

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

A Life-Group guide for sermon discussion, personal reflection, and next steps



GUEST PREACHER | ALMOST OBEDIENCE | ALLISON CARVER | OCTOBER 4, 2026

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

As disciples, we're called not just to be informed but to be transformed into people who look more like Jesus-in our homes, our workplaces, and our communities. This guide helps you apply what we're learning at New Life Church to your weekly rhythms. Use it to engage in daily Bible reading, have meaningful conversations with your group, and take clear next steps in following Jesus.

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Allison Carver warned against **almost obedience** - obeying just enough to feel faithful while still editing God's command to fit our preferences. In 1 Samuel 15, Saul technically obeyed, but he spared what appealed to him and justified the rest.

The message showed that spiritual stagnation is often not caused by obvious rebellion, but by **obedience with conditions**. God invites us to examine what drives our decisions, stop hiding behind explanations, and move from delayed surrender to wholehearted trust.

Because of Jesus, almost obedience does not have to be our final story. Through repentance, God meets us with mercy and calls us deeper into the freedom, intimacy, and growth that come through full obedience.

DISCERN

HONOR OR APPEAL?

Ask what truly motivates your yes.

DROP EXCUSES

YES, LORD

Stop editing what God has made clear.

RETURN

REPENT AND TRUST

Mercy invites you back into surrender.

RESOURCES

- [Sunday's Sermon](#)
- [Table Talk Podcast](#)
- [Download the New Life Church app](#)

KEY SCRIPTURE

"Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams."

1 SAMUEL 15:22

GROUP DISCUSSION

Use these questions to move from almost obedience to wholehearted surrender.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS SEE THE PATTERN

- **1 Samuel 15:7-9** shows Saul obeying most of what God said while still keeping what appealed to him. Where have you seen "almost obedience" show up in your own life?
- **1 Samuel 15:13-15** reveals how easy it is to believe we have obeyed when we have actually edited the command. Why is this kind of compromise so deceptive?

CHECK THE HEART

- **James 1:14-15** says desire can drag us away. What usually competes for your obedience - fear, comfort, control, approval, security, or something else?
- Allison asked, "Am I choosing this because it honors God or because it appeals to me?" How could that question help you discern your next step this week?

DROP THE EXCUSES

- **1 Samuel 15:20-21** shows Saul explaining himself instead of simply saying yes. What excuses do believers often use when God has already made something clear?
- **Proverbs 21:2** says the Lord examines the heart. Why is self-justification so dangerous in our walk with Christ?

RETURN TO SURRENDER

- **1 Samuel 15:22-23** reminds us that obedience matters more than religious activity. What does it look like to obey God fully instead of trying to impress Him with sacrifice?
- Allison emphasized that in Jesus, stagnation is not the same as disqualification. How does repentance become a hopeful way back when you realize you have been resisting God?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week identify **one area** where you have been giving God almost obedience. To **Know God**, ask Him daily to search your heart. To **Find Freedom**, name the fear, desire, or excuse behind your resistance. To **Discover Purpose**, take one clear step of full obedience. To **Make a Difference**, tell a trusted friend or group member what your yes to God will be and invite accountability.

PRAYER GUIDE

Father, search our hearts and reveal every place where we have offered almost obedience instead of full surrender. Give us courage to trust Your ways above our own logic, to repent quickly, and to obey You fully with joy. Through Jesus, lead us deeper in freedom and intimacy with You. Amen.

CLOSING THOUGHT

"Obedience is better than sacrifice..." - 1 Samuel 15:22

God is not looking for a polished explanation - He is looking for a surrendered heart. Partial compliance may look close to obedience on the outside, but wholehearted trust is what moves us forward with Him. The good news is that through Jesus, every honest act of repentance becomes an invitation to begin again.