

"SECRETS OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE" (4)

S. R. 1Jhn 4:7-18

The Secret Of Obeying Is Loving

INTRODUCTION

- A. In previous lessons we have endeavored to stress "Secrets Of The Abundant Life"(Jhn 10:10) which Jesus offers to His disciples, based upon His discourse in John 15 and related passages.
- B. The secret of living is bearing fruit; The secret of bearing fruit is Abiding; The secret of abiding is obeying
- C. But what is the secret of obeying? Our subtitle makes it clear: "The Secret Of Obeying Is Loving"

DISCUSSION:

I. CONSIDER FIRST SOME REASONS FOR OBEDIENCE

- A. Obedience out of "fear"
 - 1. Where we obey because we know what will happen if we don't Eph 5:5-7 (Dad said: "I can make you wish you had")
 - 2. There is a place for a proper "fear of the Lord"
 - a. Motivate us to initially turn to God Acts 10:1-2, 34-35
 - b. Continue to motivate us in our service to Lord Phil 2:12
 - c. Should certainly motivate us to repent when we have disobeyed God Heb 10:26-31
 - 3. Yet fear should not be only motive for obedience
 - a. Jesus indicated that He desires our relationship to be much closer and loving Jhn 15:15
 - 1) A "slave-master" relationship is based upon fear
 - 2) But a relationship based upon "friendship" is what Jesus wants Jhn 15:14
 - b. Fear, while proper in its place, can rob us of the real joy God wants us to experience when as we obey Him
 - 1) Motivation based solely on fear builds walls instead of bridges
 - 2) As John wrote: "he who fears has not been made perfect in love" 1Jhn 4:18
- B. Obedience as a result of "selfishness"
 - 1. We obey because of what we know we will get in return
 - 2. Manifested by Peter on one occasion Matt 19:27
 - 3. Difference between level of "fear" and "selfishness" can be easily demonstrated in our children
 - a. Some children obey parents to avoid discipline (fear)
 - b. Others obey parents to incur favor (selfishness)
 - 4. Many Christians never rise above these levels of obedience
 - a. Some obey God only because they fear the Judgment
 - b. Others obey only because of promise of eternal reward
 - 5. But there is yet a higher level of obedience

- C. Obedience because of "love"
 - 1. This is the highest level of obedience - where we obey God because we love Him, and will continue to obey Him no matter what the circumstances or outcome will be
 - 2. This is the level of obedience upon which Jesus wants us to do His will Jhn 14:15; 14:23
 - 3. The distinction between agapao and phileo used in Jhn 21:16 is described by Trench:., "Agapan has more of judgment and deliberate choice; philein has more of attachment and peculiar personal affection.
- 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. He wanted Israel to obey Him Deut 6:4-5; 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:1
 - 2. Jesus wants His disciples to obey Him Jhn 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 it be done out of love!
 - a. Suppose things are going so well for us and we are not mindful of God's impending judgment? – Then 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"
- C. Only when we are motivated by "love" will we be faithful in our obedience in good times as well as in bad!

CONCLUSION

- A. 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!"
- B. Our next lesson, the final one in this series, will examine the secret to loving
- C. For the time being, though, can you say that you love Jesus enough to obey Him? Jhn 14:15

(adapted from an outline by Mark Copeland, to which he appended the following)

NOTE: The general idea for this series of lessons was taken from "Five Secrets Of Living", a small booklet written by Warren W. Wiersbe