

Articles and Sermons :: Obedience & Suffering-Part Of Our Syllabus In Spiritual Education -poonen

Obedience & Suffering-Part Of Our Syllabus In Spiritual Education -poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/8/2 3:3

Obedience & Suffering-Part Of Our Syllabus In Spiritual Education

by Zac Poonen

God has always required obedience from man. Under the old covenant, the Israelites were given commandments to obey. But they discovered that they could not keep God's laws perfectly. Under the new covenant, God promises to write His laws in our hearts and minds so that we will not only obey Him but love to obey Him. God's promise is: "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." (Ezek. 36: 27) It is only through obeying His commandments that we can have fellowship with God.

Obedience however is something that many believers have not understood. Most believers have so misunderstood 'grace' that they consider obedience to be an Old Covenant requirement. God's commandments, as a result, are considered to be a heavy burden. This is a Satanic deception. It is the result of an ignorance of God's love. All of God's commandments are for our good and are meant to set us free. They all originate in the heart of a God Who loves us perfectly. Moses says (concerning God giving His laws to Israel at Sinai), "At God's right hand there was a fiery law for His people - indeed (this proves that) He loves His people" (Deut.33:2,3 - margin). The fact that God gives us His laws is a proof of His intense love for us.

Some of God's commandments may require self-denial on our part. But in the long run we will discover that they are for our very best. A father doesn't give commands to his children to burden them or harm them - but only to help them. This is how we need to see the commands that God gives us too. To have faith is to believe in a God Who is perfect in love. When we have such faith, we will delight to do God's commandments, at any cost. Here lies the reason for so much of our defeat. The Devil has convinced people that God's commandments are either unnecessary, or a burden. If we don't understand why God calls us to do something, that only proves our own immaturity. One day, when we are a little more mature, we will understand. When children are compelled to go to school, they may not understand why their parents won't allow them to stay at home and play. They may think their parents are being very hard towards them. But it is love that makes those parents compel their children to get an education. Like those little children, we too don't often understand God's ways. But if we believed in His love, we would obey all His Word and submit to all His dealings, without any question. Consider the matter of suffering. Why does a God of love allow us to go through suffering? That's because suffering is a part of the syllabus in our spiritual education. It is through suffering that God leads us on to maturity. If you have not had much opportunity to suffer, you certainly could not have learnt much in life that has any spiritual value.

Perhaps you grumbled and complained so much the last time you had a little suffering, that God now allows you to go your own way. That is sad, when God puts you on the shelf like that. I'd rather go through suffering every day of my life than be set aside by God on a shelf. It is foolish to compare ourselves with others, when God leads us through suffering. That would be like your children wondering why they have to go to school when the poor children in the slums can play in the mud all day. All of God's dealings with us are in perfect love. He wants us to be happy - not with the superficial, frothy happiness of the world, but with that deep, everlasting happiness that comes through holiness of life. And there is just no way to be holy except through suffering. "He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness." (Heb.12: 10).

Jesus was the happiest man Who ever walked on this earth. Yet He was the One Who suffered the most. His happiness came out of doing the will of His Father - not by having an easy way through life. He knew His Father as perfect love and so He joyfully submitted to all that the Father sent His way. That was the secret of His life.

Re: Obedience & Suffering-Part Of Our Syllabus In Spiritual Education -poonen - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/8/2 20:4

Quote:

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brother greg, great article. i was reading this and thinking about the rules my wife and i give our children. it is always for their good. but like them, we don't see that with God His command to love God supremely and love others as ourselves are truly for our good. God is so awesome. thank you brother for this article.