

Daily Devotional, April 23, 2021 Living in Obedience to God's Will

Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Deuteronomy 8:2-3 (NIV)

In this passage from Deuteronomy, Moses reminds the Israelites to obey God's commandments as they are about to enter into the Promised Land. Everything they experienced in the wilderness was meant to teach them humility and dependence through God's loving discipline. Just as a father disciplines his child, God's aim was to teach the Israelites that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from God. Our trials and hardships are not random instances of unnecessary suffering; rather they form us to have teachable hearts so that we might learn to depend on the One who is always trustworthy. They are meant to focus our attention and our worship toward God alone.

When the Israelites were wandering the desert, hungry and thirsty, God fed them with manna and water. And when poisonous snakes and scorpions came to afflict them, God protected them from harm. God put Israel through these hardships to humble and prepare them for life in the Promised Land. But unfortunately, the first generation in the wilderness doubted God's Word, tested God's patience, and did not enter into the Promised Land because of their lack of faith. Only their descendants were allowed to reap the benefits of God's promise and enter into the land "flowing with milk and honey".

However, once they had settled in comfortably, they also allowed their hearts to be led astray. The history of Israel sounds a lot like our own spiritual lives. Oftentimes, our hearts wander and chase after fleeting pleasures guided by sin and deception, seeking out our own sources of security rather than seeking out God's guidance.

How has God disciplined you through hardships and trials? In what areas is God trying to teach you humility and dependence?

May we never forget God's goodness to us. We are included, loved, and cared for by a God, who has plans not only for Israel, but also the entire world if we remain obedient to God's will and walk in God's ways. In this truth we find meaning, inspiration, and encouragement as well as a message that the world needs to hear.

Prayer: Loving God, teach me to be faithful to Your Word. Help me understand that blessing comes from knowing and trusting You alone. Lead me to live in the light of Your mercy and gracious blessings. To Your glory I pray these requests, Amen.