

“STEPS TO SPIRITUAL SUCCESS”

Big Idea . . . Part 10: Series Summary

INTRO: I decided to close this critical series with a summary of the steps to spiritual success. Jesus offers abundant life (Jn. 10:10). Sadly, few followers experience it. Spiritual success is God’s plan for everyone. He wants us to be emotionally and spiritually healthy. This is how Jesus lived. *If we want the life of Jesus, we must choose the lifestyle of Jesus.* Most unwilling to make the commitment and sacrifice to do that. READ John 15 . . . context. There are 3 STEPS TO SPIRITUAL SUCCESS:

Step 1: ACCEPT the MASTER’S MISSION to glorify God and to experience His joy now and forever (15:8, 11). We glorify God for many *reasons* (17+). Mainly because He created everyone and everything to declare His glory. Its why Jesus came (Jn. 17:3). It’s why we exist. He will judge all who fail to do so. Many *ways* to declare His glory-salvation, aiming at it, seeking His will, living by faith, willingness to suffer, . . . and bearing fruit.

Step 2: ADOPT HIS PLAN of five progressive keys:

1. The key to glorifying God is BEARING FRUIT (15:8)

Fruitfulness is repeated theme in Scripture (more than the gifts). Doing so is mandated of every believer (v. 16). Actually, Christ produces it through us as branches when we obey the keys. There are different *varieties* of fruit (character, godliness, converts). Also differing *degrees* (NF, SF, MF, MF).

Similar to parable of the soils. Jesus highlights two ways our heavenly Father, the Vinedresser, intervenes on our lives to increase our fruitfulness (v. 2). He *disciplines* believers who bear little or no fruit so they will can bear some fruit (Heb. 12:5-11). This is usually a sin to be forsaken. It is always painful. He *prunes* us to grow from some fruit to more fruit. This is also painful – less about sin and more about priorities. Both discipline and pruning are done in love. It’s important to respond in brokenness and repentance to both.

2. **The Key to bearing fruit is ABIDING** (11 times in vv. 1-10). To abide in Him is to be constantly aware of His presence in our lives through His Spirit. Rightly responding to His disciplining and pruning work, alongside the habits of Bible study and prayer are

vital. We must believe God loves us and trust He wants the best for us.

3. The key to abiding is OBEYING (vv. 7, 10)

Love-based obedience (vs. fear or reward) leads to deeper abiding. The more we obey the deeper we will abide (Jn. 14:21, 23).

4. The key to obeying is LOVING and TRUSTING (vv. 9, 10, 12).

This love begins at salvation and grows as we let God’s Spirit love through us (Rom. 5:5). This love is new in kind. It is agape-selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional (Rom. 5:8). The more we walked in love-based obedience the greater is our love and trust for Him. (1 Jn. 2:3-6). Jesus is our pattern. If we want the life of Jesus, we must embrace the *lifestyle* of Jesus never perfect!

5. **The key to loving and trusting is KNOWING** God wants us to know Him (not just about Him) – personally and intimately. So much so, He has revealed Himself: creation, Scripture, incarnation. Knowing Him better must be our priority. It is the key to all the other keys (Phil. 3:10 AMP). This is the PLAN . . .

Step 3: ANTICIPATE HIS PROMISES

All in walk to the Garden (Chs. 15-17). Including: power in prayer, assurance of salvation and His love, fullness of joy, loving community, persecution, incredible power (HS), incomparable peace, etc.

WARNING!! Beware of the “Grape” robber, Satan. He is a liar and deceiver. He wants to steal your joy and rob God of the glory He deserves (Jn. 10:10). He whispers lies, doubts, distrust, discouragement, etc. at every opportunity to keep us from reaching greater fruitfulness.

REMINDERS!!

God can use you no matter what season you’re in.

God’s plans for you are unique and especially suited for your success. Every branch is unique.

It’s never too late to bear more fruit. Never listen to the grape robber! Tenaciously, hold on to the gift of joy. The enemy wants to point out the discipline and pruning to discourage us.

CONC: What an informative and much needed series. AMEN!