**Changed Into His Image**

***Lesson Nine: Walking in Wisdom – Eph. 4:17-32***

**Introduction**: In last week’s lesson we looked at the first master discipline of wisdom – hearing. It is represented in the chart below. We learned that hearing consists of the two basic disciplines of attention and meditation. Are you giving God your attention? Are you meditating on His Word?

Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount that doing is the second master discipline of those who would be wise. Doing can be divided into the two basic disciplines of obedience and endurance, which will be the subject of our lesson today.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The Goal** | **Wisdom**  **(The Mind of Christ)** | | | |
| **The Master Disciplines** | **Hearing** | | **Doing** | |
| **The Basic Disciplines** | **Attention**  Choosing to listen to God | **Meditation**  Choosing to think like God | **Obedience**  Choosing to obey God | **Endurance**  Choosing to persevere for God |

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

* Explain the role of the Holy Spirit in your obedience to God.
* Understand that biblical obedience is not compliance with a rule, but a submissive response to a Person.
* Understand that biblical endurance is fueled by a relationship with God.
* Explain how hearing and doing are the hallmarks of mature Christianity.

1. **The Master Discipline of Doing**
   1. Doing Versus Being
      1. “Christianity is essentially a relationship with God, not a system of rules” (Berg 185).
      2. At the same time, it should be clear to us that every relationship produces its own rules.
   2. Being controlled by the Spirit is the key to obedience.
      1. The indwelling of the Spirit, which is the birthright of every believer, should not be confused with the control of the Spirit, which is conditional.
      2. The phrase “filled with the Spirit” conveys the idea of being controlled by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Notice how we use the phrase in other settings:
         * 1. If a person is filled with rage, we are saying that rage is controlling his actions and words.
           2. Filled with fear
           3. Filled with lust
   3. The Spirit of God is at work to produce the desire and ability to obey God (Phil. 2:13).
   4. This divine help from God is called grace (2Cor. 9:8).

1. **The Basic Discipline of Obedience**
   1. Biblical obedience is not just compliance to some abstract law or rule. It is the submissive response to the person of the Holy Spirit, who has revealed the will of God to us through His Word.
   2. A love relationship is at the heart of obedience.
      1. “We will always please the one we love the most.” (Ken Collier)
      2. We are either obeying our flesh and pleasing ourselves or obeying the Holy Spirit and pleasing God.
   3. We will always reserve the best for the one we love the most.
      1. A self-centered child picks for himself the biggest piece of

cake or the best place in line.

* + 1. Israelites offered up to God their crippled lambs because

they were more focused on themselves than a loving relationship with God (Mal 1:8).

* + 1. Obedience is a reflection of the heart.
    2. It is an act of love to someone, not just compliance to a rule.

1. **The Basic Discipline of Endurance**
   1. “Endurance is continued obedience to God, even under pressure” (Berg 194).
      1. It is the obedience of the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11.
      2. Their endurance, sustained obedience under pressure, was fueled by a sustained look at their God and at things eternal.
      3. This should characterize our Christian lives (Heb. 12:1-3).
   2. Christlike endurance is submission to the One who loved us most.
   3. God does not encourage us to endure by telling us something good about ourselves. Rather, He fosters endurance by reminding us of His own goodness.
2. **Obedience and Endurance give evidence to Christlike maturity.** 
   1. Jesus gave us the pattern of a servant (Phil. 2:5-11).
   2. Like Jesus, we are to be responsive to the needs of others.
   3. Like Jesus, we are to be responsive to the will of the Father.
3. **Application for Life Change**
   1. Cultivate sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s conviction in your life.
   2. Ask God for help to obey and endure.
   3. Follow Christ by taking up the towel of servanthood.