

Secrets of the Abundant Life (4) The Secret of Obeying is Loving John 14:15

Introduction:

- I. In previous lessons I have endeavored to stress "Secrets of the Abundant Life" which Jesus offers to His disciples, based upon His discourse in John 15 and related passages...
 1. 📖 The secret of living is bearing fruit
 2. The secret of bearing fruit is abiding
 3. The secret of abiding is obeying

- II. But 📖 what is the secret of obeying? The subtitle makes it clear: 📖 "The Secret of Obeying is Loving God."

Body:

- I. 📖 Levels of obedience
 - A. 📖 The level of "fear"...
 1. Where we obey because we know what will happen if we do not (Ephesians 5:5-7).
 2. Now, there is certainly a place for a proper "fear of the Lord."
 - a. This can motivate us to initially turn to God (Acts 10:1-2, 34-35).
 - b. This can continue to motivate us in our service to the Lord (Philippians 2:12).
 - c. And that should certainly motivate us to repent when we have disobeyed God (Hebrews 10:26-31).
 3. The Lord would have us progress beyond fear as the only motive for obedience.
 - a. Jesus indicated that He desires our relationship to be much closer and loving (John 15:15).
 - 1) A "slave-master" relationship is based upon fear.
 - 2) A relationship based upon "friendship" is what Jesus wants
 - b. 📖 Fear, while proper in its place, can rob us of the real joy that God wants us to experience when as we obey Him.
 - 1) Motivation based solely on fear buildings walls instead of bridges.
 - 2) As John wrote: "he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18).

 - B. 📖 The level of "selfishness"...
 1. We obey because of what we know we will get in return.
 2. This attitude was manifested by Peter on one occasion (Matthew 19:27).
 3. The difference between the level of "fear" and the level of "selfishness" can be easily demonstrated in our children...
 - a. Some children will obey parents to avoid discipline (the level of fear).
 - b. Other children will obey parents to incur favor (the level of selfishness).

4. The sad truth is that 📖 many Christians never rise above these two levels of obedience.
 - a. 📖 Some obey God only because they fear the Judgment.
 - b. 📖 Others obey God only because of the promise of eternal reward.
 5. But there is yet a higher level of obedience...
- C. 📖 The level of "love"...
1. This is the highest level of obedience (Matthew 10:34ff).
 2. This is where we obey God because we love Him, and will continue to obey Him no matter what the circumstances or outcome will be.
 3. This is the level of obedience upon which Jesus wants us to do His will...
 - a. "If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15)
 - b. "If anyone loves, Me, he will keep My word..." (John 14:23a)
- D. Not only is "obeying out of love" the highest level of obedience, it is also the secret to obeying...
- II. 📖 The secret to obeying is loving
- A. God has always desired that his people obey him out of love...
1. So He wanted the nation of Israel to obey Him (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; 7:9; 10:12, 13; 11:1).
 2. And so Jesus wants His disciples to obey Him (John 14:15).
- B. The value of obedience out of love can be easily seen...
1. While we may initially obey out of fear, or out of selfishness...
 2. 📖 The key to continued and successful obedience requires that it be done out of love!
 - a. Suppose things are going so well for us that we are not mindful of God's impending judgment? We are not likely to be motivated by "fear."
 - b. Suppose things are going so well for us that we do not sense any need for things from God? - We are not likely to be motivated by "selfishness."
 3. 📖 Only when we are motivated by "love" will we be faithful in our obedience in good times as well as in bad!

Conclusion:

- I. If we desire to truly enjoy the "abundant life" that Jesus offers, then let us learn to obey Jesus out of "love"...
 1. 📖 For the more we love Him, the more we will obey Him.
 2. The more we obey Him, the more we will abide in Him.
 3. The more we abide in Him, the more we will bear fruit.
 4. And 📖 the more we bear fruit, the more we will truly experience the "abundant life!"

II. Our next lesson in this series examines the secret to loving. 📄 Can you say that you love Jesus enough to obey Him...? (John 14:15)