

Love: The Key To Obedience

Ponder: Why do you obey God?

Scripture: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15, NKJV).

Motives matter! At least three motives exist for obeying God. Each is appropriate in its place, but the third is most noble.

Children first obey their parents out of fear of the consequences. We hope for higher motives as they mature, but fear will suffice as a beginning point. So it is with obedience to God. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). Those who do not know God & obey the gospel will "be punished with everlasting destruction" (2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9). No one in their right mind wants any part of that. Fear most assuredly qualifies as a Biblical motive for obeying God!

However, avoiding Hell is but one side of the coin. On the other side is enjoying all the benefits of being a child of God, both now and eternally. Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). Every spiritual blessing belongs to those who are "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). Earthly parents may motivate their children to obey by promising them different kinds of rewards. Even so, God motivates people to obey Him by promising them various blessings in this life and that which is to come. In no way do we earn these blessings; they are gifts of God's grace. But there is nothing wrong with desiring and seeking them.

I want to avoid Hell, and I want the benefits of being a Christian now and enjoying Heaven with God eternally. But a more noble motive for obedience remains: Love. As children mature, they do as their parents taught them out of love and respect rather than fear and self-interest. A slave obeys out of fear. However, Jesus doesn't call us slaves, but friends (John 15:14). Wouldn't you rather please a friend because you want to, than a slave-master because you have to? The apostle John wrote, "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). Perfect doesn't mean flawless, but complete or mature. Jesus wants mature disciples to obey Him out of love (John 14:15).

Do you love Jesus? Keep His commandments!

Song: "Jesus Is All The World To Me"

Prayer: Loving Heavenly Father, we thank and praise You for the abundant blessings You pour out upon us daily, and the promise of even better things to come. Help us, we pray, to love You and to obey You out of that love. We beg You to forgive us when we fail to do that. We pray in the name of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, Amen.

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