



We often find it very difficult to obey. Even though we know we should do good we are still tempted to disobey God. In fact, the first and foremost sin was Adam and Eve's disobedience to the voice of the LORD in Genesis 3.

You may have asked yourself, does being good earn us additional blessings and benefits aside from feeling good about it? Does God reward us for choosing to obey Him?

We can better answer this question by recognizing that God's Word is the instruction manual for our lives. When we apply its principles, our consciences are clean and our lives function as they were designed to function. Consider it this way: a man purchases an unassembled swing set for his children. He is not the engineering type and has no experience in working with tools. But if he reads the manual and consults with people who have assembled such things before, he will be able to set up the swing set the way it was designed, and he and his children will be greatly rewarded for his trouble. If he ignores the owner's manual, however, he's inviting frustration and possibly disaster. There are built-in rewards for simply following instructions.

Psalm 1:1–4 explains it this way: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.” When we follow the way of wisdom, we reap better experiences, and those better experiences produce rewards such as material provision, relational benefits, and mental and emotional health. Those are God’s rewards for people who follow His instruction.

God does not always define reward the same way we do. When we think of God rewarding us for behaving well, we usually think of tangible, material goodies. But God has eternity in mind. The Bible and ensuing history are filled with examples of people who obeyed the Lord at great cost to themselves. Scripture’s godly men and women often did not appear to reap any earthly rewards for their obedience, yet many are listed in the Hall of Faith as people whose rewards are in heaven. Hebrews 11:39–40 summarizes: “All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us.”

None of salvation’s benefits are a reward for our performance. Forgiveness and heaven are gifts granted to us because of God’s great love. The most unworthy criminal who cries out in repentance on his deathbed will receive the same pardon and eternity in heaven as the missionary martyred on the mission field. However, Jesus does promise many different kinds of rewards in heaven for every deed done in His name on earth.

Luke 6:35 New International Version (NIV)

35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you

will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

When we walk in fellowship with Him, keeping our sins confessed and our lives free of besetting sins, we are rewarded daily with fruit from the Holy Spirit. Whatever struggles we face on earth in order to obey God's Word will be overly compensated in eternity with rewards we cannot even imagine.