

*The Blessing of*  
**OBEEDIENCE**

*by Marti Starkey*

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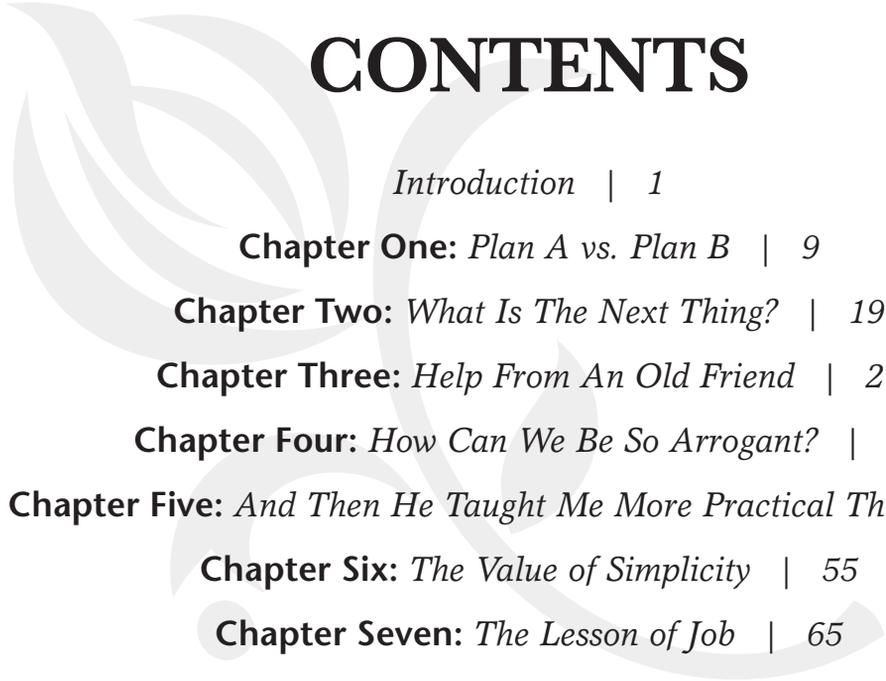
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*I dedicate this book to  
my amazing mother and father,  
Veda and Walt Taylor.*

*Your love for God and love for each other  
were a guiding light for me.*



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A large, light gray, stylized graphic of a leaf or plant branch is positioned on the left side of the page. It features several curved, overlapping leaf shapes and a central stem-like element that curves downwards and to the right. The graphic is semi-transparent and serves as a background element for the title.

# **INTRODUCTION**



**O** **N THIS DAY**, I am starting to write this book on obedience, a book I have felt led to write for more than two decades. I write, not because I have all of the answers on obedience nor because I have always obeyed (neither are hardly the case), but because I believe there is an essence of living wound around the complexities of obedience. The knowledge I do have on obedience has grown from my own, at times, difficult journey of faith. My understanding of obedience has grown and changed as God has allowed my faith to be tested. It is now my belief that obedience, in and of itself, is a blessing, and perhaps, along with peace, is what God intends when He talks about blessing our lives.

My journey of faith started when I was just five years old. My parents had been such an inspiration to me even at that young age. It was Christmas Eve, and as was common in the tiny apartment where my mom, my dad, my sister and I lived, many good and deep conversations took place in our little bathroom. (We, of course, only had one bathroom for our family – a concept that seems unfamiliar to our

own children and many families of our day.) My mother was using the toilet (lid down, of course) as a chair because the bathroom was too small for a chair. Mom was asking me what I wanted for Christmas as I soaked in the big, old-fashioned claw-footed bathtub. I sat there for quite some time, thinking hard, and finally I told her that what I wanted most for Christmas was to have Jesus in my heart the way that she and Dad did. Although it may seem hard to believe, it was 100% true and sincere for me. From that day forward, I sought, as best I could for my age, the Lord's face to lead me and guide me. I was blessed with wonderful Sunday School teachers at our Southern Baptist church home and many good Pastors along the way who taught the Truth and were very rooted in the Bible. We even had some women who were willing to teach a Bible Study, amidst pizza and NuGrape soda, in their home to our Sunday School class of girls each week during middle school. As I remember it, those were fertile times of growth in my spiritual life.

When high school came around, I was as interested in having fun as anyone. Our home was always the place for the parties with our trampoline, huge rope swing and massive backyard, complete with a dance porch. It did not hurt anything that my mom was a great cook and often brought food out to everyone. During that time,

I joined an organization called Young Life, and I felt the Lord drawing me closer to Himself. One summer after my sophomore year, I went to Colorado on a Young Life work crew. Each day, despite the ten or so hours of work as a waitress at the camp, I would go up high in the mountains for at least an hour alone with the Lord for prayer and meditation on His Word.

As I entered college, my commitment to the Lord remained strong and unwavering. I was still as interested as ever in having fun, but I did not think that I would join a sorority (a major part of campus life at the University of Evansville). However, during the rush process, I felt led to join Chi Omega (although it seemed incongruous to where I felt the Lord was taking my life in ministry). Right away though, I decided to start a Bible Study in my sorority. With what little courage I could muster, I put a postage stamp-sized note on the sorority suite bulletin board, announcing the start of a Chi Omega Bible Study. Only two women came at first. One of them “cussed like a sailor” and was living a life of which I do not think she was too proud. The other was a sweet girl who was not sure what a life committed to God would look like.

The former young woman, Jana, committed her life to the Lord in that Bible

Study. It was amazing to me that after some time, the cursing and other habits fell off of her suddenly. It was almost as if God had taken the unattractive barnacles off of a beautiful seashell. This young woman was very popular and had many friends. She attracted people wherever she went. In the coming years, she went on to lead many young women from our sorority to an eternal and saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. She impacted people with whom I could not have ever had an audience, but I am sure that the Lord knew that. He just asked that I be faithful and obedient to what He asked me to do in putting up that little postage stamp-sized notice on the sorority bulletin board and to lead that tiny Bible Study each week.

The other young woman also committed her life to the Lord during our study. She became my best friend in college, and my mom would always say that Cindy was the best friend that anyone could ever want to have (and that was true). Cindy married the love of her life immediately after we graduated from the University of Evansville, and I stood up with her as a bridesmaid at her wedding. Her husband, Chuck, had just graduated from the Naval Academy in Annapolis, and was called to serve as a fighter jet pilot for the Navy. They moved often all over the country during the next decade and a half, and Cindy and I never again lived in the same