

Pastor's Corner

Obedience and the Holy Spirit

February 18, 2009

Dear Friends,

Last week we looked at some passages from the Bible that tell us that the way we show our love for God is by obeying Him, and if someone says that they love Him and don't obey Him, that person is a liar. Pretty strong words, aren't they? But the Bible uses strong language when something is very important, and we find that obedience is very important to God. In His own words, "You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD." Leviticus 18:4, 5. Obey and live. Obedience is important to God.

And there's another aspect of obedience that we sometimes overlook. Did you know that a requirement for receiving the Holy Spirit is obedience to God? Now, don't get me wrong. The Holy Spirit convicts and strives with everyone to turn to God, even the disobedient and the vile. But the giving of the Holy Spirit to live in a person's life, to produce the fruit of the spirit, to empower them to witness to others, to work through them to work miracles to further the spread of the gospel, is given to obedient people.

"If you love Me, you will obey My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you." John 14:15, 16. (Notice carefully the sequence: If we love Him, we will obey Him, and He will give the Holy Spirit.)

"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." Acts 5:32.



And it makes sense. If God were to fill a person with the Holy Spirit who is a thief, and he preaches with power and conviction, working miracles in the name of Christ, and then goes out and steals, it would send the strong message to his listeners that sin is overlooked by God; in short, that sin and breaking God's commandments are a small thing. It's the same with us in our daily lives. If I have a teen-aged son who is using cocaine, and I continue to lavish him with gifts and support him, he will be enabled to continue to hurt himself. If I have an employee who is stealing, and I continue to promote him and give him bonuses, the other employees will feel they can steal as well, and it will only promote lawlessness.

I want the Holy Spirit, don't you? I want Him to not only convict me of sin, but also to work through me to help other people to experience God and be converted. And that's why it's important to take some time to do some self examination, and ask ourselves, "Am I obedient to God?" Then pray the prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Then, as He points out things that need to change, change them with His help!

May you be richly blessed today with a deeper experience with Him!

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