

Discipleship Series for New Believers

Lesson 9: Obedience versus Disobedience

By Kristin Bone

God has set out life giving commands in His Word. He has set before us the way of life and the way of death. If we obey His Word, all of the benefits found in the Bible will be ours. However, if we disobey God's Word, then we will suffer the consequences of choosing our own way.

Proverbs 4:13 states, "Carry out my instructions; don't forsake them. Guard them for they will lead you to a fulfilled life." This scripture shows that if we obey God, He will not rip us off and give us a life we will not enjoy. Instead, He is trying to keep things from us that will rob us of ultimate fulfillment in our lives.

Proverbs 23:17 portrays a similar theme. It says, "Don't envy sinners, but always continue to fear the Lord. For surely you have a future ahead of you; your hope will not be disappointed." The fear of the Lord restrains us from evil and causes us to obey Him. God has a good plan for our lives that He desires for us to enjoy. Some other blessings the fear of the Lord produces in our lives can be found in Proverbs 19:23. "Fear of the Lord gives life, security, and protection from harm."

Two other blessings of obedience are found in Proverbs 16:20. This scripture says, "He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he." Those who obey the Word will have their lives filled with the goodness of God. Sometimes people do not want to obey God because they believe God is withholding something good from them which they desire. However, this scripture shows that obedience leads to finding good in your life. It does not lead away from good things. Also, as we trust in the Lord we will have our lives filled with happiness. We do not need to go out searching for happiness apart from the Lord. Instead, as we trust in Him, He will produce happiness in our lives.

I John 5:3 clearly demonstrates, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." We will have an assurance of our love for God as we walk in obedience to Him. If we walk in disobedience, we can question our love for God, and rightfully so. But we can rest in assurance knowing we love God when we are surrendering to and obeying Him.

James 3:7 shows that we can have freedom from Satan when we walk in obedience to His commandments. We will have an assurance of our love for God as we walk in obedience to the Lord. As we continue to stand against the devil, he will have to depart from us. He will not have a foothold to gain access into our lives. We will also be walking in the authority the Lord bestowed on us over Satan. This principle is seen in the scripture which states, "Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

There are many other blessings of obedience found in the Bible. However, the last one I am going to mention is being free from our own works or will and simply resting in God. This

promise is found in Hebrews 4:6-9, which says “Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those whom it was first promised did not enter because of disobedience...There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself ceased from his works as God did from His.” The children of Israel never entered into this rest because they did not believe God and obey Him. But God promises to bring us into His promised land which is the perfect will of God for our lives. If we continue to obey Him, then we will walk out His perfect will for our lives. But unbelief and disobedience will take us from God’s perfect will into His permissive will. In God’s permissive will we are being dictated by our own will and not God’s will. In His perfect will we rest in God’s will for our lives which can only be attained through obedience to His voice.

Some people tend to believe that it is okay to disobey God, and they believe they can get away with sinning without experiencing the consequences. However, the Bible paints an entirely different picture and shows that there are consequences to disobedience. Disobedience occurs when you choose to follow your own will over what God tells you. This can include not doing something He tells you to do, or doing something He tells you not to do. Consequences to disobedience always occur; therefore, the Lord wants us to obey Him because He is trying to protect us from these consequences.

Proverbs 1:30-33 illustrates perfectly some consequences of disobedience. It is not a harmless way. The verses say, “For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the Lord. They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them. That is why they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way. They must experience the full terror of the path they have chosen. For they are simpletons who turn away from me to death. They are fools, and their own complacency will destroy them. But all who listen to me will live in peace and safety, unafraid of harm.” If we choose to live our lives our own way, we are not going to have more fun than anyone who obeyed God. Instead, our lives will be filled with bitter fruit and terror which the Lord tried to spare us from, but we chose not to heed His warning.

Proverbs 10:24 contrasts what happens to the obedient and the disobedient. It states, “The fears of the wicked will all come true; so will the hopes of the godly.” The wicked are those who do not obey the Lord. People have so many fears in their hearts. There are fears of dying, fear of rejection, fear of being alone, fear of becoming ill, and fear of losing all you have, just to name a few. People have so many fears, and the Word of God says if you do not obey Him, then all your fears will come to pass. However, this does not happen in the life of one who obeys Him. In the life of someone who is obedient, their hopes come true and not their fears.

Proverbs 28:9 shows that “the prayers of a person who ignores the law are despised.” If we are disobedient to the Lord, then we can pray all we want to, but it will be in vain. God answers the prayers of the humble, broken, and contrite in heart. He does not answer the prayers of the one who will not obey Him. Not only does He not answer these prayers, but it is even taken farther in the Word and states that He despises the prayer of these people.

Proverbs 19:3 shows that being disobedient can destroy the life of one who practices disobedience, and it can cause you to become bitter towards the Lord. When we walk in our own ways, we experience the consequences of our disobedience. There are often painful things we

have to go through and deep disappointments. Oftentimes, then people turn around and blame the Lord for these bad experiences that occurred in their lives forgetting that they are the natural results of our own decisions. This bitterness and resentment can cause one to turn from Him and go farther and farther away from Him. The farther people go from the Lord, the more they will continue to experience the bitter fruit of their own choices. The scripture actually says, "People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then they are angry at the Lord."

There are many other consequences to disobedience, but the last one I want to mention is never entering into the rest of the perfect will of God that He has for us. Hebrews 3:18-19 shows that disobedience robs us of fulfilling the perfect will of God for our lives. While we never regret obeying God, we will forever regret the times we choose to disobey Him. The Bible says, "And to those did He swear that they could not enter in because of unbelief." The children of Israel did not obey God and did not come to the promised land right away because they did not believe God cared for them. They could not believe His plan for them was better than what they were craving, and so they settled and disobeyed the Lord. The Lord can reveal to us something we need to avoid, and we can disobey Him and settle for less than God's best for our lives. If we do this, the consequences are cheating ourselves out of completing God's perfect will in our lives.

Obedience truly is the way to come closer to the Lord. It does not matter how much you pray, if you are not fully yielding to Him. You will not come any deeper into the knowledge of Christ. However, as you deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Him, God will reveal to you a new depth of Himself to you. The only way to attain this deeper knowledge is through taking up your cross. An obedient and yielded vessel will experience the depths of Christ. This is what God has been revealing to me recently in my own life.