

Willing and Obedient

Isa 1:19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

On the surface this looks to be such an awesome promise! However, in looking at its setting this really wasn't the case. This verse was given to the Israelites who were under the Law. The Law said, if you are willing and obedient to **all** God's laws then you will eat of the good of the land. This promise that you will eat of the good of the land is great if you are indeed willing and obedient to God all the time. If you failed in any point you were disqualified to eat of the good of the land. God gave the Law to show man that they really were not willing or obedient to Him from their heart. This was because they needed to be born again. When the commands of the Law were given instead of willingness and obedience coming out of the people's hearts, there came out rebellion and disobedience. Israel failed to receive this promise. This is seen in the fact that Israel who this promise was given to was actually thrown out of the good land and made captives in a foreign land!

The law not only focused upon one's behavior but also their desires. The tenth commandment says, "Thou shalt not covet!" ***This means you shall not even want what does not belong to you.*** This commandment actually judged the rich young ruler and legalistic Saul who became the Apostle Paul. (Luke 18:23; Romans 7:7-8) The problem people had with the Law was that the Law commanded but gave them no help in fulfilling the command.

Thank God we have been brought into a new and better covenant. It is a covenant of grace. In the covenant of grace God still expects willingness and obedience but instead of requiring all of it to come from us, God puts within us what is needed to carry out what He commands. ***In the New Covenant of grace God will never ask from you what He has not already first put within you.*** That is why the Father sent the precious Holy Spirit to reside within you! The Holy Spirit has come to impart the resources of the New Covenant in you and will work them through you for His glory. In the New Testament God still desires willingness and obedience but now He actually imparts freely to us all that we need to be both willing and obedient!

Php 2:12 And so, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only when I was with you but even more now that I am absent, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Php 2:13 For it is God who is **producing in you both the desire and the ability** to do what pleases him.

God still requires obedience from us but what is different from the Old to the New Testament is that God now is in us empowering us to obey! It is often possible to obey a command from a person or even God without being willing to do so. We might be afraid of the consequences of not obeying or we might just be doing it out a sense of obligation. This is not the kind of obedience God is looking for. Instead He is looking for whole hearted obedience!

If God is expecting us to be willing to do what pleases Him when the truth is that we are not, then we would be up the creek without a paddle! This was the case in the Old Testament and which eventually led the people of Israel to rebel. It is hard to continue to obey when you do not want to! God knows our human make up and that we have the nature of the flesh that is unwilling to desire God or submit to Him. The flesh actually desires contrary to God! (Galatians 5:17) That is why He sent the Holy Spirit within us in order to impart His very own nature into our spirits. Now from our union with Christ in our hearts God has a beach head in order to impart into us not only the ability to obey Him but also a desire to do so! What grace! God is offering to work in us both **THE DESIRE** and **THE ABILITY** to do what pleases Him. I have found myself many times just not seemingly able to do what God wanted me to do. The Apostle Paul found himself with that predicament in Romans chapter 7. However, there are other times I have found myself not wanting what God wanted me to do and instead of wanting to do his will, I wanted to do the opposite of what God He wanted. Don't be so sanctimonious! You have been there too! If you find yourself in this position right now, do not be discouraged but rejoice because God's grace has a glorious answer for you. The question you need to ask yourself is not, "Am I willing or able to do God's will?" but rather, "Am I willing to be made willing and able to do God's will?" If you honestly say that you are not willing to be made willing then God will let you have your way and allow situations to arise that will cause you to be made willing to be willing. **Your new name will be Jonah Jr.!!** However, if you are willing to be made

willing you are in a blessed position to see your salvation arise from within you. Simply tell God that you are unwilling to do what He wants you to do, but that you are willing to be willing. Do you know that this will not shock God! Hello! He already knows it already! He has been waiting for you to admit it so that He will now be able to work that willingness in you and the power to do it so that when He does do it, He gets all the glory! God desires truth in the inward parts. (Ps. 51:6) Be honest with Him. If you do not want to obey God or you do not have the ability to do what He wants you to do, then tell God that. He is waiting for you to admit it. I believe many think that we should never admit our weakness to God. We can and should admit to God our human weakness but He also wants us to admit and believe in His supernatural power and strength that is available through the Spirit of God within us! He wants you to believe in His willingness and power to deliver you! Just admitting your unwillingness and/or inability to God does not change your situation. You must ask, believe, and accept by faith that God is **now** working in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. If you are unwilling or unable to overcome in an area of your life, throw up the white flag and tell God you are unwilling or unable and that you are going to quit trying and that you will let Him give you the desire and the ability to do it. God is waiting for that grand day in your life. He is waiting to be seen as the mighty Savior in your life. Paul got to that place in His life and cried out, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death!" He got the revelation, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ my Lord!" (Romans 7:24-25) God is ready to work powerfully in you. Are you ready to let Him? If you allow Him, God will work powerfully in you to both be willing and obedient and you will enjoy the best of the land!

Prayer: God I thank you for your grace that you will never ask from me something that you do not first put within me. I admit that apart from you I cannot do anything, but in you I can do all things in and through Christ Jesus! God I am willing to be made willing. I thank you that you promised me that you are willing to cause me to be willing and obedient to you. Thank you for your amazing Grace. I believe you are working in me now giving me the desire and the ability to do what pleases you!