

Thirteen Steps To Becoming Obedient

By Susan Gammage ¹

There are certain steps we can take on our path towards obedience:

1. Enter into a covenant with God:
He must enter into a covenant with his Lord in order that he shall obey the divine commands. ('Abdu'l-Bahá: Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 163)

2. Fear God:
... lacking the fear of God an infinity of odious and abominable actions will spring up, and sentiments will be uttered that transgress all bounds.
(Bahá'u'lláh, Lights of Guidance, p. 236, #786)

3. Mention God's name day and night:
Fear thou God, thy Lord, and make mention of His Name in the day-time and at eventide. (Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 160)

Well is it with them who obey him, and call him to remembrance. (the Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 79)

4. Don't follow the faithless:
Follow not the promptings of the faithless, lest thou be reckoned among the exponents of idle fancies. Faithfully obey the Primal Point Who is the Lord Himself, and be of the righteous. (Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 160)

5. Don't follow the ungodly or those who are also committing sins:
Obey ye My commandments, and follow not the ungodly, they who have been reckoned as sinners in God's Holy Tablet. (Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 43)

6. Make an effort so God can guide you:
Whosoever he hath fulfilled the conditions implied in the verse: "Whoso maketh efforts for Us," he shall enjoy the blessings conferred by the words: "In Our Way shall We assuredly guide him." (Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 266-267)

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7. Guard yourself, defend your Faith and Oppose your passions (desires, hungers, cravings, lusts, urges, rage, fury, outbursts, obsessions, crazes):
Whoso among the learned guardeth his self, defendeth his faith, opposeth his desires, and obeyeth his Lord's command, it is incumbent upon the generality of the people to pattern themselves after him. (Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 118, #1.232)
8. Pattern yourself after 'Abdu'l-Bahá
... he must guard himself, defend his faith, oppose his passions and obey the commandments of his Lord. It is then the duty of the people to pattern themselves after him. ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 34)
9. Have faith:
It is often difficult for us to do things because they are so very different from what we are used to, not because the thing itself is particularly difficult. With you, and indeed most Bahá'ís, who are now, as adults, accepting this glorious Faith, no doubt some of the ordinances, like fasting and daily prayer, are hard to understand and obey at first. But we must always think that these things are given to all men for a thousand years to come For Bahá'í children who see these things practiced in the home, they will be as natural and necessary a thing as going to church on Sunday was to the more pious generation of Christians. Bahá'u'lláh would not have given us these things if they would not greatly benefit us, and, like children who are sensible enough to realize their father is wise and does what is good for them, we must accept to obey these ordinances even though at first we may not see any need for them. As we obey them we will gradually come to see in ourselves the benefits they confer. (Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, pp. 342-343, #1150)
10. Let all your actions conform to His laws:
Through the power of faith, obey ye the teachings of God, and let all your actions conform to His laws. (Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 35)
11. Sacrifice your personality:

They have to sacrifice their personalities, to a certain extent ... (Shoghi Effendi: Lights of Guidance, p. 83, #291)

...when He desired to impress a person with the necessity of obeying the Teachings and rectifying his life, He never said: You must do thus and so, be self-sacrificing, see no fault in others, and so on -- He always said: We must... (Marzieh Gail, Dawn Over Mount Hira, p. 200)

12. Know that no matter how difficult it might seem, the solution is within your power

Certainly the problem confronting you is a difficult one. However, its solution lies within your power ... (Universal House of Justice, Lights of Guidance, p. 366, #1227)

13. Use doctors, pray and meditate and serve the Faith and your community:

You can be confident that with the help of doctors, by prayer and meditation, by self-abnegation and by giving as much time as possible to serving the Cause in your community you can eventually succeed in overcoming your problem. (Universal House of Justice, Lights of Guidance, p. 366, #1227)