

Psalm 119:33-48

Obedience and Delighting in God's Law

Introduction

Obedience can sometimes be difficult, but is there a way we can learn to love God's commandments?

1) The Law

- Our modern laws are different from the laws of the Old Testament. The "Torah" was given to Israel as part of their covenant relationship with God.
- As one commentator writes: "The Law was neither a wearisome burden nor simply a reference book to be consulted in time of need but a constant source of refreshment and of life, a means of communion with God."
- The psalmist wants to know the loving instruction of a Father to his children, not just a list of rules. Our obedience should be from our love and respect of God.
- The prophets looked forward to a day when God's commands came naturally to us, when the law would be "written on our hearts" (see Jeremiah 31:33-34, Deuteronomy 30).
- Jesus fulfils the law, takes away the condemnation of breaking the law and gives us the Holy Spirit to help us grow in obedience.

2) Refocus

- How can we grow in our obedience? By learning to focus our eyes on Jesus, as the hymn says: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth shall grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace."
- This psalm is a challenge for us to refocus our attention on what truly matters, to turn our eyes upon Jesus.
- There are many distractions in life, but the Bible shows us the true value of things that are not from God. Wealth is not truly valuable (see Matthew 6:19-24).
- We must also be careful that our focus isn't on things that are sinful (see Matthew 5:27-30).
- As Paul urges us to do at the end of Philippians, we should turn our lives towards true, honourable, just, pure, lovely and good things. Like a plant, we will grow towards what we face. We will change to be like what we worship.

2) The Result?

- A righteous life is good for us! God's ways are best.
- One commentator writes that "Here the law is a gracious gift of God to his people, in the knowledge and practice of which they may find **fullness of life.**"
- In verse 41, the psalmist shows how obedience to God gives him salvation from his enemies. Our salvation from sin and death is given by Christ and our works are the fruit of a redeemed life, empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- In verse 42, the psalmist shows that trusting in God's word gives us an answer to those who may mock us. God's truth is secure.
- God's ways also give us freedom from our sinful desires, in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Obedience glorifies God: we can even speak his truth before rulers.

Conclusion

How then can we gain a delight in God's commands? One, by living in relationship with God and seeing his commands in **that** context; two, by focussing our eyes on him, letting everything else fall into its proper perspective; and three, by living a godly life which glorifies him and even benefits us.

***Teach us, Lord, the way of your decrees,
that we may follow it to the end.***