

Don't Measure Your Righteousness by Your Blessings

I love the writings of the psalmist David because he asked some of the same questions that you and I may ask. For instance, like David, I have asked G-D about the apparent disparity between the unrighteous seemingly being blessed and the righteous (like himself) struggling with shortfalls and difficulties. We read in Psalm 73:1-5 (TLV):

“A psalm of Asaph. Surely God is good to Israel, to the pure in heart. But as for me, my feet almost slipped. My steps nearly slid out from under me. For I envied the arrogant, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pains at their death, their body is healthy. They have none of humanity's trouble, nor are they plagued like others.”

Why is it that many people who live unrighteous lives still seem to be blessed with abundance while others who seem to walk in the ways of G-D seem to struggle with limited resources? Like many other Bible believers, I used to struggle as I saw dedicated believers who were willing to lay down their lives, living so modestly, while there were others who seemed to live their spiritual lives skirting the edges of faithfulness and seemed to always have more than enough.

That was until I took a closer look at how G-D interacts with Jacob in the book of Genesis. Jacob has always been one of my favorite people in the Bible. Not because he did everything right but because he did so many things wrong. Yet even though Jacob made so many bad decisions that were clearly sinful (such as lying to his father Isaac), G-D seems to continually bless Jacob. The answer for why G-D keeps blessing Jacob, even when he is in sin, is shared with us in Genesis 28:13-15:

"Surprisingly, Adonai was standing on top of it and He said, 'I am Adonai, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your seed. Your seed will be as the dust of the land, and you will burst forth to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed—and in your seed. Behold, I am with you, and I will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land, for I will not forsake you until I have done what I promised you.'"

Before we start to dig into the verse above, we need to think about the context of this event. Jacob just lied to his father and is running away from his brother Esau, who is out to kill him for stealing his blessing. This moment in time is probably the lowest point in Jacob's spiritual life. He clearly has sinned and, at this point, is unrepentant of that sin. Yet it is at this moment in time that G-D uses a dream to speak directly to Jacob the words we read in Genesis 28:13-15. For those who have not read the rest of Jacob's story in the Bible, I encourage you to read it for yourself. It is a story of G-D's continued blessing of Jacob. When Jacob does go back home, he returns prosperous.

So, if you are like me, you have wondered, "Why?" Why would G-D bless this man who has deceived and dishonored his father and stolen from his brother?

The answer is simple. Because G-D won't break His covenant promises, even if we violate His commandments. When G-D introduces Himself to Jacob in the dream, He starts with, "I am Adonai, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac" and He ends with "...for I will not forsake you until I have done what I promised you."

You see, G-D has made covenant promises to His people and He will never break His covenant promises. This is why it is so important for us not to judge our level of righteousness by

our level of prosperity or blessings. It is possible to be deeply entrenched in sin and be surrounded by G-D's blessings and prosperity. It is imperative that we, as believers, never deceive ourselves into thinking that because G-D is still with us, and because His blessings are still flowing around us, that G-D is ignoring our sins—or worse, maybe He has changed and now accepts our sins or He doesn't see them at all.

Too often we, as believers, look at the outward blessings in people's lives and attribute those blessings to G-D's approval or proof of their rightness with G-D. But the truth is that the blessings we see are often proof of G-D's faithfulness to His covenant and not a means to measure our righteousness. Please don't measure your righteousness by your blessings.
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