

# CHRISTMAS WAS JUST THE BEGINNING

**Focus** To walk in the fullness of what Jesus made available to us through His obedient life and death on the cross, we must be obedient to God.

**Open** Do you make “resolutions” at the beginning of each year? Why or why not?

**Read** Christmas is a celebration of Jesus’ birth and His obedience. Philippians 2:6–8 tells us that Jesus “*humbled Himself in obedience to God ...*” when He came to earth to die on the cross for us. Obedience means “to be under the one which you hear,” in the same way a person under authority listens to and carries out the orders of his superior. For us to experience the full blessing and protection of God, we must adopt the same spirit of obedience that Jesus demonstrated.

- Talk**
1. When you first think of “submission,” what comes to your mind? Is your first response positive or negative? Why?
  2. Read John 6:38. Practically, how do we set aside our own will to embrace the will of God as Jesus did?
  3. Before now, had you ever thought about hearing God’s voice in terms of learning to *recognize* His voice? How can we learn to better recognize His voice?
  4. Deuteronomy 28:1–9 describes some of the blessings that result from a life of obedience. What might cause someone to hesitate to obey when there are so many blessings promised to those who are obedient?

**Live**

1. John 2:1–11 describes the miracle of Jesus turning the water into wine and Mary's direction to the disciples to "*do whatever He tells you.*" Describe a time when you "did whatever He told you." What happened as a result?
2. Which of the three elements of obedience (submit, hear, do whatever He tells you) do you feel most comfortable with? Which is most difficult for you? Why?
3. Is there something that you know the Lord has been asking you to do recently? Share it with a partner, and talk about what steps you will take to do it this week.

**Pray**

In partners, talk to the Lord about the act of obedience that He has been talking to you about lately. Ask Him to empower you to fully follow His will. Pray that God will help you to recognize His voice more clearly. Ask Him to break down any walls that have been built in your heart that influence you away from fully submitting to Him. Ask for His blessing to be upon you as you obey His voice.