

Obeying God vs. Pleasing People: What We Can Learn from Shiphrah and Puah

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where doing the right thing wasn't the easy thing? Maybe you felt pressure to stay quiet when you knew you should speak up. Or perhaps you struggled with making a decision because you feared how others might react. If so, you're not alone!

The Bible is full of people who faced this same struggle. One of the most inspiring examples is **Shiphrah and Puah**, two Hebrew midwives who had to choose between **obeying God or pleasing a powerful king**.

Their story is a reminder that **courageous faith is always worth it**, even when it comes with risk.

A Life-or-Death Decision

The story of **Shiphrah and Puah** takes place in **Exodus 1:15-21**. At this point in history, the Israelites were living in Egypt, but their numbers had grown so much that Pharaoh saw them as a threat.

His solution? Oppress them with hard labor. But when that didn't slow them down, he took things even further—he ordered the Hebrew midwives to **kill all newborn Israelite boys at birth**.

Can you imagine the weight of that command? These women were not powerful rulers. They had no army. They were simply midwives doing their job—until suddenly, they were faced with a **life-or-death decision**. Would they obey Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the land? Or would they honor **God, the Creator of all life**?

They chose God.

Exodus 1:17 says:

"But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live."

Despite the danger, Shiphrah and Puah refused to kill the babies. **They feared God more than they feared Pharaoh**. They understood that obeying God was more important than pleasing a king—even one who could harm them.

God Honors Those Who Obey Him

When Pharaoh realized that the baby boys were still being born, he summoned the midwives and demanded an explanation. They responded wisely, telling Pharaoh that Hebrew women were strong and gave birth before the midwives could even arrive.

And what happened next?

God blessed them for their obedience!

Exodus 1:20-21 says:

"So God dealt well with the midwives... And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families."

Their courage not only spared the lives of many Hebrew children, but God also **honored their faithfulness by blessing them with families of their own**. They risked everything to follow God, and He saw their obedience.

What This Means for Us

Most of us won't face life-or-death decisions like Shiphrah and Puah, but we will face **moments where we have to choose between obeying God and pleasing people**.

- Maybe it's standing up for your faith when others ridicule it.
- Maybe it's saying **no** to something that goes against God's Word, even if it makes you unpopular.
- Maybe it's speaking truth in love, even when it's uncomfortable.

Here's the hard truth: **following God isn't always easy. It won't always win you applause from the world**. But in the end, obeying God is always the right choice.

How to Choose Obedience Over People-Pleasing

1. **Fear God More Than People**
 - Shiphrah and Puah weren't afraid of Pharaoh—they respected and honored God more.
 - When you're tempted to please people, ask yourself: *Who am I living for?*
2. **Pray for Boldness**
 - We all feel fear at times, but courage doesn't mean being fearless—it means trusting God even when we're afraid.
 - Ask God to give you boldness in moments when it's hard to stand firm.
3. **Remember That God Sees Your Obedience**
 - Even when no one else notices, **God does**. He honored the midwives, and He honors those who follow Him today.
 - Galatians 6:9 reminds us: *"Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."*
4. **Surround Yourself with People Who Encourage Your Faith**

- Shiphrah and Puah weren't alone—they had each other!
- Find a community of believers who will encourage you to stay strong in your faith.

Reflection Questions

1. In what areas of your life do you struggle with people-pleasing?
2. How can you develop a deeper fear (respect) of God rather than worrying about what people think?
3. What is one step you can take this week to stand firm in your faith, even when it's difficult?

Final Encouragement

Shiphrah and Puah may not be the most famous women in the Bible, but their **bold obedience changed history**. They remind us that **faithfulness to God is always worth it, even when it's risky**.

So today, if you find yourself in a place where you have to choose between **pleasing people or obeying God—choose God**. He sees you, He honors your obedience, and He will bless your faithfulness.

Are you ready to trust Him fully?

I hope this encourages you! If this post spoke to you, I'd love to hear your thoughts in the comments. Have you ever struggled with choosing obedience over people-pleasing? How did God help you through it?