

8. Application Time

Application time is where listening and obedience come together as action. There is no better way to demonstrate love for God than by following through with an obedient response to what He asks of us. As Jesus said, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me" (John 14:23-24).

God sometimes asks things of His people that are unusual and defy our understanding. For example, the prophet Jeremiah had God make a strange request of him. He was in prison in Jerusalem right when the city was about to be overrun by the Babylonians. At that time, God told him to buy some land there. It wasn't exactly a great time to buy real estate since the enemy was about to take everybody and everything away from the city.

Despite the peculiarity of God's instructions to him, Jeremiah obeyed immediately and completely (Jer. 32). He bought the field, and God used his actions as a symbol of hope to the people—that they would some day be restored to Jerusalem. That's the kind of response God wants to see in us. Partial obedience is really disobedience. If we are going to obey, we need to do it all the way.

Every single time I've met with God in prayer, He has never failed to ask something of me—that's why I always have a legal pad with me when I pray. But God never overwhelms me with His instructions. He usually gives me only one thing to do at a time. (Occasionally He'll give me two; very rarely does He give me three.) He may ask me to intercede for someone. He may tell me to spend more time with one of the children. Or He may give me a message to preach. But no matter what He tells me to do, He does it clearly and simply so that it's not difficult for me to understand or obey.