**Lessons from a Lockdown**

**Volume II**

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**Day 73**

**1 John 3:19-24**

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. Is my heart at rest in God’s presence? Am I confident with God? Why?
2. Am I confident that I will receive what I ask from God in prayer? Why?
3. Am I focused on obeying and pleasing God everyday? Why?
4. Does my life show that I believe in Jesus? Why?
5. Do I feel the Holy Spirit moving in my life? How has the Spirit changed me?

***Insight:***

We set our hearts at rest in his presence and have confidence before God, when we are doing our best to please him and are obedient to him. Doing something else to try to feel good about ourselves spiritually will not work. There is no substitute for obedience and pleasing God.

We all have a conscience. There is a part of us that tells us that what we are doing is wrong even before we ever read the Bible. But in our desire to sin, we try to fool our hearts or consciences. Sometimes we just choose to ignore what our heart is telling us. But God is greater than our hearts. While our hearts can be deceived, no one can deceive God. So if our own hearts, faulty sin detectors they may be, can be bothered by our sins, what more God?

John wrote that we receive from God *anything* we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. When we ask, it will be given to us. What we seek we will find. If we knock, the door will be opened (Matthew 7:7). This is a promise from Jesus for those who please and obey God. This means that the keys to answered prayers are *obedience* and *pleasing* God. The effectiveness of a prayer is not in its length or volume but on the heart and actions of the person praying. To have powerful prayers we should focus on pleasing and obeying God. The moment we wake up we should think about how we could we please God that day. As we go through our day, we should consider whether what we are doing at that moment is pleasing to God. As we figure out what we should do next, we should choose what would be most pleasing to God. Before we sleep we should evaluate how pleasing to God we were that day and how we could be better the next day. If Jesus is Lord and God is our Master, we should be focused on pleasing God. But how focused are we on pleasing God?

God’s command is for us to believe *in the name* of Jesus and for us to love one another. To those who believe *in the name* of Jesus, he gives the right to be called children of God (John 1:12). We have life *in his name* (John 20:31). We were justified *in the name of Jesus* (1 Corinthians 6:11). Do we recognize the significance and the power of Jesus’ name? It is wrong therefore for people in the world to utter the name of Jesus as a curse word. It equates the name of Jesus with other words people use as a curse. It diminishes the reverence dues to his name. As Christians, we should honor the name of Jesus.

If we keep God’s commands, we will live in him and he in us. We know God and become united with him when we obey his commands. When evaluating our relationship with God we should consider how obedient we are to God. Church attendance and financial giving can sometimes give “false positives.” The more accurate test of our relationship with God is our obedience to the Word of God. We cannot obey God without being close to him. We need the strength from God to enable us to obey. But also, by obeying God, the more we become closer to him. The opposite is also true. The farther away we are from God, the more difficult it is to obey him and the less we obey the farther we go from him. So in which direction is our life headed? The good news is that once we have noticed that we are drifting far from God, we can start going back to him.

We received the Holy Spirit from God when we got baptized. This gift is for every disciple of Jesus and not just for the most committed. If we live in God, we have the Holy Spirit. Having the Holy Spirit should have an impact on our lives. Since we received the Spirit upon our baptism, we should have started being transformed by the Spirit since then. The Spirit gives us power, love and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7). Do these three things characterize our lives? Are we powerful or powerless? Are we loving or selfish? Are we self-disciplined or lazy? Have we grown in these areas since the day of our baptism?

Today, let us make it our goal to please God in everything we do.