

## LeaderLesson 23: What does obedient love look like?

Bob Lowman, Jr.

January 7, 2014

*[This first LeaderLesson of 2014 continues the effort that we started in 2013 – to communicate with pastors and leaders in a way that encourages and equips us for Great Commission obedience. Our theme for Metroline Baptist Association in 2014 is Obedient Love. This LeaderLesson explores what that kind of love looks like.]*

Jesus has called us to follow Him. When we decide to follow Him as Lord, He expects us to obey Him. A maturing, growing, healthy Christian is typified by obedience-demonstrated instead of knowledge-acquired, meaning that being a Christian is not just about learning information about God, it is about knowing, loving and obeying Him day by day. The Bible does say, “This is love, that we walk in obedience to His commands” (See 2 John 6).

If all of this is true, and I believe it is, then, what does obedient love look like? What does an obediently loving Christian look like? If someone were watching us, and we wanted to live a life of obedient love as a Christ-follower, what would we do? How would we live?

Instead of simply saying one loves Jesus, obedient love demonstrates that love by striving to obey everything Jesus commanded us to do. The Great Commission tells us to teach those who become disciples of Jesus to obey all that He has commanded us (Matthew 28:19-20). So, we are not supposed to obey only those commands or instructions from the Lord that keep us comfortable. We are to learn and obey all that He has commanded, all that His Word instructs us. All of it.

Instead of hoping that someone will reach out to a neighbor who is in need, obedient love reaches out to the neighbor to discover how best to meet their need (See Matthew 25:40).

Instead of agreeing with the pastor that someone ought to help with the children’s ministry in the church, obedient love prays for a worker and helps find one (unless the Lord leads them to be that one!) (See Acts 2:44).

Instead of talking about the awful ways our culture is going to hell in a handbasket, obedient love prays for God to open doors for servant evangelism in a tough neighborhood in our city (See Luke 10:2).

Instead of complaining about the music being used in a morning worship service, obedient love thinks about the people who could be reached by the songs being sung, and invites a neighbor who may like that music to sit with them next Sunday during worship (See Philippians 2:3-5).

Instead of hoping someone will go on that mission trip to Africa, obedient love gives sacrificially and prayerfully helps raise money for the friend who senses God’s call to go (See Matthew 28:19-20).

Instead of sharing a criticism with the pastor just before he preaches on Sunday morning, obedient love takes time to pray for the pastor, asking God to empower him to share the Lord’s message during worship (See 1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Instead of worrying about their children who are far from God, obedient love prays, even fasts and prays, asking God to send someone to be His witness to those loved ones who are far from Him (See Exodus 32:9-14).

Instead of seeing another church near your church as competition, obedient love finds ways to build relationships between the churches so that you can partner together in reaching your neighborhood for Christ (See John 17:22-23).

Instead of holding something against a fellow Christian, obedient love forgives and reaches out to the other person with grace (See Matthew 5:23-24).

Instead of ignoring people of different ethnicities or people groups, obedient love wonders if those neighbors from other nations know Jesus, and prays, asking God to send workers to reach them in ways that make disciples. Those from the ends of the earth now live next door to us – what are we going to do about it? (See Acts 1:8).

Instead of trying to avoid people who seem to be bothersome or petty, obedient love prays for ways to care for those people, knowing that their attitudes may come from woundedness or from a serious lack of love in their own lives (See Ephesians 4:1-3).

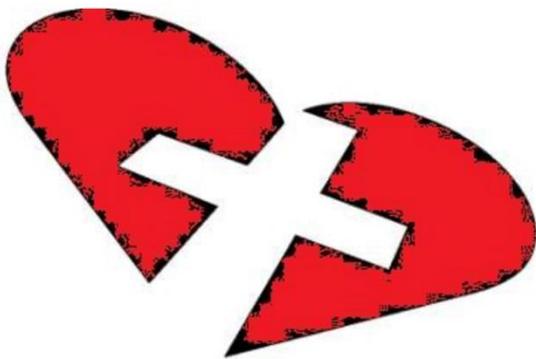
Instead of watching for another way to boycott the world, obedient love finds ways to reach out to those who do not believe, encouraging them to consider the amazing truth that has given us abundant life now, and eternal life forever. Jesus told us that we are to be salt and light in the world – what are we going to do about it? (See Matthew 5:13-16).

You see, obedient love is more about loving God and loving other people than it is about loving ourselves, or our preferences, or our traditions, or our comfort.

Obedient love is about loving the Lord enough to obey Him in every way possible. It's about learning and remembering what He has told us to do and then doing everything we can to obey His commands every day that we live.

And, when we mess up and disobey Him (and we do often), we quickly repent, turning afresh to God, asking His forgiveness and deciding again to love Him enough to obey Him.

I am convinced that the year 2014 is going to be a year of significant change in our family of churches and in the mission fields around us. I pray that we will be ready for change that is Kingdom-focused and mission-driven. Many indicators point to changes that may be difficult. But God has more in store for us than we can imagine if we will love Him with all that we are and serve Him and our neighbors with obedient love.



**2014: A YEAR OF  
OBEDIENT LOVE  
IN METROLINA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

***AND THIS IS LOVE,  
THAT WE WALK IN OBEDIENCE  
TO HIS COMMANDS. -2 JOHN 6***

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*LeaderLessons are a ministry of encouragement and equipping from Bob Lowman and Metrolina Baptist Association. You can find them at [www.metrolina.org](http://www.metrolina.org) or on the MBA Facebook page. If you would like to get a printed copy of these articles, please contact us by emailing [leaderlessons@metrolina.org](mailto:leaderlessons@metrolina.org) or calling 704.375.1197.*

**Metrolina Baptist Association**  
328 West Carson Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28203  
Dr. Bob Lowman, Jr., Executive Director