**Similarities of Two Opposites (SR: Gal. 5:16-25)**

Sin and obedience are as opposite to each other as night and day. Yet, despite the fact they are opposites, they have several similarities. Though opposites, they are similar.

**I. Both Are Defined By God**

A. Sin is not defined according to man’s ideas or notions, but by God’s Word.

1. In our day we see many things that once were counted to be sin by almost everyone now being approved by most people – homosexuality, abortion, etc.

2. The idea is widespread that what is sin and what is not can be decided by man. Others maintain that sin is an obsolete idea & must be forgotten.

3. Sin means missing the mark, but what mark? God says it is sin if we fail to follow His law (1Jn. 3:4). He further defines (1Jn. 5:17). If God says a thing is sin, it is sin!

B. In similar manner, obedience is defined by God.

1. If God alone defines sin, He alone can define obedience. Saul claimed to be obedient (1Sam. 15:13). In reality he was disobedient (15:14). Saul had done part of what God said.

2. Christ defines obedience as submission to His words (Jn. 12:48). The gospel alone is the power to save (Rom. 1:16). Salvation is not what man defines it to be (Jn. 8:32; Matt. 7:21).

**II. Both Affect Man’s Relationship To God**

A. Sin, as defined by God, cuts man off from God (Is. 59:1f).

1. The efforts of man to redefine sin is an effort to justify themselves. The truth is, God does not overlook sin. Sin becomes a divider between God and man.

2. Sin is not a light or laughing matter (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:20).

B. The answer is the similarity of the opposite. Obedience also affects our relationship to God.

1. Obedience to God’s word brings us into fellowship with God (Jn. 3:36). Jesus gave us the example (Heb. 5:8f). He gave a parabolic story to impress the need for obedience (Matt. 7:24f).

2. You have sinned (Rom. 3:10). You must obey God (Acts 2:40). Peter preached the word of Jesus (Acts 2:36f). Convicted sinners were told (Acts 2:38).

3. When one sins after baptism, it is obedience that causes God graciously to forgive (1Jn. 1:9).

4. Since both sin and obedience affect our relationship to God, we must decide which we will live (1Jn. 1:7).

**III. Both Require The Use Of Our Freedom Of Choice**

A. Sin is not forced upon anyone. We sin by choice just as Adam and Eve.

1. The Devil presented his allurement and lied as well (Gen. 3:4, 6). The choice of believing and following Satan led Eve to sin. Our moral lives are the result of our choice (Rom. 6:16).

2. The final choice of whether you will violate God’s law is yours. You hold the key.

B. Similarly, obedience to God cannot be forced. It is the result of each person’s will.

1. Every Christian is one who at some time, by the influence of the gospel, made a deliberate choice to obey God (Rom. 6:17). No one becomes a Christian accidentally or by physical birth.

2. All people have the power to make that choice (Rom. 10:13). You can be saved regardless of your sins if you are willing to submit in loving obedience to God’s law (Acts 22:16).

**IV. Both Work In The Same Way**

A. Sin works from the inward to the outward part of man.

1. Sin begins in man’s heart or inward man, and then is shown in actions (James 1:15). All of man’s sinful words and actions begin on the inside (Matt. 12:34f).

2. Sin is not something that strikes us uncaused. It comes from the desires, thoughts, and lusts in our hearts.

B. Just so, obedience also begins in our hearts (Ps. 119:10).

1. The heart refers to the inward workings of man’s will, emotion, and intellect (Matt. 22:37). Obedience to God is the result of a determination within us (James 1:21).

2. If you are obedient, it is because your heart desires to be (Acts 15:9).

**V. Both Have Eternal Consequences.**

A. The consequence of sin is not just for this life only. Sin has consequences eternal in nature.

1. Death is the wages paid (Rom. 6:23). This is not physical death (although that did come through sin), but rather spiritual death (Eph. 2:1).

2. The earthly consequences of sin are hardly worth considering compared to the eternal (1Thess. 1:7f). Eternal penalty is too high a cost to pay.

B. Especially since obedience is similar in that it too has eternal consequences.

1. Obedience brings eternal life (Rom. 6:23). “Life” means all that is good, lovely, and desirable (Rom. 2:7, 10). There is a glorious inheritance for those who yield their wills to God (1Pet. 1:4).

2. God’s promise is assured. Those who obey will be saved (Matt. 25:46).

Sin is desirable because it gives pleasure to selfish desires, BUT it also brings the burden of spiritual death and eternal torment. Obedience is desirable because it keeps us in God’s favor AND brings the reward of spiritual life and eternal paradise. What is your choice? Will you obey? (Acts 22:16; 2:40).