

Mutually Committed

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Genesis 12:1-7

Initially, God gave Abraham only one instruction ... *“leave your homeland and begin a journey by faith to a new land that I will show you.”* Immediately after giving Abraham this instruction, God made three commitments to Abraham. The first commitment was, *“I will show you a land.”* The second commitment was, *“I will make you a great nation.”* The third commitment was, *“I will make your name great.”* In other words, God was telling Abraham what He would do for him if he obeyed this one instruction. In return for Abraham’s obedience, God made three promises to him that would bless him in ways that would exceed his ability to comprehend.

Throughout the whole of Scripture, you will find that every instruction of God is followed by the promise of a reward for our faithfulness to obey that instruction. Romans 10:13 says, *“Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Jeremiah 33:3 says, *“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”* Luke 6:37-38 says, *“Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

Building on Our Commitments

God always requires us to establish our commitments to Him based on the commitments and promises that He has made to us in His Word. God has made specific promises which are only realized when we faithfully obey His instructions. When we walk in obedience, we will move into the will of God and we will be kept in the midst of God’s purposes for our lives. We must understand that the Lord’s instructions are not given as a means for Him to control us; rather, each one is given to protect us and position us to maximize our opportunity to live life to the fullest. Obeying the instructions of God will enable us to live free of guilt and free of self-condemnation over our failures. Realize, when God makes a commitment to us, He expects a commitment from us in return.

Our Obedience Impacts Others

God’s call for us to walk by faith into His will is never an isolated, or an independent transaction. Our response, or lack of response to His instructions, will *always* impact others. Absolutely no one lives the Christian life unto themselves. Consider the people listed in Genesis 12:5 who were impacted by Abraham’s obedience. Whether or not Abraham obeyed God’s instruction to him would have a profound impact on his wife, Sarah; on his nephew, Lot; and on all of his household servants. There will be repercussions if we choose not to obey God’s instructions and live our lives according to His purposes. Our disobedience will impact others in our sphere of influence. They will, more than likely, choose to follow our example and not obey God either.

This is especially true for parents. Parents who exhibit a disregard for the things of God will usually raise children who have the same disregard for God. Those who are able to climb over a parental example of disobedience to God’s Word, usually do so with great struggle.

What if Abraham had made the decision to stay in Ur? What if he had chosen to stay in Haran? Would Sarah, Lot, and his servants have ever made it to the Promised Land? Probably not! Would Sarah, Lot, and his servants escaped from the idolatry of their families? Probably not! Would Sarah, Lot, and his servants come to know the rich blessings of the Lord? Probably not! Whether we like it or not, we provide a spiritual covering for the people that are connected to us. It is true that everyone must personally respond to God's offer of salvation. It is also true that it is possible for someone to walk into the will of God regardless of the example of others. However, we can never escape the simple truth that God places each of us in positions of responsibility and influence in the lives of others. We are accountable for the examples we set for those around us.

Accepting Our Responsibility to Others

We all have a sphere of influence. It is sobering to think that we may cause others to end up missing the will of God for their lives. They will also miss the blessings of God, solely because we ignored the will of God, or because we failed to obey it all together. Let's be honest for a moment ... more likely than not, if Abraham had remained in Haran (where his father Terah was buried), he would probably have died there. Not only would he have missed the future God had planned for him, but his family would have also forfeited the promise. Not one of them would have reached the Promised Land. Not one of them would have tasted the blessings of God.

Parents, we have an awesome responsibility to our children. We must accept the fact that we provide a spiritual covering for our children. There is a very popular misconception among parents today. Tragically, many believe that their failure to follow the Lord, and their failure to provide spiritual leadership for their families, will only impact them personally. This concept couldn't be further from the truth! Our children will adopt our disciplines when it comes to attending church; reading our Bible daily; serving and trusting God; giving ourselves to prayer; and walking in obedience to the Scriptures. Our disciplines will always give evidence to our values. Jesus gave a very stern warning to anyone who would cause a little one (a child or one young in the faith) to stumble in the things of God in Mark 9:42, "*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.*" Parents, it is your responsibility to make sure your example is a Godly one!

The Ultimate Reward of Obedience

After Abraham obeyed God's instruction, God appeared to him. I believe that this is the ultimate reward for obedience ... to see God. Jesus promised in John 14:21 that He would manifest Himself to those who obey His Word, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." I'm not suggesting that as a result of our obedience to the Word of God that we will physically see Jesus in the flesh. However, I am suggesting that we will see Him at work in our lives. What greater reward can anyone receive than to see Jesus at work answering prayers and fulfilling what He promised? What a simple concept ... *Choose to obey His Word!*

**WHEN GOD MAKES A COMMITMENT HE EXPECTS A COMMITMENT IN RETURN.
WE MUST BE WILLING TO LEAVE OUR COMFORT ZONE AND WALK IN FAITH.
OUR DECISIONS WILL IMPACT THOSE IN OUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.
OUR DISCIPLINES WILL ALWAYS GIVE EVIDENCE TO OUR VALUES.
THE ULTIMATE REWARD OF OBEDIENCE ... WE WILL SEE GOD!**