

The Discipleship Wheel Illustration

Chapter Fourteen

The Obedient Disciple in Action—Part One

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Scripture Memory

John 14:21

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.

Review

- Draw The Wheel Illustration
- II Corinthians 5:17
- Galatians 2:20
- II Timothy 3:16
- Joshua 1:8
- The Word Hand
- Philippians 4:6-7
- John 15:7
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- Philippians 2:1-2
- Hebrews 10:24-25
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The Scales of Community
- Romans 1:16

Obedience: The Hallmark of Discipleship

In John 14:21 Jesus is talking to His disciples about practical discipleship. In doing so He does not discuss abstract philosophical concepts. The discussion does not begin with a “philosophy of ministry.” He does not discuss pragmatic approaches to ministry growth. The discussion does not begin with statistical analysis of ministry methods. He does not discuss mystical or emotional states of subjective experience. The discussion does not begin with exhortations to rapturous transcendent spiritual states. Rather, Jesus goes straight to the heart of discipleship, of man and man’s relationship with God – obedience. Jesus Christ defines our love for Him, not on philosophical principles, not on ministry growth strategies, not on intensity of feelings but rather by obedience. In the culture of the 21st century where pragmatic marketing collides with emotion charged, subjective, mystical experience, we find this as baffling and disconcerting in our realm of experience as the early Christians did in theirs. Yet, laid out before us is to love Jesus is to obey Jesus.

Two mistakes are often made by Christians pertaining to loving God. First, many Christians equate God’s unconditional love of them with a wrong view that since God’s love for them is without conditions, it only makes sense that their love for God is then without conditions. We live in an age where love is an unchallenged declaration. Regardless of our actions, we freely declare our love for a woman, a car or a music style. As this carries over to the church, loving God is whatever a Christiana defines, declares or assumes loving God to be. Because the Christian intensely feels it to be so, he declares it to be so. Nothing though could be further from the truth. God has a very strict definition of what it means to love Him.

The second mistake many Christians make is thinking that their love for God, instead of being a totally subjective, unconditional emotion, is rather an expression through obedience. Therefore, they come to the erroneous conclusion that since to love God they must obey Him, then for God to love them, they must obey Him. Again, nothing could be further from the truth. God’s love for us is unconditional.

The fact remains that nothing we do will make God love us more and nothing we do will make God love us less. The problem with this in terms of our day-to-day application is that we have no human reference point in terms of personal experience with which we may contextualize this great doctrinal truth of the new covenant.

There is no one in our lives—not in our families, not in the church, not at the work place or our school—who illustrates this truth in our day-to-day-experience. As much as we or others might like to, we are unable to separate our reaction and feelings towards a person and that person’s actions. Thus, for ourselves and for all those we relate to, what they do does affect our love for them. They can, indeed, cause us to love them more and can cause our love and our affections for them to cool. Yet, this is not true with God.

Man says, “We must love God to get Him to love us, and we get to decide what the expression of this love is and means.” But God loves us without reference to our actions, and He gets to decide what it means to express our love for Him in response to this great truth.

This study then is not an attempt to motivate the disciple to a life of obedience in order that God might love him more. It is too late for that; God already loves you to the infinite degree. Nothing you do will make God love you more; nothing you do will make God love you less.

Rather, this study is to equip the disciple to properly express his love for God. There are things we do that make us love God more, and there are things we do that make us love God less.

Our actions then are not a determiner of God's love for us, but rather of our love for God.

I. *He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me...*

A. *My commandments*

Whose Word is it? In the Bible the phrase "God said" occurs over 570 times; the phrase "Word of the Lord," over 250 times; and the phrase "Word of God," over 45 times. These statistics point to a clear assumption on the part of the Holy Spirit that the Bible clearly belongs to God. When God speaks of "My commandments," He is speaking of the Bible as His Word. The Bible then is not man's attempt at transmitting to man his concept of God, but rather God entrusting to man His revelation through His holy Word.

1. As you read the passages below, circle the word or phrase which denotes the "ownership" of the Bible.

Isaiah 1:10: *Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah.*

Isaiah 55:11: *So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

Hebrews 4:12: *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

I Thessalonians 2:13: *And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.*

Commandment

1785 *entole* (en-tol-ay'); from 1781; injunction, i.e. an authoritative prescription: KJV-- commandment, precept. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.)

COMMANDMENT

2. *entole* ^1785^, akin to No. 3, above, denotes, in general, "an injunction, charge, precept, commandment." It is the most frequent term and is used of moral and religious precepts, e. g., <Matt. 5:19>; it is frequent in the Gospels, especially that of John, and in his Epistles. See also, e. g., <Acts 17:15; Rom. 7:8- 13; 13:9; 1 Cor. 7:19; Eph. 2:15; Col. 4:10>. See PRECEPT. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.)

2. In the following passage circle each phrase that attributes ownership of the Word of God to God.

Psalm 119:9-16

- 9 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word.*
 10 *With all my heart I have sought Thee; do not let me wander from Thy commandments.*
 11 *Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.*
 12 *Blessed art Thou, O LORD; teach me Thy statutes.*
 13 *With my lips I have told of all the ordinances of Thy mouth.*
 14 *I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.*
 15 *I will meditate on Thy precepts, and regard Thy ways.*
 16 *I shall delight in Thy statutes; I shall not forget Thy word.*

3. Whose Word is it? When we consider the commands of the Bible, are we considering the commands of God or of man?

B. ...and keeps them...

If we love God, what will be our response to His Word?

1. As you read the passage below, record the relationship between feeling and action, between saying you love God and what you do in your daily life.
 - a. First read the passage.
 - b. Then circle the command to “love God.”
 - c. Next, underline the application the passage makes in the expression of our love for God.
 - d. Last, write out a short devotional statement below the verse.

Deuteronomy 11:1: *You shall therefore love the LORD your God, and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.*

KEEPS

5083 *tereo* (tay-reh'-o); from *teros* (a watch; perhaps akin to 2334); to guard (from loss or injury, properly, by keeping the eye upon; and thus differing from 5442, which is properly to prevent escaping; and from 2892, which implies a fortress or full military lines of apparatus), i.e. to note (a prophecy; figuratively, to fulfil a command); by implication, to detain (in custody; figuratively, to maintain); by extension, to withhold (for personal ends; figuratively, to keep unmarried); by extension, to withhold (for personal ends; figuratively, to keep unmarried): KJV--hold fast, keep (-er), (pre-, re-) serve, watch. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.)

I John 3:18: *Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*

I John 5:3: *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.*

2. If we truly love God, what will be our response to His Word?

C. Alternatives to obedience

1. **Conceptual Christianity:** One alternative to obedience is to emphasize the concepts of the Bible while neglecting the practical applications to your daily life. From the passage below, what is the result of having a great deal of knowledge without the heart for God which results in obedience?

I Corinthians 8:1: *we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.*

- a. Satan and his demons are an illustration of the fact that head knowledge alone is not enough. In fact, head knowledge that does not impact the heart simply leads to pride.
- b. From the passages below, how does Satan illustrate this truth?

Isaiah 14:12-15

12 *“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!*

13 *“But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.*

- 14 *‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’*
 15 *“Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.”*

Ezekiel 28:13-17

13 *“You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared.*

14 *“You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire.*

15 *“You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you.*

16 *“By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.*

17 *“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you.”*

James 2:19; *You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.*

I have seen this reality of conceptual Christianity when witnessing. We will begin the process by the person I am witnessing to establishing the fact that he is an agnostic or atheist. Then, as I begin to share passages on the plan of salvation, he will begin to argue with me about what the God he does not believe in would or would not do: “I don’t believe a loving God would cast anyone into hell!” he proclaims. But he does not believe in God!

It is not uncommon for Christians, as well, to argue at length about concepts when they are not applying the most basic commands of discipleship in their lives. As we seek to follow Christ as His disciples, let us make sure that the goal of our knowledge is love and not simply concepts to be argued.

2. **Christianity as a fire insurance policy:** For others Christianity is no more than a spiritual fire insurance policy. By making certain meetings and observing some holy days, they are assured of a reasonably comfortable life in the hereafter. Like a man who takes vitamins but has no intention of becoming a health food nut, so this man sees the value of a limited exposure to religion but has no intention of actually studying the Word of God with a view of submissive obedience. How does the following verse speak to this alternative to submissive obedience to God's Holy Word?

Jeremiah 7:9-10

9 *“Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal, and walk after other gods that you have not known,
10 then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’-- that you may do all these abominations?”*

3. **Christianity as a diversion:** To others Christianity is viewed as a healthy diversion to the stresses of modern society on the home, marriage and family. In a debating society or a philosophical book club filled with nice people, it is enjoyable to hear the latest thoughts and concepts as long as all points are presented and the response is left to the individual. Whether they be mental gyrations or mystical events, it is an exciting diversion to attend and to be stimulated. Though day-to-day life is left to the value system of the individual, the diversions themselves are enjoyable. How do the following verses depict this type of person?

Acts 8:9-11

9 *Now there was a certain man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city, and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great;
10 and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, “This man is what is called the Great Power of God.”
11 And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts.*

Acts 17:18-21

18 *And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. And some were saying, “What would this idle babblers wish to say?” Others, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.*

19 *And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?"*

20 *"For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; we want to know therefore what these things mean."*

21 *Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)*

I Timothy 1:3-7

3 *As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,*

4 *nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.*

5 *But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

6 *For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,*

7 *wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.*

II Timothy 2:14-17

14 *Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.*

15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*

16 *But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,*

17 *and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus.*

4. **Christianity as a reflection of our own value system:** Still others view Christianity as a reflection of their own value system. They checked around; and of all the religions being offered, Christianity fit the bill for the most part. Nevertheless, they can be heard saying in response to some commands or statements in the Bible, "Well, that is not something my God would require"

or “That is not the God I worship” or better yet, “I just don’t believe a loving God would say (do) that.”

I still have a clear memory of an event that took place during my ministry at Oklahoma State University. The University provided for the facilitation of ministers on campus through an organization called the Association of University Ministries which held monthly meetings. Each minister was routinely asked to pray at the opening of each session. At one meeting the Methodist minister assigned to the Wesleyan Student Center was asked to pray. He excitedly shared that he had just returned from a prayer workshop where each participant was asked to spend time meditating and reflecting on their unique relationship with God and His with them and then to devise their own unique prayer as a reflection of their God. He then opened with a prayer to the “Great Spirit” and continued praying, weaving into his prayer an amalgamation of spiritual terms and phrases from a number of religions with a strong emphasis on traditions from the cultures of the Native Americans which he had been studying. I sat in amazement as this minister weaved his own prayers to his own god reflecting his own values through this supposed prayer. These and many other variations reflect a God made in the image of man’s values. How do the passages below reflect the biblical response to those who desire to love God in accordance with their own value system and perspective of God as opposed to the holy Word of God?

Romans 1:21-22

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Romans 1:25: For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

D. ...he it is who loves Me...

Who gets to define what it means to love God?

LOVE

25 *agapao* (ag-ap-ah'-o); perhaps from *agan* (much) [or compare 5689]; to love (in a social or moral sense): KJV-- (be-) love (-ed). Compare 5368. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.)

LOVE (NOUN AND VERB)

A. Verbs.

1. *agapao* ^25^ and the corresponding noun *agape* (B, No. 1 below) present "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the NT. Cf, however, <Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5>.

"*Agape* and *agapao* are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, <John 17:26>; the human race, generally, <John 3:16; Rom. 5:8>, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ particularly <John 14:21>; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, <John 13:34>, and toward all men, <1 Thes. 3:12; 1 Cor. 16:14; 2 Pet. 1:7>; (c) to express the essential nature of God, <1 John 4:8>.

"Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, <1 John 4:9,10>. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, <Rom. 5:8>. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, Cf. <Deut. 7:7,8>.

"Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ, <2 Cor. 5:14; Eph. 2:4; 3:19; 5:2>; Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian, <Gal. 5:22>.

"Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, <John 14:15, 21,23; 15:10; 1 John 2:5; 5:3; 2 John 6>. Self-will, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God.

"Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, <Rom. 15:2>, and works no ill to any, <13:8-10>; love seeks opportunity to do good to `all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' <Gal. 6:10>. See further <1 Cor. 13> and <Col. 3:12-14>." (Hogg and Vine, Notes on Thessalonians, p. 105.)

In respect of *agapao* as used of God, it expresses the deep and constant "love" and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential "love" in them towards the Giver, and a practical "love" towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver. See BELOVED. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.)

1. It is a general rule of relationships that the person receiving the stimulus gets to define the stimulus. If you walk up to a friend, slap him on the back and say, "Hi!" and he cries out, "Ouch! Watch it, that hurts. I have a sunburn!" and if you reply, "Nah, that doesn't hurt; that was just a pat on the back" and repeat it, what will his response be? Does it still hurt? Does the fact that you do not think it should hurt have any bearing on whether or not it does indeed hurt?

2. I have seen the same phenomenon in marriage counseling. In the midst of counseling one spouse will make a comment to which the other visibly cringes. I ask, “When _____ said that just now, did it hurt?” To which the spouse answers in the affirmative. More often than not the marriage partner who made the comment will respond with disbelief: “Hey, I was only teasing; don’t be so sensitive” or “I was just being honest, and there is no harm in that.” But it does, indeed, hurt. Whether or not it would hurt you, you think it would hurt or you meant it to hurt does not change the fact that it does hurt.
3. In my early relationship with Eleanor both of us would do things that we would want done for us. I like surprise parties, and I like to eat at home. She likes intimate dinners and to eat out. Needless to say, neither of us were happy with the special things we planned until we started asking the question, “What would Eleanor like?” rather than, “What would I like if Eleanor were me?” and correspondingly, “What would John like?” rather than “What would John like if John were me?”
4. It is the same with God. The questions are not what we feel God would like, what would God like if we were God or what we think a loving God should like or feel. Rather, the questions are, “What has God revealed about Himself?” and “What has God defined as loving Him?”
5. If we have trouble understanding, communicating with and showing our love to a woman we live with day in and day out and if we need her to clue us in on what makes her feel loved and appreciated, what makes us think by sheer intuition and feeling we can understand, communicate with and show love to the infinite, invisible God of the universe apart from the guidance of His divine Word.
6. How do the following verses speak to this tendency to tell God what we think He feels rather than to look to His Word for guidance in this area?

Isaiah 45:9 *“Woe to the one who quarrels with his maker--an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’ Or the thing you are making say, ‘He has no hands’?”*

Romans 9:18-20

18 *So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.*

19 *You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?”*

20 *On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it?*

E. How does Jesus define His love for the Father?

Our own love for God can be guided by His perfect and Holy Son, the second member of the Trinity, who while on earth was both God and man. How does Jesus define His expression for His love of God the Father in the following passage?

John 14:31: *but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go from here.*

F. What is man's proper expression of the love of God?

From the following verses, what does it mean to love God?

John 14:15: *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*

John 14:21: *He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.*

John 14:23: *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."*

John 14:24: *He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.*

John 15:14: *You are My friends, if you do what I command you.*

- G. Many people find certain commands difficult or threatening.** They just cannot see themselves following through. What about the statement: “I love God, but I just can’t live like this any longer.”
1. **The person caught in an unhappy marriage:** “I love God, but I just can’t live like this any longer.”
 2. **The shy person:** “I love God, but I just can’t talk to people about my relationship with Christ.”
 3. **The poor person:** “I love God, but I just don’t have money to give to His work.”
 4. **The busy person:** “I love God, but I just don’t have time right now to serve in His church.”
 5. **You:** “I love God, but I just can’t _____.”
 6. If these people truly loved God, what would be their response to the command of God’s holy Word?
 7. As a campus representative at Texas A&M University I had a very gifted young man in the ministry named Bobby. Bobby had a great zeal for the Lord and threw himself wholeheartedly into every campus activity we had except for evangelism. He was sacred stiff about sharing Christ with others, not to mention knocking on the doors of total strangers.

One day Bobby was walking me back to my car, and we were talking about the importance of personal evangelism. He shared with me, “John, I love God; but I just can’t do evangelism. That is for others.”

I took him first to John 14:21 which he had long ago memorized: *He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.* Next we looked at John 14:23: *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."* Having laid this groundwork we then went to Acts 1:8: *but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*

Then I said, "Bobby, let's stop here, sit on the hood of my car and pray about this. I'll pray first, then you pray and we will just commit this problem to the Lord." Then I prayed, "Dear Lord, Bobby has something he wants to share with You. He does not believe You when You tell him that Your Holy Spirit will give him the power to share Christ. Not only that but he wants to let You know once and for all that even if You really were going to empower him through your Holy Spirit, he does not love You enough to do this and that is that."

Then I stopped and turned to Bobby, "OK, Bobby, your turn. Now you let God have it; just give it to Him right here, and don't pull any punches." Bobby looked aghast, "I can't pray that!" I responded, "Bobby, you already have, you are just being man enough now to come out and say it. You close in prayer, Bobby; then I need to take off for home." Bobby then prayed one of the sweetest most sincere prayers of love and submission to God I have heard. He went on not only to be an effective witness, but within two years he was in charge of evangelism for our campus ministry.

Years later I met Bobby as a physician. He had been through medical school, his internship and was now practicing medicine in Texas; and, yes, he was still exited and actively involved in personal evangelism.

H. What then is the driving force or our motivation in discipleship?

1. Sometimes in order to understand what something is we must first understand what it certainly is not. Each of the following is a reason some choose to love God.

First, read the wrong rationale or motivation for discipleship. Next, read the verse, circling the key words as they pertain to the rationale. Last, write why this is a wrong rationale based on the verse(s) from the Word of God.

- a. We strive to be disciples of Christ that we might be worthy to gain salvation and become a Christian.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;*

9 *not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

Titus 3:5-7

5 *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*

6 *whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

7 *that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

- b. We strive to be a disciple of Christ that we might be found worthy to keep from losing our salvation.

Romans 8:35-39

35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

36 *Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*

37 *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

38 *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,*

39 *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

John 6:37: *All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

John 10:27-29

27 *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;*

28 *and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.*

29 *My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

John 17:11: *And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

- c. We strive to be a disciple of Christ to keep God from doing bad things to us that we might not, in this life time, experience the punishment of God for our sins.

1 Peter 2:24: *and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

Hebrews 10:18-22

18 *Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.*

19 *Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,*

20 *by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,*

21 *and since we have a great priest over the house of God,*

22 *let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

I John 4:18: *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

- d. We strive to be a disciple in order to gain God's favor, to get His attention, to get God to love us, for without such a life God will not look upon us nor care about us, being repulsed by our sin.

Romans 5:6-8

6 *For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.*

7 *For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.*

8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

Ephesians 2:4-5

4 *But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*

5 *even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*

Why is this a wrong rationale based on the verse from the Word of God?

2. Correct motivation – to express our love for God. We do not love God to get Him to love us more. Rather, we obey God as an expression of our love for God. How do the following passages define what it means to love God?

John 14:21: *He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.*

John 14:23: *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."*

John 14:24: *He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.*

John 15:14: *You are My friends, if you do what I command you.*

3. Love: Talk is cheap. The expression of love as something we do rather than an amorphous subjective state is hard for us to grasp in the midst of the relativism of the 21st century. Love has been reduced to whatever man declares it to be:

"Who are you to say I do not love God?"

"That's not what loving God means to me."

"I love you; I just don't like you."

"We don't need a piece of paper to prove our love."

"I love you, but I don't make commitments; love is my guide."

"I love you, but it is time for me to move on."

"I told you I loved you when I married you, and when I stop loving you I will tell you."

Our vernacular is replete with expressions which reserve the right of love by declaration, regardless of action, both in our relationship with God, with man and in marriage. How do the following passages speak to the issue of love and actions as they pertain to God, to man and in marriage?

a. Talk is cheap: God

I John 3:18: *Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*

b. Talk is cheap: Man

James 2:15-18

15 *If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,*
16 *and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?*
17 *Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*
18 *But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."*

c. Talk is cheap: Marriage?

Ephesians 5:22: *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

Ephesians 5:25: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*

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4. Purifies motive: God already loves us completely and perfectly. His love for us is infinite. It cannot be improved or increased. Neither can it be sullied or diminished. Nothing we do will make God love us more; nothing we do will make God love us less. We do not love God to get Him to love us. God is not wooed by us into a personal relationship. He first loved us with a perfect, complete and infinite love. We then obey God because of a desire to express our love for Him, not in the hopes that it will cause Him to express His love to us. We obey God because of the effect it has on our own hearts, causing our love to increase, not because of the effect we hope that it will have on His love. If we do not have to obey God to get Him to love us and keep on loving us and if our obedience is simply an open expression of our love for God, then we immediately ask, “If God is going to love me no matter what I do, then why do anything?” Bingo! The Holy Spirit has revealed to you in an instant your heart and motive. An understanding of obedience because of love and not to get love both reveals and purifies motives. How do the following statements reveal the true heart and motives of the speakers?
- a. Child to father: “I was obeying you because I thought if I did not, you would kick me out of the house. But if it is true that you are going to love me and be my father no matter how I behave, then I get to do anything I want!”

 - b. Wife to husband: “ I have been faithful to you in marriage because I thought that if I was not, you would kick me out of your life. But if it is true, that you are going to love me and be my husband no matter what I do, then I get to do anything I want!”

 - c. You to God: “I have been striving to be Your disciple because I thought that would make You love me more and keep You from abandoning me. But if it is true that You loved me first, that You loved me when I was the most unlovable and that You will continue to be my heavenly father and love me no matter what I do, then I get to do whatever I want!”

- d. If, indeed, God saves us without reference to works and if our salvation is secure in Christ without reference to works, then our motivation for obedience is and must be our deep love for God. How does this truth purify the motives of discipleship in your life?

II. ...and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father...

- A. Why do we love God?

I John 4:19: *We love, because He first loved us.*

- B. According to the following passages, who was the first to love—us or God?

Romans 5:8: *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Ephesians 2:4-5

4 *But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*
5 *even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)*

I John 4:9-10

9 *By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.*
10 *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

I John 4:19: *We love, because He first loved us.*

C. Did our love for God cause Him to love us?

D. Does our love for God keep Him loving us?

Romans 8:31-39

31 *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?*

32 *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*

33 *Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;*

34 *who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*

35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

36 *Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*

37 *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

38 *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,*

39 *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

E. If our love for God sprang from our own ability, then this verse could conceivably mean that "if we choose to love Jesus, then God will choose to love us." But this is not the case.

Ephesians 1:4-5

4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love*

5 *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will*

F. This passage is often misused. In not understanding the reality that we love God because He first loved us, we may come to the erroneous decision from this verse

that it is in our loving God that causes God to love us. This verse may be accurately interpreted on the basis of I John 4:19: *“He who, because of My love for him, is able to love God, it is this person who shall be loved by My father...”*

- G. Recognizing that it was God who loves us and continues to love us despite our sinful state, we are freed to express our love for God. This love then becomes just that—an expression of devotion rather than a bribe.
- H. We live in an age when love is viewed as something that happens to us that we have no control over.
 - 1. Love is something we “fall in to,” and we must live with its decision as if love were the Greek God Cupid or Venus. As a result, we hear statements like, “I did not mean to fall in love with my secretary. I sincerely meant to remain with my wife and honor my marriage vows. I don’t know what happened. We just fell in love, and I woke up one morning realizing I no longer loved my wife.”
 - 2. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. Love does not just happen. There were hundreds of little steps that went into this man’s change of heart, both in his relationship with his wife and with his secretary. I would tell him that the solution was simple: “All those things you do with your secretary, do for and to your wife. Then fire your secretary and never see, speak to or hear from her again.” Then the process would begin to reverse.
 - 3. Many Christians bring this fatalistic view of love to their relationship with God. Love is something that “happens.” Some people just love God more than others. It is a mystery. We attribute it usually to a great movement of the Holy Spirit in their life or some cataclysmic spiritual event or life changing experience. Perhaps they are almost killed. Perhaps they were saved out of some great sin. Perhaps they have some fantastic revival experience. Whatever it was, we have not had it, so we are left out of the loop.
 - 4. What then is the answer? As Christians if we do not love God as we should, how can we impact our heart to love Him more? The goal is to love God. But what if we do not love Him, what then? God gives us the answer. We are not left to the capriciousness of our emotions or to some circumstance or event outside our control to increase our love for God. We do not have to say longingly, “Yeah, well if that had happened to me, I would love God like he does.” Rather, God gives us the fertilizer of the soul to turn the hard, barren ground of our hearts into the good, fruit-bearing soil that brings glory to Him and increases our love on a daily basis.
- I. In the project below the disciple is provided with a list of verses which specifically deal with rekindling our love for God. They are not verses that deal with love, God’s love for man, the command to love God or how to love God but, rather, they are verses that have an impact on our heart in terms of our loving God.

First, read the passage or passages. Second, ask yourself the question, “What does this verse say will increase my love for God?” Third, write the spiritual principle in the blank provided. Fourth, write an action step that you could take on a regular basis to put this principle to work in your own life.

When you are through, you will have a list of five action steps provided by God that the disciple can take when he finds his love for God waning or cold.

1. _____ – Luke 7:41-42, 47

Luke 7:41-42, 47

41 *A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.*

42 *When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?*

47 *For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.*

Application:

2. _____ – Psalm 119:32; 19:8; Jeremiah 15:16

Psalm 119:32: *I shall run the way of Thy commandments, for Thou wilt enlarge my heart.*

Psalm 19:8: *The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

Jeremiah 15:16: *Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts.*

Application:

3. _____ – Psalm 28:6-7; Psalm 116:1-2; Luke 18:1

Psalm 28:6-7

6 *Blessed be the LORD, because He has heard the voice of my supplication.*

7 *The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him.*

Psalm 116:1-2

1 *I love the LORD, because He hears My voice and my supplications.*

2 *Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.*

Luke 18:1: *Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart*

Application:

4. _____ – Hebrews 10:24-25; 3:13-15

Hebrews 10:24-25

24 *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,*

25 *not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*

Hebrews 3:13-15

13 *But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

14 *For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;*

15 *while it is said, “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked me.”*

Application:

5. _____ – Matthew 6:20-21

Matthew 6:20-21

20 *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;*

21 *for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Application:

The question is not, “Why do I not love God more?” The question is, “What am I doing to love God more?” How does the following verse speak to this truth?

Revelation 2:4-5

4 *“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

5 *“Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you repent.”*

In the space below summarize your understanding of:

Man’s love for God.

How man can grow in this love.

III. ...and will disclose Myself to him.

As we express our *love* for God in obedience, what in return does He do?

A. How does James 4:8 reflect this principle?

James 4:8: *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

B. According to the following verses how does Jesus disclose Himself to us?

John 5:39: *You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me;*

Luke 24:27: *And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.*

Luke 24:44: *Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must."*

Romans 1:2-3

2 *which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,*

3 *concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,*

Romans 16:25-26

25 *Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,*

DISCLOSE

1718 *emphanizo* (em-fan-id'-zo); from 1717; to exhibit (in person) or disclose (by words): KJV-- appear, declare (plainly), inform, (will) manifest, shew, signify. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.)

APPEAR, APPEARING

5. *emphanizo* ^1718^, from *en*, "in," intensive, and *phaino*, "to shine," is used, either of "physical manifestation," <Matt. 27:53; Heb. 9:24>; cf. <John 14:22>, or, metaphorically, of "the manifestation of Christ" by the Holy Spirit in the spiritual experience of believers who abide in His love, <John 14:21>. It has another, secondary meaning, "to make known, signify, inform." This is confined to the Acts, where it is used five times, <23:15,22; 24:1; 25:2, 15>. There is perhaps a combination of the two meanings in <Heb. 11:14>, i. e., to declare by oral testimony and to "manifest" by the witness of the life. See INFORM, MANIFEST, SHEW, SIGNIFY.#
(Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson)

26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

Colossians 1:25-26

25 Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God
26 that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints,

IV. As Disciple Makers

A. According to I Timothy 1:5, what then is the objective of our ministry?

1 Timothy 1:5: But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

B. According to John 14:15-16 if we accomplish this goal in the lives of our disciples, what will they be characterized by?

John 14:15-16

15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.
16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give

C. How is this illustrated by the lives of the early disciples in Acts 5:29?

Acts 5:29: But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men."

D. What will this love look like in the disciples who come out of our ministry?

E. Write out in your own words a summary statement of the truth found in John 14:21

John 14:21: He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.

**Quiet Times Alone With God—Jeremiah 15:16—Chapter 14 Theme: The Obedient Disciple
in Action—Part One**

Passage for Meditation: John 14:15

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: John 14:21

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: John 14:23

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

**Quiet Times Alone With God—Jeremiah 15:16—Chapter 14 Theme: The Obedient Disciple
in Action—Part One**

Passage for Meditation: John 14:24

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: I John 4:19

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: I John 5:1-3

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?