



## More Than Obedience

Judges 2:1-5(NLT): "The angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said to the Israelites, 'I brought you out of Egypt into this land that I swore to give your ancestors, and I said I would never break my covenant with you. For your part, you were not to make any covenants with the people living in this land; instead, you were to destroy their altars. But you disobeyed my command. Why did you do this? So now I declare that I will no longer drive out the people living in your land. They will be thorns in your sides, and their gods will be a constant temptation to you.' When the angel of the Lord finished speaking to all the Israelites, the people wept loudly. So they called the place Bokim (which means "weeping"), and they offered sacrifices there to the Lord."

Judges 2:16-20(NLT): "Then the Lord raised up judges (shofetim — "rescuers," "deliverers") to rescue the Israelites from their attackers. Yet Israel did not listen to the judges but prostituted themselves by worshiping other gods. How quickly they turned away from the path of their ancestors, who had walked in obedience to the Lord's commands. Whenever the Lord raised up a judge over Israel, he was with that judge and rescued the people from their enemies throughout the judge's lifetime. For the Lord took pity on his people, who were burdened by oppression and suffering. But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways, behaving worse than those who had lived before them. They went after other gods, serving and worshiping them. And they refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways. So the Lord burned with anger against Israel."

Deuteronomy 28:1, 15(NIV): "If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands... the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth... However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees... all these curses will come on you and overtake you."

There is NO word in Hebrew for Obedience

Obedience is not what is coming to your rescue from your rut

"Shema" = More Than Hearing (or Obeying)

- Listen carefully — "Incline your ear to wisdom..." (Proverbs 2:2)
- Reflect deeply — "Meditate on it day and night." (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2)
- Respond wisely — "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Matthew 7:24)

"You don't stop smoking by fighting the urge. You stop by paying attention to what you're doing." Dr. Judson Brewer

"The truth is, we are being robbed of our ability to think deeply, reflect, and connect meaningfully—and that loss is making us more anxious, more irritable, and more disconnected from ourselves."  
— Johann Hari

Judson Brewer, addiction psychiatrist: "Mindful attention—paying close, curious, non-judgmental awareness to what you're doing—interrupts automatic habits and weakens their grip."

Romans 12:2(NIV): Mindfulness, not mindlessness, is what transforms us. "...be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Bessel van der Kolk: "The first step to healing trauma is noticing what's going on inside you."

Obedience rooted in fear, pressure, or external rewards doesn't change us. It may work short-term, but it doesn't form lasting identity.

Proverbs 25:2(NIV): Wisdom isn't on the surface- "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter"

- The Bible often says the opposite of what it first looks like.
- Paradox slows us down so we listen, reflect, and converse.
- Deeper truth emerges only through meditation (Psalm 1:2).

The Bible doesn't contradict itself to confuse you. It "trips you up" on purpose — to slow you down, so you'll shema.

### **Don't Marry a Canaanite**

Exodus 34:15, 16(CEB): "Don't make a covenant with those who live in the land.... Then you might go and choose their daughters as wives for your sons."

Deuteronomy 7:1,3(NIV): "When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you... Do not intermarry with them."

### **Don't Marry a Moabite**

Deuteronomy 23:3(NIV): "No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord."

Ruth 4:11(NIV): "Then the elders and all the people standing in the gate replied, 'We are witnesses! May the Lord make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, from whom all the nation of Israel descended!'"

Genesis 38:26(NIV): "She(Tamar the Canaanite) is more righteous than I"

Matthew 1:1,3,5(NIV): This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah... Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar(the Canaanite)... Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab(the Canaanite) Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth(the Moabite)."

### **This Is a Paradox — by Design**

- A paradox isn't a mistake.
- It's a literary strategy that slows us down to reflect.
- Definition: A paradox is truth hidden inside tension.
- This is the essence of Shema — listening, reflecting, responding.

Practical Call to Action: The 2-Minute Shema

Start a new habit: once a day, pause before you react.

Ask yourself:

"What am I really doing right now? And why?"

Use it to...

- Pause before the snack or the scroll
- Pause before the reactive word slips out
- Pause before spending, escaping, or avoiding

This isn't a guilt move. It's a growth move. "You don't stop smoking by fighting the urge. You stop by paying attention to what you're doing." — Judson Brewer

*All scriptures referenced are from the New International Version (NIV) translation of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.*