

“STEPS TO SPIRITUAL SUCCESS”

Big Idea . . . Part 9: Anticipate the Master’s PROMISES

INTRO: Spiritual success, as God defines, is possible. God wants us to experience it more than we do. Jesus explains it in John 15 in the Upper Room and enroute to the Garden with His closest followers, hours before His death. He suggests three steps to enjoying spiritual success.

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

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

1. The key to glorifying God is *bearing fruit* (v. 8)
2. The key to bearing fruit is *abiding* (vv. 4-5)
3. The key to abiding is *obeying* (vv. 7, 10)
4. The key to obeying is *loving and trusting* (vv. 9-10)
5. The key to loving and trusting God is *KNOWING Him better*

(Repeat forward and backward . . .)

Step 3: Anticipate the Master’s PROMISES

Promises matter. When fulfilled they bring confidence and trust in the promise giver and hope for the promise-receiver. ILL: Ever had someone make you a promise and not deliver? All have. How did you feel toward them? Have you done that, too? Jesus includes many promises to those who follow the steps and experience spiritual success. They are found in John 15 and the broader context through Chs. 16 & 17. Let’s examine some of the wonderful promises to anticipate when we strive to live out His PLAN to achieve His MISSION. We can see these promises as assurances, blessings, results of a fruit-bearing life. Though the steps are not easy – often requiring sacrifice, commitment, obedience, discipline, pruning, etc., the potential dividends from the investment border on the spectacular.

1. PRAYER POWER (15:7, 10, 16; 16:22-24)

Answered prayers strengthen our faith and trust. When we follow these steps, including the keys, we find ourselves more often in His will, which results in prayer power (1 Jn. 3:21-22; 5:14-15).

2. SECURITY OF SALVATION (15:8)

Bearing fruit, esp. much fruit, gives evidence of a salvation relationship (2 Pet. 1:8-11).

3. ASSURANCE OF LOVE (15:9, 10, 12)

This life leaves me assured of Jesus’ love and the Father’s love for me. It assures me I am abiding in their love, safe and secure. We are loved and in return we can truly love others.

4. FULLNESS OF JOY (15:11; 16:22, 24)

Talked often of this in the series (v. 11). But look at 16:22, 24 – Joy is promised in the most difficult of circumstances: “your hearts will rejoice, . . . no one will take your joy from you . . . your joy may be full.” WOW!

5. LOVING COMMUNITY (15:12-17)

We are not alone in this difficult journey Others are taking these steps as well. We can love and support one another along the way.

6. PERSECUTION (15:18-25; 16:1-4; 14:15-20)

Only negative promise. Similar to Matt. 5:10-12. We shouldn’t be surprised. The world and the god of the world despise us and can react with hostility toward those who stand out – and living this life definitely stands out! 1 Pet. 4:12-16

7. INCREDIBLE POWER (15:26-27; 16:5-15)

The Holy Spirit is Jesus’ incredible gift of power to enable to live this life and be courageous in the tough times.

8. INCOMPARABLE PEACE (16:33; 14:27)

This peace comes to all “in Him”. We may be “in” a situation but we are also “in Him”! He is greater. “. . . cheer” is both courage and comfort - not in the circumstance, but in Him to get us through.

9. GOD IS GLORIFIED IN AND THROUGH OUR LIFE (15:8)

This has been the repeated theme of this series. It is our assignment, our mission.

All these promises require adopting His plan . . .

CONC: No doubt a demanding and difficult life to live. But for all who seek to do so (and when fail, humbled and repentant), God has promised so much. Our next series will even further describe the life God rewards, a perfect sequel. Next week, a recap . . .