

Words of Obedience

by Dan Jenkins

Words of Faith and Hearts of Faith

The story Jesus told about the man who had two sons is well understood by most parents. The father in this story wanted both of his sons to go work in the vineyard, so he told both of them to immediately go to work. The first son said, “I will not,” and the second son said, “I will” ([Matt. 21:28-29](#)). The rebellious son later changed his mind and went to work in the vineyard. The second son, while saying he would obey, did not do it.



Do your actions match your words?

When Jesus asked the Jews which son did the will of his father, the answer was obvious. He wanted the Jews to see the difference in simply saying the right word and doing the right thing.

Words of obedience from the lips must become actions of obedience in life. There is a vast difference in saying, “Thy will be done on earth as it is heaven,” and then manifesting these words in one’s life. Many can so beautifully sing in the assembly, “Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way,” yet once they leave the assembly, there is little evidence of submission. God help us to use *words* of obedience and help us to *livelives* of obedience.

Words about providence from the lips must be manifested in daily lives. Ezra had gone before King Artaxerxes and been given permission to lead a second group of Jews from Babylonian captivity. When those Jews assembled, it became obvious how dangerous it would be for them because of the vast amount of gold and silver they were taking to the holy city. Should Ezra make an additional request for the king’s help in providing protection? Ezra said, “I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldier and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king saying, ‘The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsaken Him’” ([Ezra 8:22](#)).

It is not enough to sing *It is Well With My Soul*, nor simply to quote [Psalm 23](#), the Shepherd Psalm, and then for our outlook for the future to be as filled with anxiety as the ungodly. God help us to talk openly about His providence, but even more importantly, God help us to show it in our lives!

There are the words of faith about obedience and the words of faith about providence. Yet, *words* of faith must become *actions* of faith. Obviously, while there are times when faith is weak and our lives may not always openly manifest the depths of our devotion, His mercy is so abundant. May we always have hearts of devotion and not lives of rebellion toward Him. Perhaps the words of John sum it up perfectly. “My little children, let us love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” ([1 John 3:18](#)).