

“STEPS TO SPIRITUAL SUCCESS”

Big Idea . . . Part 7: Adopt the Master’s PLAN (#5)

INTRO: What are the steps to spiritual success, living an abundant life? Jesus explains in John 15. There are three steps.

Step 1: Accept the Master’s MISSION to declare His glory and to live in joy (Jn. 15:8, 11)

Step 2: Adopt the Master’s PLAN that consists of five keys:

#1 – The key to glorifying God is BEARING FRUIT. Different varieties and differing degrees (NF, SF, MF, MF). Role of God’s disciplining and pruning work.

#2 – The key to bearing fruit is ABIDING in and with Him – living in constant communion.

#3 – The key to abiding is OBEYING (Jn. 15:10, 14). Heart-obedience.

TODAY, Key #4 – The key to obeying is LOVING / TRUSTING (15:9, 10, 12; Jn. 14:15, 21, 23; 1 Jn. 2:5)

MOTIVATIONS FOR OBEDIENCE

Fear-based (have to or else) – disciplined, punished

Reward-based (to get something) - selfishness

Love-based (highest). Love evidences our salvation (Jn. 13:34-35; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 2:7; 3:11, 14; 4:10). God has always desired His people obey Him out of love (Deut. 6:4-5; 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:1). MAC quote . . . Remember the greater our love for Him the greater our obedience TO Him!

QUESTION: “How is this love-based obedience produced, perfected, and practiced?”

I. HOW IS THIS LOVE *PRODUCED*?

- A. Begins with God coming into our lives. God IS love (1 Jn. 4:7-8). God’s love is produced by His indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22)
- B. What kind of love is it?
 1. NOT eros (sensual), philos (social, friendship) but . . .
 2. IS Agape love – This was a new kind of love (1 Jn. 2:7-8). Rom. 5:8 describes it as selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional (Jn. 3:16)

II. HOW IS THIS LOVE *PERFECTED*?

John 14:15, 21, 23 . . . 1 John 2:3-6 . . . Agape love is perfected in us when we consistently strive to “keep” His commandments and Word. To “keep” is more than to obey, but to value and protect as priceless treasure. His Word and commandments are treasure (protects, guides, etc.) *The ultimate purpose of love is obedience.* God seeks obedience that is growing and maturing to become more like Christ – not about perfection, but direction. 1 Jn. 2:3 states it negatively and 1 Jn. 2:4 states it positively. Perfect obedience is not possible, but the desire must be present and when we fail, we are broken and repentant. Always driven to please the ones we truly love (Jn. 8:29).

III. HOW IS THIS LOVE *PRACTICED*?

1 Jn.2:5-6 All “in Him” seek to “abide in His love”. We have His example and *ought* to “walk as He walked” (v. 6; 4:17; 1 Pet. 2:22; Jn. 13:34-35). We live a lifestyle of love. Practically, what does that look like? We walk in: honesty (1:7), purity (3:3), righteousness (3:7), and love for others (3:7-11). We live out the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40). Notice word “ought”. We “ought” to obey and live as He lived (Heb. 5:9). He doesn’t say we will but ought to be. He is our pattern for obeying motivated by love.

CONC: The key to glorifying God is bearing fruit. The key to bearing fruit is abiding. The key to abiding is obeying. The key to obeying is loving. One more key left: The key to loving is KNOWING (next time).