

Loving Obedience

by A.W. Tozer

True love for Christ is demonstrated through practical obedience to His commandments, not just emotional feelings.

Scripture: Matthew 7:21, Luke 6:46, John 14:21, John 14:23-24, Romans 6:16, Galatians 5:13, James 1:22, 1 Peter 1:14-16, 1 John 5:3

Topics: "Obedience to God", "Discipleship"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the critical importance of loving obedience in the life of a disciple, arguing that modern Christianity often substitutes genuine discipleship with mere emotional affection for Christ. He warns against a superficial love that lacks the commitment to obey Christ's commandments, highlighting that true love for Jesus is demonstrated through our actions and adherence to His teachings. Tozer points out that feelings alone are not sufficient; rather, obedience is the true measure of our love for God, as stated in John 14:21-24. He calls for a return to a faith that is rooted in practical obedience rather than subjective emotional experiences.

Transcript

The absence of the concept of discipleship from present-day Christianity leaves a vacuum which we instinctively try to fill with one or another substitute. I name a few.

Pietism. By this I mean an enjoyable feeling of affection for the person of our Lord which is valued for itself and is wholly unrelated to cross-bearing or the keeping of the commandments of Christ.

It is entirely possible to feel for Jesus an ardent love which is not of the Holy Spirit. Witness the love for the Virgin felt by certain devout souls, a love which in the very nature of things must be purely subjective. The heart is adept at emotional tricks and is entirely capable of falling in love with imaginary objects or romantic religious ideas.

In the confused world of romance young persons are constantly inquiring how they can tell when they are in love. They are afraid they may mistake some other sensation for true love and are seeking some trustworthy criterion by which they can judge the quality of their latest emotional fever. Their confusion of course arises from the erroneous notion that love is an enjoyable inward passion, without intellectual or volitional qualities and carrying with it no moral obligations.

Our Lord gave us a rule by which we can test our love for Him: He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. . . . If a man love me, he will keep my words. . . . He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings (John 14:21-24).

These words are too plain to need much interpreting. Proof of love for Christ is simply removed altogether from the realm of the feelings and placed in the realm of practical obedience. I think the rest of the New Testament is in full accord with this.

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