

The Joy of Abiding in God's Love (Jn. 15:9-11)

I. ABIDING IN GOD'S LOVE

- A. Jesus made a most dramatic announcement—that God loves us in the way that God loves God (Jn. 15:9). Jesus feels the same intensity of love for us that the Father feels for Him. We are to abide in or focus on living in God's love by receiving it then returning it to God and getting it overflow to others. Abiding in love begins by studying and meditating on God's love. This changes how we feel. It exhilarates our hearts with joy, or a deep sense of well being.

⁹*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹*These things I have spoken...that My joy may remain in you. (Jn. 15:9-11)***

- B. **Keep My commands**: Cultivating a spirit of obedience increases our capacity to receive and feel more of God's love. To live in obedience to Jesus is to live in agreement with Him. We love God on His terms. Many want to feel more of God's love, but neglect to live in agreement with God's heart. Sin defiles and dulls our heart and diminishes our capacity to feel and respond to His love.

²¹*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me... (Jn. 14:21)*

- C. Jesus defined loving Him and keeping His commandments as more than obeying Him in areas of our morality, speech, and finances. It includes fulfilling the ministry assignment that He gave us.

³⁴*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. (Jn. 4:34)*

- D. Jesus set His heart on finishing the work that the Father gave Him. This involved long and hard work in ministering to people, speaking unpopular things, and then dying on the cross for us.

⁴*I have finished the work which You have given Me... ⁸*For I have given to them the words which You have given Me... (Jn. 17:4-8)**

- E. Jesus spoke to people out of His loyal love for God. He was not focused on how much He was liked as a preacher or how much popularity He might gain from a "good sermon."

⁶⁰*Many of His disciples...said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" ⁶¹*When Jesus knew...that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?..."**

⁶⁶*From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. (Jn. 6:60-66)*

II. KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDS: GODLY CHARACTER AND FINISHING THE WORK

- A. We keep God's commandments by our choices for godly character and in doing the work He gives us. Some mistakenly see their ministry assignment as an "optional" part of obeying His commands and loving Him. It is more than an optional addendum that we embrace to gain affirmation. We must not quit because He requires that we express our love to Him in this way.

¹⁰*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. (Jn. 15:10)*

- B. At the end of Paul's life he had the assurance, that he finished the assignment the Lord gave him.
⁶My departure [death] is at hand. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race...
(2 Tim. 4:6-7)
1. **Godly character:** To finish his assignment, he must have discipline in his actions.
²⁴Run in such a way that you may obtain it [the prize]... ²⁶I run thus: not with uncertainty... ²⁷But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
 2. **Hard work:** To finish his assignment, it required that he be diligent in his ministry labors.
¹⁰I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God...with me.
(1 Cor. 15:10)
 3. **Bearing reproach:** To finish his assignment, it required that Paul say the unpopular truths in the Word. He bore Jesus' reproach called the fellowship of suffering (Phil. 3:10).
²⁰I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you... ²³the Holy Spirit testifies...that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy... ²⁷I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God... (Acts 20:20-27)
- C. Loving God involves running the race or fulfilling the assignment that He set before each of us. God has given each of us "a work" or specific ministry assignment to complete in our life.
¹Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus. (Heb. 12:1-2)
- D. It is a challenge to be faithful to our specific ministry assignment in context to a small measure of God's manifest presence in our work, a small amount of resources, and a small response from people we serve along with the pressures of difficult circumstances and conflicts from people.
¹⁷Well done...you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities. (Lk. 19:17)
²¹You were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. (Mt. 25:21)
- E. Jesus was faithful in context to a very small response from the people He ministered to (Isa. 49). He was preoccupied with being faithful to God not on how much the people responded.
³And He [the Father] said to Me [Jesus], 'You are My servant...in whom I will be glorified.'
⁴Then I said, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain [from man's point of view]; yet surely my just reward is with the LORD"... (Isa. 49:3-4)
- F. Jesus kept focused on God's eyes being on Him knowing His reward was delayed until the age to come in the Millennium when all the ends of the earth accept His leadership and salvation.
⁵I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD... ⁶Indeed He says, "It is too small a thing that You should...restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isa. 49:5-6)