
Words of Truth

A Stubborn Attitude Is Sinful

By: Brian A. Yeager

Some people think that being hardheaded is a good thing. Some people will actually boast about being stubborn. We hear frequent statements like this one: "I don't care what anyone thinks I am going to do what I want to do". Some people have their minds made up regardless of the illogical, sinful, stupid decisions they make.

In the Scriptures we can see stubbornness defined and dealt with by God. Consider this example: *"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them"* (Proverbs 1:20-32).

Stubbornness is difficult to deal with. A stubborn person can quickly reach a point wherein they are unreachable. You can see this in an Old Testament command, which we are no longer under (Romans 7:1-6, Ephesians 2:11-17, Colossians 2:14, and Hebrews 9:15-17), regarding dealing with a stubborn child. Notice: *"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear"* (Deuteronomy 21:18-21).

God says that stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23). Clearly, such a mindset is sinful based upon what we have already uncovered. So, what if you have a stubborn mindset? Since such a mindset is sinful that means that you are going to perish if you do not repent of it (Luke 13:3 and Romans 6:23). Since God, in times past, had children put to death for stubbornness, can't you see the hopelessness of such a mindset? Let's consider how one could leave stubbornness behind.

Repenting Of Stubbornness Starts With Inward Changes

Stubbornness is a result of not having a right heart. Consider this: *“And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God”* (Psalms 78:8). People like Rehoboam do evil because they do not prepare their hearts to seek the Lord (II Chronicles 12:13-14). On the other hand, Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments (Ezra 7:10).

When Samuel spoke to the rebellious house of Israel at one point, the record says this: *“And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines”* (I Samuel 7:3). Setting your heart in the right direction is necessary in not being stubborn (I Chronicles 22:19, Jeremiah 4:3-4, and Ezekiel 18:31). When one does not change his or her heart, the truth cannot have a converting effect on that person (Acts 7:51-59).

If The Heart Is Not Right, Stubbornness Will Be The Result

An individual who has a hardened heart will fall (Proverbs 28:14). As we've partially discussed already, let it be said again, a stubborn person that has a hardened heart can reach a point wherein there is no remedy for them (Proverbs 29:1 and Ezekiel 3:7). All that does is irritate our God (Zechariah 7:11-12). In reference to Numbers 13:21-14:39, God said this: *“And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief”* (Hebrews 3:5-19).

Conclusion

A young man just recently told me that he is a tutor in his school for struggling math students. He said he has one young boy that needs help, but refuses to learn. So, this young man says he is going to refuse to teach a person that is stubborn and does not want to learn. Listen, this young boy gets what many adults do not. A stubborn person cannot really be helped. You have to stop being stubborn to be taught. Don't be like a mule (Psalms 32:9). Learning requires a willingness to listen (Proverbs 8:33). Don't be stubborn; you'll burn for it!