with someone who doesn't follow the rules. On the other hand, we also know what it feels like when our homes or schools seem to have too many rules. But God's Word isn't meant to be an endless list of tiring to-dos. God's Word gives us life. It fills us with wisdom and gives us the truth we need to have a spectacular relationship with God and others. It shows us how to live on purpose, in the purpose for which God created us. Sadly, sometimes studying and applying God's Word falls down the list of our priorities. In today's session, Judah is rebuked by God for refusing to obey His commands. Obeying the Word of God honors Him, and it must be the top priority of our lives.



CENTRAL **truth**

Obeying God should be the top priority in our lives.



EXPLORE

scripture

JEREMIAH 35:5-19

JEREMIAH 35:5-11

5 I set jars filled with wine and some cups before the sons of the house of the Rechabites and said to them, "Drink wine!" 6 But they replied, "We do not drink wine, for Jonadab, son of our ancestor Rechab, commanded, 'You and your descendants must never drink wine. 7 You must not build a house or sow seed or plant a vineyard. Those things are not for you. Rather, you must live in tents your whole life, so you may live a long time on the soil where you stay as a resident alien.' 8 We have obeyed Jonadab, son of our ancestor

Rechab, in all he commanded us. So we haven't drunk wine our whole life — we, our wives, our sons, and our daughters. 9 We also have not built houses to live in and do not have vineyard, field, or seed. 10 But we have lived in tents and have obeyed and done everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. 11 However, when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched into the land, we said, 'Come, let's go into Jerusalem to get away from the Chaldean and Aramean armies.' So we have been living in Jerusalem."

JEREMIAH 35:12-17

12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13 "This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Go, say to the men of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem, 'Will you not accept discipline by listening to my words? — this is the LORD's declaration. 14 The words of Jonadab, son of Rechab, have been carried out. He commanded his descendants not to drink wine, and they have not drunk to this day because they have obeyed their ancestor's command. But I have spoken to you time and time again, and you have not obeyed me! 15 Time and time again I have sent you all my servants the prophets, proclaiming, "Turn, each

one from his evil way, and correct your actions. Stop following other gods to serve them. Live in the land that I gave you and your ancestors." But you did not pay attention or obey me. 16 Yes, the sons of Jonadab son of Rechab carried out their ancestor's command he gave them, but these people have not obeyed me. 17 Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I will certainly bring on Judah and on all the residents of Jerusalem all the disaster I have pronounced against them because I have spoken to them, but they have not obeyed, and I have called to them, but they did not answer.'"

JEREMIAH 35:18-19

18 But to the house of the Rechabites Jeremiah said, "This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'Because you have obeyed the command of your ancestor Jonadab and have kept all his commands and have done everything

he commanded you, 19 this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Jonadab son of Rechab will never fail to have a man to stand before me always.'"

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE JEREMIAH 33:3

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

JEREMIAH 35:5-11

DWELL

The Rechabites wouldn't compromise on what their ancestor had told them to do. To live for Christ, we too will be peculiar and different from our culture. We will be called to leave behind many things that our culture considers normal, and we will be called to embrace many things our culture considers strange. God's holiness makes Him different from all others, and His holiness in our lives will make us different and distinct in many ways. Being holy means we give certain things up, but whatever we give up can never compare to what we gain.



Why did the Rechabites refuse the wine? What does this tell us about them?



What are some "normal" things we leave behind when we follow Jesus? What are some "unusual" things we embrace when we follow Jesus?

MEMORIZE

Write Jeremiah 33:3 in a journal each day this week and read it aloud 2–3 times. If you'd like, you can decorate the margins with doodles related to the verse.

PRAY

Thank the Lord that His holiness makes you more like Him. Ask the Lord to show you what He's calling you to lay aside so you can lay hold of His calling on your life.

day 2

JEREMIAH 35:12-17

DWELL

God spoke to His people, but they refused to listen. He had tried to spare them the punishment their sin deserved, but they refused His grace and mercy. So He had no choice but to bring painful consequences into their lives for their unrepentant, sinful lifestyles. On the other hand, the Rechabites were rewarded by God. God knows we all make mistakes and sin, and He wants us to repent and come to Him for forgiveness. He wants to empower us with His grace to know Him and obey Him. His commands are always for our good and for His glory.



Why did God correct His people by sending His prophets to them (see v. 15)?



What does this passage tell us about God's desires for us and His love for us?

MEMORIZE

Write Jeremiah 33:3 on a note card and post it somewhere you'll see it regularly, or save it as the lock screen on your phone. Say it aloud 2–3 times whenever you see it.

PRAY

Thank the Father that He is good and His will for you is good. Ask Him to empower you with His Spirit to hear and obey His good plans for your life today.

day 3

JEREMIAH 35:18-19

DWELL

Things worked out quite well for the Rechabites, but not for Judah. History is filled with examples like these: imperfect people trying to honor and obey the Lord. No one does everything right. But one thing we can't find in history is stories of people who genuinely lived to honor and obey God and regretted it. You'll never regret agreeing to what He requires of you. He may ask you to give things up, but you will gain the Lord. Once you have Him—a close, intimate relationship with Him—everything else dims in comparison, like a candle versus the sun.



What do we learn about God from how He treated the Rechabites?



What was Judah supposed to learn from the Rechabites example? What can we learn?

MEMORIZE

Every time you wash your hands today, say as much of Jeremiah 33:3 aloud as you can remember.

PRAY

Thank the Father that He will always be faithful to you and take care of you. Ask Him to empower to be faithful to loving Him and obeying His Word.

day 4

JOHN 14:21-25

DWELL

In this passage, Jesus is preparing His disciples for His death, resurrection, and eventual ascension into heaven. They'd have to live without Jesus physically on the earth. How would they love Him, walk with Him, and know Him more deeply? It's pretty simple, according to Jesus: His Holy Spirit would teach them all things and remind them of His words. By the power of the Spirit, we, too, obey Christ's commands out of our love for Him. Through the Holy Spirit in our lives, we are always growing in our knowledge of the Father and the Son. We obey God to know Him and experience Him.



According to verse 21, what are we expressing to Him when we obey Him?



What should we pray for so we can obey the Lord and love Him?

MEMORIZE

Ask 2–3 people today if you can practice reciting Jeremiah 33:3 for them.

PRAY

Ask God's Holy Spirit to teach you and remind you of Christ's words today. Ask Him to fill you with God's love and empower you to obey the Lord today.

day 5

1 JOHN 5:1-4

DWELL

Over a lifetime of obeying God, John learned that God's commands are not a burden. The Greek word translated "burden" in verse 3 means something heavy that becomes a source of trouble, exhaustion, and cruelty—something that breaks you down over time.¹ The devil lies to us and tells us that obeying God is exhausting, and that sinful living is exciting. In reality, sinful living exhausts our souls and destroys our relationships. Obeying the good and loving commands of God satisfies our souls, strengthens our relationship with God and others, and gives us peace.



According to verse 3, what does it look like for us to show our love for God?



What are some ways you can follow God's commands more closely?

MEMORIZE

Write out each of the words of Jeremiah 33:3 on note cards or scraps of paper, and mix them up. See if you can put them in the correct order from memory.

PRAY

Thank the Father that His commands are not a burden, but a blessing in your life. Ask His Holy Spirit to fill you with God's love and empower you to obey Him.

¹ James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (1890), s.v. "926. Barus," Bible Hub, <https://biblehub.com/greek/926.htm>.