

Undiscovered Blessings

Read Deuteronomy 15:1-15, 18

As we have seen, God's blessings are often dependent on our receiving them. To receive them, we must obey Him.

As God was forming the people of Israel into a holy nation - a nation to be His light to all the peoples of the earth - He laid out for them in great detail the blessings He would pour out on them if they obeyed, as well as the curses that would come if they disobeyed. Many of the laws they were called to obey concerned how they should treat each other. For example, consider these passages from Deuteronomy:

- Every third year the Israelites should use their tithe to feed the needy in their town (14:28-29).
- Every seven years creditors should release their debtors from what they owed (15:1-11). The exact details of this release are uncertain, but it is clear that creditors were to show mercy to those caught in the grip of debt.
- Jewish slave owners were to release their Hebrew slaves in the seventh year (15:12-15, 18). They were not to send these slaves away empty-handed but were to freely share their own goods with them.
- Israelites were forbidden to charge interest to their fellow Jews (23:20).
- They were to leave part of their harvest in the fields and allow the poor to gather it free (24:19-22).

The rights of individual ownership were tempered with the absolute necessity of compassion and generosity toward the needy. God continually prodded them to treat their fellow Jews like family - like brothers. He reminded them that He had been generous and compassionate toward them, delivering them when they were in helpless bondage. He had never treated them with a tight-fisted, "This is Mine!" attitude, nor had He withheld His gifts because they didn't deserve them. He now expected them to treat each other the same way.

God is still eager to bless His people in all our endeavors. He wants to lavish on us the many undiscovered blessings of love and unity. But we have to follow Him in treating His people with open hands and open heart.

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