

The Benefits of Obedience

Isaiah 1:1-2:22 Yesterday's devotion shared how complete God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ is. Jesus not only forgives us, but He also cleanses us, restores us and empowers us when we confess our sins to Him. The Book of Isaiah that we begin today reveals the heart of the Father so beautifully. Throughout your readings in Isaiah you will see the longing of God's heart to gather His little ones to Himself and to once again be in fellowship with them. He thirsted for fellowship with Israel, but their stiff-necked pride and rebellion separated them from the very One who always sought to do them good.

Israel was unwilling to obey God. The only thing God requires of us is a willingness to obey. He then supplies the power to obey. We will never enter into the attitude of an obedient heart unless we have faith and trust in God. Even our own relationships here tell us it is nearly impossible to obey someone in whom you have no faith or trust. The first step to obedience is trust. We must trust and rely on God more than we trust and rely on our own resources, our own strength or intellect. We must also have faith. This faith is more than just believing He exists. The kind of faith that works an obedient attitude into our hearts is the faith that believes God is a good God and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Whenever you have a thought that God is mean or uncaring or that He has forgotten and abandoned you, reject that thought immediately. Those thoughts are lies from the enemy. Satan knows that if he can get us to doubt God's goodness, then we will be vulnerable to the temptation to rebel against what God has commanded. Satan pulled this trick in the Garden of Eden, and he was successful. He put doubt into the mind of Eve by getting her to think God was withholding something good from her. In reality God was withholding the tree of the knowledge

of good and evil from her because He knew once she partook of its fruit, she was destined to sin and death. The Ten Commandments are all for our good. They were not given to withhold us from anything but that which would cause harm and destruction in our lives.

An obedient heart is a heart that is grateful for God's goodness. I have never seen a thankful rebellious person. Paul tells us in Romans 1 that one of the first things that opens the door to rebellion in our hearts is being ungrateful. Listen to Isaiah's words: "'If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword'; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it" (Isa. 1:19-20).

The benefit of obedience is to taste daily the goodness of the Lord, which leads to blessing upon blessing.

Lord, I want to obey You. Give me a willing, grateful heart always.

**READ: Isaiah 1:1-2:22; 2 Corinthians 10:1-18; Psalm 52:1-9;
Proverbs 22:26-27**